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A Preliminar Study on Pro and Counter Zapatista Protests

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Abstract

Using negative binomial models and data on pro- and counter-protest activity from 1994 to 2003 surrounding the Zapatista movement that developed in Chiapas, Mexico, this study tests some of the claims made in the literature about the dynamics that exist between movement and countermovement actors. As such this study represents the first systematic analysis of the interaction between pro- and counter-Zapatista protestors and one of the few empirical tests of movement-countermovement dynamics. The results show that (1) as the theory predicted, pro- and counter-protests had a positive effect on each other's future protest activity; (2) contrary to what was predicted, pro- and counter- protestors did not target a specific political party systematically; (3) procedural concessions granted to one side of the conflict (Zapatistas) generated more protest activity from the favored group, but had no effect on counter-protest activity. More general concessions (such as increases in public works spending and social programs) helped to decrease protest activity from the counter-protesting groups but had no significant effect on the pro-movement protests.

Keywords: pro- and countermovement protests, concessions, Zapatistas, EZLN, Mexico.

Resumen

Usando modelos binomiales negativos y datos sobre protestas pro y contra zapatistas entre 1994 y 2003, este estudio pone a prueba algunas de las hipótesis de la literatura sobre las dinámicas que existen entre movimientos y contramovimientos sociales. Como tal, este estudio es el primer análisis sistemático de las interacciones de los actores pro y contrazapatistas y se une a los pocos análisis empíricos dentro de la literatura sobre los movimientos y contramovimientos sociales. Los resultados muestran que (1) como la teoría predice, las protestas a favor y en contra del movimiento se afectaron unas a las otras en forma positiva; (2) contrariamente a lo que la teoría predice, pro y contraprotestas no estaban dirigidas sistemáticamente contra un partido político en específico; (3) concesiones de manejo de conflicto que beneficiaron sólo a los actores promovimiento generaron más protestas de parte del grupo favorecido pero no tuvieron ningún efecto sobre la actividad contramovimiento. Concesiones generales (incrementos en obras públicas y programas sociales) ayudaron a disminuir la actividad de contraprotesta, pero no tuvieron un efecto significativo sobre las protestas promovimiento.

Palabras clave: protestas promovimiento, protestas contramovimiento, concesiones, zapatistas, EZLN, México.

Introduction

In 1996, David Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg's work on movement and countermovement dynamics opened the door to this understudied field with the proposition of fourteen different hypotheses to be tested by future researchers. They suggested that support for these claims needed to come from three different types of studies: 'comparisons of movements that generate countermovements with those that do not; comparisons of different movement-countermovement conflicts; and cross-national comparisons of movements and countermovements' (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996: 1631). Scholars have responded to this call with different studies testing some of their claims. In his study over 'White-Flight' Schools in Mississippi, Kenneth Andrews (2002) tests Meyer and Staggenborg's second and seventh propositions by analyzing the intended and unintended effects of movement over countermovement mobilization, as well as, how victories granted to pro-movement actors generated opportunities for countermovement mobilization efforts. Lee Ann Banaszak and Heather Ondercin (2009) tackle the fifth proposition related to the effects of the media coverage of a movement on generating a countermovement by looking at the relationship between public opinion and the development of the U.S. women's movement. Joseph Luders (2003) investigates the first proposition by analyzing the relationship between countermovements, the response of a state at the federal and state levels, and the intensity of racial contentious politics in the American South. Aaron McCright and Riley Dunlap's (2000) study on conservative claims against global warming conscience raising movement offers an analysis on how the framing of countermovement claims influences public opinion on a social problem. By doing this they assessed Meyer and Staggenborg's third, fourth and thirteenth propositions. Michael Peckham (1998) trials propositions seven, eight and nine which are related to movement and countermovement tactics by looking at how Scientology organizations and their critics have used the Internet in their campaigns. Finally, Regina Werum and Bill Winders's (2001) study on state fragmentation and the development of the gay right's movement also analyzed how movement and countermovement actors use different tactics and venues at different levels of government.

This study adds to the list of studies testing some of their hypotheses and contributes to our understanding to the development of pro- and counter-movement protests in the following two ways. First, this study offers an analysis of the interaction of protests and counter-protests around a social movement within a democratic transition, namely the Zapatista movement in Mexico during the 1990s. As such it offers an application test for these claims outside the realm of cases for which they were developed in the first place - social movements in stable Western democracies. Trying these claims in

settings for which these hypotheses were not developed can offer either a robustness test in case they are confirmed, or can offer a refinement of the theory. Second, it offers a new perspective to the development of the Zapatista conflict in Chiapas, Mexico. Although the Zapatista movement is a well-studied case, this study is the first quantitative analysis of the contentious interactions between pro- and counter-Zapatista actors in the region. The results of this study offer a systematic analysis of the effects of the Mexican government responses to pro- and counter-Zapatista groups on each side of the conflict protest activity. As such it speaks to more detailed studies on inter- and intra-community conflicts like the ones conducted in the northern region by Agudo (2005, 2007) and in the Lacandon Jungle by Estrada (2007).

The Zapatista movement emerged right after hostilities between the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, EZLN) and the Mexican federal army ended, twelve days after the EZLN uprising on January 1, 1994. Support for the Zapatistas' cause was evident inside and outside of the region of conflict and a strong cycle of protests developed. However, because Zapatista sympathizing and non-sympathizing groups alike took advantage of the instability generated by the fighting between the EZLN and Mexican army and conducted numerous land seizures, some counter-Zapatista sentiment also grew among affected landowners and peasant communities. Once the Zapatista movement took over the streets with demonstrations, counter-Zapatista actors also started expressing their voice through protest activity. This pro- and counter-protest activity was prolonged over the years as inter- and intra-community conflicts emerged between Zapatista and non-Zapatista supporters and both sides used demonstrations to call the attention of the Mexican state. Pro-Zapatista protest activity was always stronger and lasted longer than counter-Zapatista protest events. A potential explanation for this could be the different demands and discourses of both sides of the conflict. While counter-Zapatista protestors demanded economic compensations to their loss of land and cattle, in the case of ranch owners, and the end of hostilities between pro- and anti-Zapatistas demanded by non-Zapatista communities; pro-Zapatista protestors were in synch with the broader Zapatista discourse which sought the recognition of indigenous rights and autonomy as the solution to all their other needs. Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) suggested that when mobilizing actors have more narrow and economic claims, their force to develop a movement is weaker than when these claims are broader—third proposition. For the authorities it is also easier to respond to those more concrete demands than when demands involve major changes in the distribution of political power. Once concessions are granted to resolve those more narrow demands, protestors have a harder time sustaining their protest activity. This was the case of counter-Zapatista actors. On the other hand, Zapatistas were

able to continue their cycle of protests for a longer period of time given that their agenda was more complex and the negotiations between the EZLN and the federal government never produced the results they were expecting. To put it in Meyer and Staggenborg's words, pro-Zapatista organizations were able to sustain a longer campaign given their ability to portray their demands as part of a conflict entailing larger value cleavages in the Mexican society. Meyer and Staggenborg also proposed that pro and countermovement mobilization efforts trigger each other protest activity further. The results presented in this study also support this claim, as pro- and counter-protest activity showed a positive effect on each other's future protest events. However, contrary to what these authors proposed about pro- and counter-protesting groups targeting their counterpart's ally in power, these results show that pro- and counter-Zapatista protestors have no consistent political party in power as a target for their protests. Finally, these results did not offer a consistent confirmation to the proposition related to the effects of relative victories gained by each side of the movement on their own protest activity and that of their counterpart.

The next section presents a narrative of pro- and counter-Zapatista protest events and negotiations between each side of the conflict and the Mexican government from 1994 to 2003 to illustrate the need to test some of Meyer and Staggenborg's suggested propositions on pro- and counter-protests. The third section justifies the choice hypotheses to be tested in this study. This section is then followed by a description of the methods and data employed to test the hypotheses of this study. Finally, the results and their implications for studying the dynamics between Zapatista protests and counter-protests in particular and the theory in general are discussed.

The EZLN Uprising and the Emergence of Counter-Zapatistas

The sympathy that the Zapatistas gained after images of an uneven war between the Mexican federal army and poorly-armed indigenous guerrillas of the state of Chiapas circulated on printed, broadcast and virtual media, is well acknowledged and has been widely studied (Bob, 2005; Bruhn, 1999; Collier and Collier, 2005; Hellman, 1999; Schultz, 1998). So has also been the subsequent social movement that the Zapatistas inspired throughout the state of Chiapas with great support from the national and international public (Higgins, 2004; Leyva, 2001; Mattiace, 1997; Mosknes, 2005; Stephen, 2002). Some scholars have also devoted time to study the emergence and development of counter-Zapatista groups in the region (Agudo, 2005) and the desertion of many supporting communities (Estrada, 2007). However, there is no study which analyzes the interaction between pro-Zapatista and counter-Zapatista protestors. This study fills in this gap in the literature.

The EZLN uprising did not generate rebellions in other parts of the country despite the EZLN's call for fighting the authoritarian regime from different angles and tactics.¹ However, it triggered significant political changes and protest activity, especially throughout Chiapas. The chaos generated by the hostilities between the EZLN and the federal army facilitated land seizures by Zapatistas and non-Zapatistas alike from January to March 1994. These land invasions generated great outrage from the affected landowners (ranchers and other peasant communities alike). Soon thereafter they also got mobilized and started protesting for compensations of their losses (Villafuerte *et al.*, 1999). After the government reached an agreement with the affected landowners and the peasant groups which had participated in these seizures, protest tactics changed. This change was also due to the rounds of talks between the EZLN and the federal government that initiated only three weeks after the uprising. Pro-Zapatista sympathizers started to hold meetings and marches in support of those talks, while counter-Zapatista protesters were protesting mainly against the support of the Bishop of San Cristóbal de Las Casas to the Zapatista cause, as Bishop Samuel Ruiz became the mediator during the Cathedral Dialogues.²

In August 1994, the gubernatorial candidate of the leftist party, Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Party of the Democratic Revolution, PRD), Amado Avendaño, who was sympathetic to the Zapatista cause, survived a road accident that was characterized as an attempt on his life by his sympathizers. This event triggered pro-Zapatista protests, now in the form of marches and road-blocks. In addition, the Zapatistas organized the National Democratic Convention within their controlled territory³ just two weeks before the presidential and national legislative elections.

The gubernatorial race for Chiapas coincided with the federal elections. The gubernatorial candidate of the official Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Revolutionary Institutional Party, PRI) won the elections under severe accusations of electoral fraud. These accusations generated extensive post-electoral demonstrations across the state. Building seizures were the main protest tactic. Pro-Zapatista protesters demanded the clarification of electoral fraud accusations and the resignation of the elected authorities, while counter-Zapatistas supported the victory of their candidate. As part of these protests, Amado Avendaño was proclaimed *Rebel Governor of the Transition Government* in a massive but only symbolic inauguration that took

¹ In an interview with Yvon Le Bot, Marcos stated that the EZLN was calling all people and social sectors to fight against the 60-year old dictatorship in any way possible to bring democracy to the country. He also mentioned that although they knew it was highly impossible, deep inside the Zapatistas were hoping that other groups were going to follow their lead in rising up in arms against the federal government (LeBot, 1997).

² This first round of talks was held in the cathedral of San Cristóbal de Las Casas from February 21 to March 2, 1994. Its main achievement was the recognition of two Zapatista controlled areas (*zonas francas*) in San Miguel, Ocosingo, and in Guadalupe Tepeyac, Las Margaritas.

³ The meeting was held in the community of Guadalupe Tepeyac, Las Margaritas in Chiapas.

place in the central square in the Chiapas capital, Tuxtla Gutiérrez. At the same time the winning PRI candidate was being inaugurated as the official Chiapas governor inside the state government building in a very private ceremony under high security measures. Due to the lack of resources, Avendaño's symbolic rule lasted only a couple of months. The federal government responded by increasing the military presence in Chiapas.

Following these events, Bishop Samuel Ruíz proposed the formation of the Comisión Nacional de Intermediación (National Intermediation Commission, CONAI) to foster the resumption of a dialogue between the EZLN and the federal government. After the new president was inaugurated in December 1994, an official mediation commission was also created: the Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación (Commission of Concord and Pacification, COCOPA). It was to be formed by legislators from all parties in Congress in order to make it representative and to give it independence from the executive power.

On December 19, 1994, the EZLN launched the peaceful seizure of 38 *municipios* and declared them rebel territory.⁴ In January 1995, the EZLN called for the formation of a National Liberation Movement and for a new meeting of the National Democratic Convention in the central state of Querétaro. Although the Zapatista military commanders could not attend the meeting given the arrest warrants pending on them were they to leave their security zone, Zapatista sympathizers including the PRD did attend those calls. Following the EZLN's call, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, two-times presidential candidate and leader of the PRD, proposed the formation of a movement for national liberation.

In February 1995, Mexican intelligence revealed the identities of some of the ski-masked Zapatista leaders.⁵ The Mexican army was sent into the recently declared *municipios rebeldes* to re-establish the constitutional order. The EZLN was forced to retrieve deeper into the Lacandon Jungle. From all the 38 taken municipalities, the EZLN was able to keep only San Andrés Larráinzar, which they renamed as San Andrés Sakamchén de los Pobres. However, smaller communities within these municipalities remained Zapatista support bases.⁶

The EZLN called for an end to these hostilities and again demonstrations were triggered to demand negotiations to resume and the end to aggressions

⁴ Affected localities: Altamirano, Amatenango del Valle, Bochil, El Bosque, Cancuc, Chamula, Chanal, Chenalhó, Chilón, Comitán, Huitiupán, Huixtán, La Independencia, Ixtapa, Jitotol, Larráinzar, Las Margaritas, Mitontic, Nicolás Ruiz, Ocosingo, Oxchuc, Palenque Pantelhó, Las Rosas, Sabanilla, Salto de Agua, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Simojovel, Sitalá, Socoltenango, Teopisca, Tila, Totolapa, La Trinitaria, Tumbalá, Venustiano Carranza, Yajalón, Zinacantán.

⁵ Identities revealed by the Ministry of the Interior: Subcomandante Marcos identified as Rafael Sebastián Guillén Vicente, Comandante Germán as Fernando Yáñez Muñoz, Comandante Vicente as Javier Elorreaga Berdegué, Comandanta Elisa as María Gloria Benavides Guevara, Comandanta Gabriela as Silvia Fernández Hernández, Comandanta Sofía as Mercedes García López.

⁶ 29 towns and communities in Lacandon Jungle and the highlands are still under the rule of the Zapatista Juntas de Buen Gobierno (Enlace Civil, 2003).

against the indigenous population of Chiapas. These demonstrations not only attracted great international attention and support for the movement, but also new and more violent counter-Zapatista expressions in the two months that followed. Counter-Zapatista groups started to raise arms. They were later identified as paramilitary groups by Zapatista sympathizers. These groups operated mainly in the north and highland regions harassing Zapatista communities with the help, and/or omission to punish, from the local authorities.

In March, President Zedillo and the COCOPA signed the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and Just Peace in Chiapas which guaranteed the suspension of military operations against the EZLN, as well as the suspension of arrest warrants against EZLN leaders as long as the dialogue continued. The EZLN accepted the Law and soon thereafter the Zapatista commanders met with representatives of the government, the COCOPA and the CONAI members in San Miguel, Ocosingo, to discuss the logistics and the agenda for the upcoming peace talks.

Talks between the EZLN and the federal government continued during 1995 and 1996 in what became to be called the Dialogues of San Andrés, as they were held in San Andrés Larráinzar. This period of dialogues occurred in lapses with long interruptions and each negotiating phase was accompanied by pro-Zapatista demonstrations and meetings in support of the talks. The Zapatistas organized several big events in between. In August 1995 they held the National Consultation for Peace and Democracy to decide the future of the EZLN. The following month the EZLN held a Special Forum to organize civic committees that would represent the Zapatista cause.

The Zapatistas also called for the construction of many '*Aguascalientes*' as resistance centers. In December 1995, the Zapatistas inaugurated four *Aguascalientes* in the communities of La Realidad (Las Margaritas), La Garrucha (Ocosingo), Oventic (San Andrés Larráinzar) and Morelia (Altamirano). These *Aguascalientes* were intended to function as centers where the EZLN and civic organizations were to coordinate peaceful cultural and development activities for the region. The government responded by intensifying the military presence in the region, while the COCOPA and the EZLN formulated the procedures and terms for a Special Forum on Indigenous Rights to be held in San Cristóbal de Las Casas in January 1996.

On the second anniversary of the uprising, the EZLN published the *Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* in which they called for the formation of a broad opposition front that would serve to launch the Movement of National Liberation.

In February 1996, the EZLN and the government negotiating delegation signed the first set of accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture.⁷ These came to be known as the San Andrés Accords.

In April 1996, the EZLN held the First Continental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism in the Zapatista *Aguascalientes* of La Realidad (Las Margaritas) with large numbers of participants. Thousands of nationals as well as foreigners attended the meeting. In July of that same year, the EZLN and the COCOPA organized a Special Forum on the Reform of the State in San Cristóbal de Las Casas. The Forum was organized in a similar manner to the National Indigenous Forum of January, and thus attempting to open up the San Andrés talks on Democracy and Justice to include other different civic organizations. Just after this meeting, the EZLN organized the First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism in the *Aguascalientes* of Oventic, San Andrés Larráinzar. Round tables were also held in the other four *Aguascalientes*, with more than five thousand people attending the meeting. This time the meetings lasted for two weeks and ended just before the EZLN was supposed to meet again with the government in San Andrés Larráinzar.

In August 1996, the EZLN and the government met again in San Andrés Larráinzar. No agreement was reached. Given that no consensus was possible on the 'Democracy and Justice' negotiations, the government proposed to leave this subject for later talks and move on to the next topic, 'Wealth and Development'. In the mean time president Zedillo advisers had reviewed the text of the San Andrés Accords and had declared them unconstitutional. The decision of President Zedillo not to honor the San Andrés Accords in September 1996 made its recognition the emblematic demand of all subsequent demonstrations in support of the Zapatista movement.

These pro-Zapatista protests did not go unnoticed by counter-Zapatista organizations. Violence between Zapatista sympathizers and opponents in Chiapas escalated. The inter- and intra-community conflicts unfolded into large numbers of people being expelled from their communities. During 1996, tensions increased between northern pro- and counter-Zapatista communities (Agudo, 2005). Similar events occurred in the Highlands' and Jungle regions (Hirales, 1998, Estrada, 2007). The maximum expression of these conflicts came in December 1997 when 45 Zapatistas sympathizers were massacred by a counter-Zapatista group in Acteal (Hirales, 1998). However, hostilities between pro- and counter-Zapatistas continued over the rest of 1998. The government responded by intensifying the military presence in the region. The

⁷ The San Andrés Accords granted the recognition of autonomy to the indigenous peoples and communities. This first document established a new pact between the indigenous groups and the State. The second suggested specific policy proposals supported by the government and the EZLN that were to be presented to the Mexican Congress. The third established specific reforms for the Chiapas case, and the fourth document consisted of some amendments to the previous three documents.

Acteal massacre and the significant increase of military presence in the region brought protest activity almost to a complete halt.

Pro- and counter-Zapatista protests as well as aggressions continued but at a very low rate. They receded to some extent after 2000, when state and national elections brought a new party into power. Vicente Fox Quesada became president under the coalition between the Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party, PAN) and the Partido Verde Ecologista de México (Green Ecologist Party of Mexico, PVEM). Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía became the governor of Chiapas under the coalition built by all political forces except the PRI. These changes in power together with efforts from non-governmental organizations, the Catholic Church, and state mediation commissions helped to reconcile the divided communities. Conflicts over land still emerged every now and then, however, no pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity resumed.

The following section offers some theoretical propositions to find systematic explanations to the developments explained here.

Protest-Counterprotest Dynamics

Students of movement-counter movement dynamics have highlighted the fact that all powerful social movements that successfully threaten contrary interests, as a byproduct of their struggle, develop a counter movement or at least counter-protest activity (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996). In the case of the Zapatistas, the EZLN's uprising and the land invasions that followed, generated large counter-Zapatista protest events conducted by the affected landowners and other affected non-Zapatista rural communities. These counter-Zapatista actors were able to sustain a protest campaign over time demanding compensations for their seized land and cattle, and the state intervention to resolve conflicts and hostilities between- and inside pro- and anti-Zapatista communities. Local, state and federal government actors were forced to respond to these demands at least partially. The fact that pro- and counter-protest actors were able to sustain their cycle of protest long enough to achieve the state's attention deserves analytical attention.

Given that the data available on pro- and counter-Zapatista mobilization consists of protest events, I can only test those Meyer and Staggenborg's propositions for which the data is suitable. The three propositions tested in this study refer to the ideas that (1) movement-counter movement conflicts tend to emerge in states with divided authority (Proposition 1), (2) when pro- and counter movement actors exploit events successfully, they tend to trigger their counterpart mobilization efforts as well as their own agenda advancement (Proposition 2) and (3) that victories gained by one side of the conflict tends to trigger the pro- and counter-tension further (Proposition 7).

In their first proposition they state 'movement-counter movement conflicts are more likely to emerge in states with divided government authority (1637)'. A federal system where different parties ruling at different levels of government allows movement and counter movement actors to find opposing political allies and targets. Depending on which ally is in power, one side will get more access to power while the other will protest more, as the police and governments will favor one side over the other. Thus, what represents a political opportunity to one side becomes an obstacle to the other. Moreover, other authors have also suggested that movements grow when they have influential political allies (Cress and Snow, 2000; Piven and Cloward, 1977; Tarrow, 1994). Accordingly, when alliances exist and endure and the movement gets closer to its goal of changing policy, protest activity is expected to decrease (Jenkins *et al.*, 2003; Minkoff, 1997). When such an alliance continues but is unable to promote the movement's goals, having influential political allies actually empowers the movement to continue its struggle by contentious means (Della Porta and Diani, 1999; Katzenstein and Mueller, 1987; Kriesi *et al.*, 1995).

Because the EZLN launched the uprising against the PRI-dominated political system, it is reasonable to argue that counter-Zapatista protesters, both landowners and peasant organizations affiliated to the PRI, were allied with, or at least sympathetic to, PRI authorities. Having been the Chiapas a PRI stronghold for so long it is not surprising that the party was able to keep strong alliances with the landowning elite in the region—especially during the studied period, as well as with the peasant organizations that remained loyal to the Confederación Nacional Campesina (National Confederation of Peasants, CNC) and did not join the Zapatista cause. One example of rural communities allied with the PRI even after the EZLN's uprising are the emergence of the counter-Zapatista organization, *Paz y Justicia*, in the north of the state and their covered up aggressions against Zapatista communities by the local PRI (Agudo, 2005, 2007). This phenomenon, however, was not limited to the northern region of the state. It also occurred in the highlands. The Acteal massacre in 1997 perpetrated by counter-Zapatista actors was the tragic consequence of prolonged anti-Zapatista actions that were not attended by PRI-local authorities (Hirales, 1998). Other expressions of counter-Zapatista actions covered up by PRI local governments were also present in the Lacandon Jungle (Estrada, 2007; Washbrook, 2005). The PRI governor of Chiapas soon attended landowners' demands after the escalation of counter-Zapatista protest actions in 1994 (Villafuerte *et al.*, 1999). Thus despite the electoral democratization that swept through Chiapas in the 1990s, as Fox (1994) suggested there were still strong clientelistic networks

cross the state that could have represented both PRI and loyal peasants' demands alike.⁸

The EZLN, however, never acknowledged any political party as their official ally and although at first Zapatistas were sympathetic to the PRD political agenda and vice versa, once the PRD started winning local and national positions, it prove to be ineffective, or unwilling, in the Zapatistas' view, to advance the movement's goals. The PRD's inability or unwillingness to promote the Zapatista agenda led the EZLN to stop supporting the PRD and made it a target of their protests too. Thus, at first, Zapatistas and *perredistas* would have protested jointly against the PRI regime, later Zapatistas would have protested against PRD incompetence or unwillingness to push the Zapatista agenda further.

Following Meyer and Staggenborg's hypothesis, it is expected then that PRI sympathizers would have had more prerogatives in PRI-ruled localities and therefore fewer motives to protest there while they should show more inclination to protest more in PRD-ruled localities. Meanwhile, Zapatistas should protest as much in PRI- and PRD-ruled localities alike. Zapatistas would have the incentive to protest against PRI local government as they represent the same regime that motivated the EZLN uprising. PRD-ruled localities would become their target of protests once they proved to be distanced from society and concerned solely with winning elections (Marcos, 2000).

The following hypothesis states this idea more clearly.

Hypothesis 1: Within a democratic transition protestors tend to protest more against parties in government who are not their political allies.

Meyer and Staggenborg's (1996) second proposition indicates that 'when movements effectively create or exploit events, they are likely to encourage countermovement mobilization at the same time that they advance their own causes (1638)'. The more successful these events are, the more countermobilization they would create. If this hypothesis is correct, we should observe counter-Zapatista protests following Zapatista protest events but even more so in the aftermath of the EZLN's uprising in January 1994, the land seizures that followed, around the negotiating periods between the EZLN and the federal government, and whenever the Zapatistas held their massive events, such as the peaceful seizure of 38 municipal governments in December 1994 on the National Democratic Convention held in Zapatista territory in August 1995, to name a few. The opposite should also be true, as countermobilization increases, movement events should increase too. Thus

⁸ During its over seventy dominance of the party system in Mexico, the PRI was able to sustain both the loyalty of corporatist labor and peasant associations as well as the support from the elite sectors (Camp, 2007; Hansen, 1974). Thus it is not difficult to envision the PRI enjoying the support of the landowners in Chiapas given the inability of PAN to find support in southern Mexico, especially during the early 1990s.

counter-Zapatista events should have also triggered pro-Zapatista activities. The following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Mobilizing events advocating the causes of one side of the conflict tend to trigger protest mobilization from its counterpart.

The final hypothesis of Meyer and Staggenborg tested in this study is Proposition 7, which suggests that 'a victory for one side will spur the other in a movement-counter movement conflict. In the long run, neither side can maintain itself without victories; the side that fails to win any victories over many years will decline (1647).' Other studies of the effects of concessions over mobilization have also shown that concessions tend to have positive effects on future protest activity, especially when these concessions are only partial (Rasler, 1996; Goldstone and Tilly, 2001). Partial gains won due to protest activity trigger further mobilization in hopes of achieving further more significant victories. However, when victories respond to specific, narrow, economic claims on one side of the conflict, then the previously existing conflict with movement actors should recede and protest activity should diminish as these concessions have become substantial to that side of the conflict. Partial concessions should not only trigger further mobilization from those actors to which they were granted, but from their counterparts as well. The other side of the conflict would be motivated to protest after observing that their counterparts received concessions.

In this study, two types of concessions are included in the analysis. First, there are the procedural concessions granted to the Zapatistas during negotiating periods with the federal government. Concessions to the Zapatistas were negotiated over a longer period of time and were mostly partial or procedural. The other source of concessions comes from the local governmental expenditures on public works and social programs.⁹ These concessions are considered applicable to pro- and counter-Zapatista communities alike. Public works and social programs could have been targeted to curtail inter- and intra-community conflicts as well as to respond to demands presented by any protesting group. As protesting organizations see some governmental response to their demands they should feel encouraged to sustain their protest activity. The following two hypotheses are offered to test these claims:

⁹ Concessions granted to the landowning elites are considered not considered in the dataset because these were granted at one point in time when landlords, peasants and government officials negotiated compensations for their losses after the initial land invasions in 1994 (Villafuerte et al., 1999).

Hypothesis 3a: Partial concessions granted to one side of the conflict might increase protest activity from movement and countermovement actors alike.

Hypothesis 3b: Government expenditures on public works and social programs might increase protest activity from movement and countermovement actors alike.

The operationalization of variables to test the hypotheses presented here is described in the following section.

Methods

Data

Table I presents a summary of the variables employed in this study.

TABLE I. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

VARIABLE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
PRO-ZAPATISTA PROTESTS*	1.55	6.65	0	128
COUNTER-ZAPATISTA PROTESTS*	0.40	1.08	0	14
PRI LOCAL GOVERNMENTS•	82.11	11.63	68	110
PRD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS•	16.90	4.97	0	19
PARTIAL CONCESSIONS TO ZAPATISTAS*	0.13	0.36	0	2
PUBLIC WORKS AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS (MILLIONS OF PESOS)•	948.83	442.70	242.36	1605.45

PRI = Partido Revolucionario Institucional; PRD = Partido de la Revolución Democrática.

* Measured on a weekly basis.

• Measured every three years.

PROTESTS: Protest activity of pro- and counter-Zapatista actors is measured by the number of protests held across *municipios* in the state of Chiapas over a ten-year period, from January 1, 1994 to December 31, 2003. Data were coded by one person from daily newspaper articles from *La Jornada* and aggregated by the week to make the unit of analysis number of protests per week. Additional reports from the local newspapers *El Tiempo* (later called *La Foja Coleta*) and *Cuarto Poder* collected by Melel Xojobal¹⁰ were triangulated to check for possible problems of selection and description biases (Earl *et al.*, 2004). Table II presents the disparity of events reported in local and national sources. Roughly half the events were not reported in the national newspaper *La Jornada* and consistently events reported in local sources tended to be

¹⁰ Melel Xojobal is a social service organization founded by the Dominican Friars of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in Chiapas, on February 2, 1997 that has archived a daily synthesis of Chiapas news in local and national newspapers.

smaller in magnitude than those reported in national sources. Triangulating local and national reports for those years for which data was available helped to confirm that no other significant effects created by the reports' selection and description biases. Moreover, given that more events were covered by national sources, I was able to comfortably rely on the 'hard news' provided by national newspaper sources, as Earl *et al.* (2004) suggest.

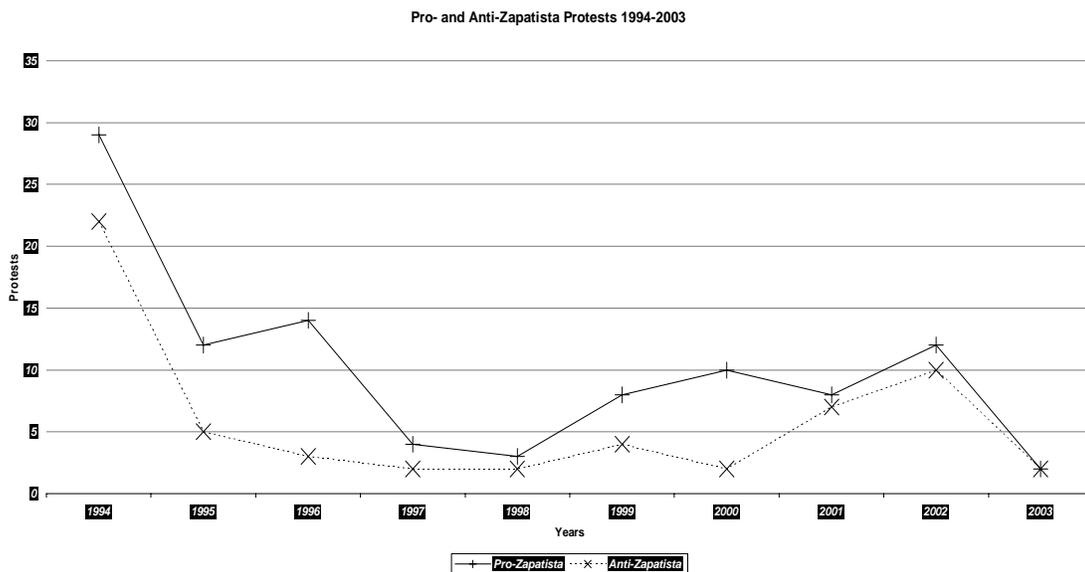
TABLE II. LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON PROTEST EVENTS (SELECTED YEARS)

	1998	1999	2001	2002
NUMBER OF EVENTS REPORTED IN BOTH LOCAL AND NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS	25	63	85	80
NUMBER OF EVENTS REPORTED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS ONLY	16	37	35	46

Source: Newspaper accounts of protests in *La Jornada*, *La Foja Coleta* and *Melel Xojobal*.

Figure 1 describes pro- and counter-Zapatista protesters.

FIGURE 1. PRO- AND COUNTER- ZAPATISTA PROTESTS 1994-2003



Pro- and counter-Zapatista protests varied from marches and roadblocks, to land invasions, seizures of buildings, meetings, sit-ins and strikes.¹¹ The selection criterion for counting an event as a protest was defined by whether the event involved at least three people collectively critiquing or dissenting

¹¹ The results of this study show no risk of having different types of events aggregated in the analysis that could wash out the effects of political opportunities (Jenkins, Jacobs and Agnone, 2003; Meyer, 2004).

together with social or economic demands (Rootes, 2003).¹² To avoid data inflation protest events were coded as only one protest even when these lasted various days.

One-week lagged endogenous variables were introduced for each of the protest variables (pro- and counter-Zapatista) in the models to estimate their possible 'bandwagon effects' (Rasler, 1996).¹³

MOBILIZING EVENTS: Movement and countermovement protests function as independent variables to each other to find out their relative explanatory variable in triggering their opponent protest activity. For this purpose these variables are also lagged one period (one week).

PARTY IN POWER: Using electoral data from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Chiapas (IEE-Chiapas, 2003) two different variables were created to identify PRI and PRD ruled localities. Variation comes every three years, according to the frequency of local elections in Mexico. To assess the initial and delayed effects of these variables, one-week ($t-1$), six-months ($t-6$) and one-year period ($t-12$) lags were constructed, as Bruhn (2008) argues that protest activity from ally or opponent groups alike tends to intensify during the first year of a new administration in order to influence the new government's agenda.

CONCESSIONS: Concessions can be understood as any rights, prerogatives or benefits gained from the state by collective action efforts. This type of concessions can be granted to any actor and/or organization on either side of the conflict. These prerogatives and benefits could be administered through to local governmental expenditures on public works and social programs. Procedural concessions entail low-level accommodations that the state grants to dissident actors to signal its willingness to negotiate (Gamson, 1990). Gamson's definition is particularly useful in this study as most of the concessions granted to the Zapatistas during negotiations with the government were procedural or partial. These include the release of political prisoners, mass pardons and amnesties, reshuffling of cabinet members, governors, and lower levels administrative personnel, and promises to respond to the movement's demands.

Data on local governments' expenditures on public works and social programs comes from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI, 2008) and is measured on a yearly basis. Thus a six-month ($t-6$) and a year ($t-12$) period lags to test for their long-term effects on protest activity on the assumption

¹² In most cases, reports on the number of participants were imprecise as they would only mention the presence of tens, hundreds or thousands of people.

¹³ It is assumed that successful protest events can trigger more future protest events.

that it would take time before these concessions are observable and protesting groups react to them.

Data on partial concessions given to the Zapatistas comes from Marco Antonio Bernal and Miguel Ángel Romero (1999) and the negotiating accounts published by the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Front of National Liberation, FZLN).¹⁴ By combining these two sources, any potential bias in the data is diminished. Partial concessions were counted on a weekly basis and to assess their short- and long-term effects four lagged variables were created: a one-week ($t-1$) and a six-week ($t-6$) period lags to follow Rasler's (1996) assumption on having observable effects up to six weeks after concessions were granted.

Models

Given that the two dependent variables consist of counts of pro- and counter-Zapatista weekly protest events per locality respectively, the most appropriate estimation procedure is an event-count model (Barrón, 1992; King, 1989). More specifically, negative binomial models were chosen given that there is a strong overdispersion in the data (see the difference between the mean and standard deviation values for Pro- and Counter Zapatista protest activity in Table 1) and observations are not independent from one another (Land, McCall and Nagin, 1996). In order to correct for potential heteroscedasticity and serial correlation robust standard errors were estimated and the progressive counts of weeks was included as the exposure variable in the model (Long, 1997).

Two models were run. Model 1 tests the effects of counter-Zapatista protests, party in power, partial concessions to the Zapatistas and local government expenditures on Zapatista protest activity; and Model 2 analyzes the effects pro-Zapatista protests, party in power, partial concessions to the Zapatistas and local government expenditures on counter-Zapatista protest activity. Results of the incidence-rate ratios are shown in Table III. These results are presented and discussed in the following section.

¹⁴ The FZLN kept an account of important events on their webpage <http://www.fzln.org.mx> (accessed on February 6, 2005), while Marco Antonio Bernal Gutiérrez (Commissioner for Peace in Chiapas from 1995 to 1997) and Miguel Ángel Romero Miranda (1999) published an account of the negotiating periods from the Mexican government's perspective.

Results

TABLE III. NEGATIVE BINOMIAL MODELS FOR MOVEMENT AND COUNTERMOVEMENT PROTESTS (INCIDENCE-RATE RATIOS ARE REPORTED AND WEEK NUMBER IS USED AS EXPOSURE VARIABLE)

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	MODEL 1 MOVEMENT PROTESTS	MODEL 2 COUNTERMOVEMENT
<i>PROTESTS</i>		
PRI RULE (T-1)	0.98 (0.02)	1.04 (0.03)
PRI RULE (T-26)	1.01 (0.03)	0.96 (0.04)
PRI RULE (T-52)	1.04 * (0.02)	1.003 (0.03)
PRD RULE (T-1)	0.64 *** (0.05)	0.75 *** (0.07)
PRD RULE (T-26)	0.07 (0.05)	0.93 (0.06)
PRD RULE (T-52)	1.02 (0.04)	0.97 (0.04)
PARTIAL CONCESSIONS TO ZAPATISTAS (T-1)	0.94 (0.19)	1.24 (0.30)
PARTIAL CONCESSIONS TO ZAPATISTAS (T-6)	2.11 *** (0.61)	1.54 (0.49)
GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES (T-26)	0.99 (0.0004)	0.99 *** (0.0004)
GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES (T-52)	0.99 (0.0004)	1.008 * (0.0005)
PRO-ZAPATISTA PROTESTS (T-1)		1.09 ** (0.05)
COUNTER-ZAPATISTA PROTESTS (T-1)	1.134 * (0.080)	
LAGGED DEPENDENT VARIABLE	1.04 (0.04)	1.02 (0.98)
NUMBER OF WEEKS: 468		
LOG PSEUDOLIKELIHOOD	-529.897	-313.964
WALD (CHI)2	3492.06	3741.33
*** $p \leq 0.01$; ** $p \leq 0.05$; * $p \leq 0.10$		

The analysis of this study offers interesting and unexpected results. Hypothesis 1 suggested that movement and countermovement protestors would target more local governments that are not considered their respective political allies. Thus, it was expected that pro-Zapatista protestors would protest more in PRI-ruled localities, while counter-Zapatista groups would

target their protests against PRD-ruled localities. The results in Table III show only slight confirmation for this hypothesis. One can observe that pro-Zapatista protestors targeted PRI-local governments significantly only in the long run. A year after the PRI had taken office, a *municipio* was 1.04 times more likely to experience pro-Zapatista protests. The results also show that pro-Zapatista protestors decreased their protest activity against PRD-ruled localities during the first week of this party's administrations not only with a stronger statistical significance, but also with a larger impact. A week after the PRD took office in a given *municipio* pro-Zapatista sympathizers were 0.64 times less likely to hold protests there, while counter-Zapatista groups were 0.75 times less likely to do so.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that protests events advocating those causes of one side of the conflict trigger protest mobilization from its counterpart. The results support this hypothesis. Pro-Zapatista protests were 1.13 times more likely to occur after a counter-Zapatista protest event had taken place the week before, while counter-Zapatista protests were 1.09 times more likely to occur a week after pro-Zapatista protests had been held.

Hypothesis 3a advocated that partial concessions granted to one side of the conflict might increase both, movement and countermovement protest activity. Hypothesis 3b suggested that concessions granted to either side without discrimination, such as public works and social programs expenditures, would also increase movement and countermovement protest activity alike. Pro-Zapatista protests were 2.11 times more likely to occur six weeks after procedural concessions were granted to the Zapatistas during negotiating periods with the federal government. Counter-Zapatista protest activity did not show any statistically significant change after procedural concessions granted to the Zapatistas were granted. Increases in local government spending on public works and social programs affected counter-Zapatista protest activity but only slightly. Counter-Zapatista protests were 0.99 less likely to occur six months after public expenditures were increases. However, a year after they had a 1.008 more chances of occurring. Thus, the effects cancelled each other out as time passed.

Conclusions

As the literature on social movements predicts for any influential social movement (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996), the Zapatista movement was able to generate significant countermovement mobilization—even when this countermovement mobilization was concentrated around compensation claims for lost land by rich landowners and non-Zapatista peasant communities alike. Once counterprotest was generated, protest activity of each side of the conflict functioned as protest-trigger of each other during the ten years of study.

The results related to political parties in power as specific targets of movement and countermovement protestors, however, offer inconclusive results. Meyer and Staggenborg's hypothesis proposed that dissident groups tend to protest more against their political opponents in power. Bruhn argues, however, that regardless of political alliances with parties in power, dissident groups tend to protest more during the first year of the party's administration in order to try to influence its policy agenda. The results of this study showed that counter-Zapatista groups protested less in PRD-ruled localities, but only during the first week of these parties' administrations. More than contradicting Meyer and Staggenborg's and Bruhn's propositions, these results suggest no consistent counter-Zapatista protest behavior against specific political parties in power over time.

Pro-Zapatista protests do not offer a consistent pattern over time either. Pro-Zapatista protestors showed a statistically significant increase in their mobilization activity within a year of a PRI local administration. However, they significantly reduced their protests in PRD-ruled localities during their first week in office. The attitude showed by the EZLN in several of their communiqués may help us understand this unexpected outcome. By not officially allying themselves with any political party at first and by later rejecting the role of all political parties and advocating for direct democracy, the EZLN might have influenced sympathizing groups in not trying to interact with the established political system (Marcos, 2000).¹⁵ In any case, further research is necessary as these results do not appear to be consistent over time.

Finally, partial concessions granted to one side of the conflict were expected to increase protest activities of movement and countermovement actors. These concessions would encourage actors from both sides of the conflict to push for more substantial gains. Concessions granted to either side of the conflict without discrimination, such as local governmental expenditures on public works and social programs, were also expected to

¹⁵ Information confirmed during a personal interview with an advisor of the Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo (Rural Collective Interest Association, ARIC), Mexico City, September 2009.

generate more protest activity from movement and countermovement actors seeking more substantial gains. The results show that this may occur but not consistently. Procedural concessions granted to the Zapatistas during the dialogue periods between the EZLN and the federal government increased only pro-Zapatista protests. General concessions in the form of expenditures on public works and social programs had no effect over pro-Zapatista protests, while they slightly encouraged counter-Zapatista protests. Hence these results partially support Meyer and Staggenborg's (1996) as well as Rasler's (1996) and Goldstone and Tilly's (2001) hypotheses. As Meyer and Staggenborg suggested, Zapatistas did not face obstacles to initiate and sustain their mobilization activity given that their claims were broad and legitimated as the movement was seeking political rights for indigenous groups. Thus, partial concessions granted through the negotiating periods with the government were not enough to placate their demands. However, we know that eventually the Zapatistas grew frustrated with the governmental response and abandoned all protest activity to concentrate their efforts in constructing their autonomous authorities parallel to those of the state and regardless of enjoying official recognition. Counter-Zapatistas, on the other hand, had very concrete complaints that were soon compensated. Thus their protest campaign did not last long and increases in social spending at the local level ended up having a cancelling effect over time over counter-Zapatista protest activity. For counter-Zapatista organizations to sustain their protest campaign they had to 'portray the conflict as one that entails larger value cleavages in society' (Meyer and Staggenborg, 1996: 1639) and they proved unable to do so. Their more limited claims were easier for the state to respond to and by doing so the conflict between both sides receded. After counter-Zapatista protesting groups were compensated for their land losses, they did not have any other motive to sustain their struggle either.

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