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International Opportunities and Domestic Protest: Zapatistas, Mexico and the New World Economy

JOSÉ A. MUÑOZ

Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Stony Brook, New York, USA

ABSTRACT   *The EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1994 took advantage of many political opportunities in an economic and politically liberalizing state. Most significantly, the negotiation and passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) generated issues over which to mobilize and created political openings in the system to support mobilization. While NAFTA highlighted the dark side of globalization with its negative effects on living conditions in southern Mexico, it also ushered in political reforms that protected human rights and brought great international attention to Mexico. Many nations were watching to see whether Mexico had reached economic and political maturity. Taken together, these political opportunities provided the context for the EZLN to mobilize as a political movement.*

KEY WORDS: Indigenous movements, human rights networks, political opportunities, globalization, Mexico

Introduction

The EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1994 took advantage of many political opportunities in an economic and politically liberalizing state. Most significantly, the negotiation and passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) generated issues over which to mobilize and created political openings in the system to support mobilization. While NAFTA highlighted the dark side of globalization with its negative effects on living conditions in southern Mexico, it also ushered in political reforms that protected human rights and brought great international attention to Mexico. Many nations were watching to see whether Mexico had reached economic and political maturity. Taken together, these political opportunities provided the foundation for the EZLN to mobilize as a political movement.

  Understanding the question of how the Zapatista movement developed requires the consideration of the constellation of allies and adversaries within the international sphere. Thus, in analyzing the Zapatista case one must consider two international forces that the Mexican government has had to balance: the influence of international financial networks

Correspondence Address: José A. Muñoz, Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, New York 11794-4356, USA. Tel.: (631) 632-7700; Email: jmunoz@ic.sunysb.edu

and institutions; and the pressure mobilized by Zapatista support networks. Studies have addressed the influence of international financial networks and institutions (Markoff, 1996; Jenkins & Schock, 1992; Walton & Ragin, 1990; Boswell & Dixon, 1990) as well as human rights networks (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999; Keck & Sikkink, 1998) and their impact on domestic politics. However, we do not know enough about *how* the actions of social movement organizations (SMOs) adversaries are altered (Meyer *et al.*, 2002) by domestic protest. In the case of Mexico, the actions by the Mexican government towards the Zapatistas were altered by the support garnered by the movement and pressure from international financial organizations.

Financial interests have placed pressure on the Mexican government to end the Zapatista conflict and to secure investments; Zapatista mobilization of national and international support has placed proportional pressure on the Mexican government to make greater efforts to ensure human rights and democratization. The impact of these pressures allows the Zapatista movement and other groups to take advantage of Mexico's sensitivity to its human rights record with the goal of extending supportive values such as freedom of expression and other individual rights (Kriesberg, 1997). Therefore, the influence of human rights groups and financial institutions has created a climate where internationally, the efforts to resolve the conflict have 'structurally constrained' (Jenkins & Schock, 1992, p. 180) Mexico's political and military decisions. In the decision-making found in this intersection of domestic politics and international negotiations, the Zapatista movement has been entangled with international negotiations over financial and human rights interests. The principal entanglements being the points at which state action was constrained given international human rights and financial pressure, and domestic protest (Putnam, 1988).

The 'exogenous change processes' (McAdam, 1999) of economic globalization and the formation of international human rights norms stimulated the political opportunity structure necessary for the EZLN to wage protest. Tarrow (1996, p. 54) defines political opportunity structure as 'consistent – but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national – signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements'. I argue that the formation of human rights norms and economic globalization have created a political opportunity structure that placed the Mexican government in a position where it was unable to either ignore or fully repress EZLN collective action. Mexico's new international position, highlighted by NAFTA, required that it take a stand on human rights befitting a country laboring to situate itself as a regional and hemispheric economic power. This is consistent with Risse, Ropp & Sikkink (1999) argument that a nation's record on human rights is one sign, to other countries that have adopted these norms, that it is part of the 'club'. As this paper will show, Zapatista insurgency was given due consideration by the Mexican government when negotiating transnational economic policy. Specifically, the Mexican government, sensitive of its human rights record, took care in how it dealt with the Zapatistas.

In this study, I focus primarily on political opportunities made available to the EZLN. This is not to say that the role of organizational strength and mobilizing structures are ignored, but rather that they are secondary elements to political opportunities. I use a wide array of historical, journalistic and electronic records to make my case.

To summarize, this paper states that the international economic and human rights transformations in Mexico created political opportunities for movements, such as the EZLN, to have a meaningful impact on prospects for domestic political change in Mexico.

The rest of the paper is presented in several sections and will reflect the abovementioned claim. The following sections begin with a history of the EZLN (additional facts are listed in the appendix), followed by an analysis of the Zapatista movement guided by the 'dimensions of opportunity', for movement protest outlined by Tarrow (1998). The sections that apply the political opportunity structure model are titled the following, political access, shifting alignments, the Zapatista support network, divided political-economic elites, and the costs of militarization.

A Short History of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation Movement

Today we say enough is enough! To the people of Mexico: Mexican Brothers and Sisters:

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children (EZLN General Command, 1993).

The EZLN was formed, primarily as an indigenous movement, on 17 November 1983 in Chiapas, Mexico. Three non-indigenous activists from the National Liberation Forces (FLN), an urban guerrilla organization, arrived in Chiapas in 1983. One of these FLN activists would later be known from 1 January 1994 as subcomandante Marcos. These three FLN activists and three Indians formed the EZLN. The EZLN spent the next ten years building up membership primarily through kinship ties, purchasing weapons in piecemeal and clandestine fashion, and building trust among indigenous communities. The organizational structure of the EZLN involved the subordination of the army by a clandestine committee, which placed responsibility for the defense of indigenous communities in the hands of Marcos and the EZLN. Political decisions involve the consultation of indigenous communities following the Zapatista logic of *mandar obedeciendo* (governing by obeying the will of the community), whereby the EZLN folds these communities into the decision-making process.

The quote that begins this section highlights why the Zapatistas have mobilized around political, social and economic issues. In the southern state of Chiapas, in particular where the Zapatista rebellion occurred, many indigenous communities have had to deal with political repression from soldiers, police and paramilitary groups armed by landowners and local PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) officials. Collier & Quaratiello (1999) states that as the PRI began to lose political leverage this promoted forms of repression to retain the votes of those communities where dissent was expressed. Repression came in the form of denying basic social services, amendments to the penal code by Governor Absalón

Castellanos Domínguez, denying the right to protest, freedom of association, and limiting land acquisition tactics by indigenous activists (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999).

President Carlos Salinas de Gotari also accelerated the privatization policies ongoing since the early 1980s beginning with the coffee and grain sectors, which had a significant impact in Chiapas. The Mexican Coffee Institute (INMECAFE) was in debt by US$90 million due to managerial inefficiencies and corruption. As part of President Salinas' plan, based on International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions, INMECAFE reduced subsidies to the purchasing and marketing of coffee. These reforms to the coffee sector put small-time growers in a precarious situation that was worsened by the Mexican government's decision not to offset a severe drop in the world market price for coffee by increasing payments to producers, and the overvalued Mexican peso. Given the changing economic situation, small-time growers abandoned their lands in Chiapas between 1989 and 1993. Many of the communities where land was left behind can be found in the zone of EZLN insurgency (Harvey, 1999). The deleterious effects of these reforms on agricultural producers were exacerbated by the reforms to the agrarian laws in existence since the 1930s, which now allowed for the right to buy or sell communal lands, for private companies to purchase these lands, and deleted the right to petition for land. These changes to article 27 of the Mexican Constitution were made more contentious due to a shortage in available land given the needs of cattle ranchers, a ban on timber exploitation and overcrowding (Harvey, 1999; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999).

The decision to rebel against the government was decided by a vote in October 1992, where the EZLN was put in charge of devising a plan for armed action. This vote was taken after a peaceful protest action, by the Emiliano Zapata Independent National Peasant Alliance (the EZLN's public name), in the colonial city of San Cristobal de la Casas. The protest action was conducted in order to help prepare for armed rebellion (Harvey, 1998).

The uprising by the EZLN that began on 1 January 1994 and involved armed men and women wearing masks, in some cases carrying wooden rifles, lasted a few days. This was followed by the EZLN retreating to their jungle encampments, while being pursued by federal troops in armored vehicles and backed up by air strikes. On 12 January President Salinas ordered a ceasefire due in part to a wave of international support for the EZLN and internal conflicts within the PRI. Peace negotiations began in February 1994 between the Zapatistas and the Mexican government in the San Cristobal de la Casas Catholic diocese; they included Marcos, the EZLN's general command-CCRI (Committee of Clandestine Indigenous Revolution), Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia, and former Mexico City mayor Camacho Solis. The Zapatistas later rejected the peace accord and instead called for a transformation of the political system (Montemayor, 2005; Foley, 1999; Harvey, 1999; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999). Later in the year the Zapatistas called for a National Democratic Convention in Chiapas where more than 6,000 civil society actors were in attendance to consider the possibility of entering the national elections of 1994 as an opposition movement.

In December 1994 the Zapatistas begin to form autonomous communities in 38 indigenous municipalities in Chiapas. This action is significant in a state that since Mexico's post revolutionary period has been governed by the PRI (Hayden, 2002; Foley; 1999). Peace talks resumed in April 1995. In San Andres Larrainzar, Chiapas, talks on indigenous rights and culture were discussed. The agreement, the San Andres accords, stipulated demands for a plan for land reform, indigenous autonomy, and cultural rights. President Ernesto Zedillo later rejected the accords in 1996.

The Zapatistas continued to invoke the participation of civil society in the movement by hosting a series of international meetings (*encuentros*) such as the first Intercontinental Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neoliberalismo where 3,000 activists representing 43 countries and five continents were in attendance in Chiapas, Mexico, from 27 July to 3 August 1996 (Wood, 2005). Marcos read a statement at the *encuentro*:

> This intercontinental network of resistance will be the medium in which distinct resistances may support one another. This intercontinental network of resistance is not an organizing structure; it doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist (Wood, 2005, p. 95).

One result of the 1996 *encuentro* was the creation of People's Global Action (PGA). PGA is a coalition of Northern and Southern activists which has mobilized protest against the WTO in Seattle in 1999 as well as a variety of coordinated same-day actions that have included both disruptive and non-disruptive tactics (Wood, 2005). The Zapatista movement also provided opportunities for domestic protest and the formation of social movements from the beginning of the uprising to the contemporary period (Davis & Rosan, 2004; Zugman, 2001; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999). For example, many independent peasant organizations took the opportunity to protest in Chiapas and other states within days and months of the Zapatista uprising (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999).

In the period between 1996 and the Mexican elections of 2000 where Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) assumed the presidency, Zapatista communities faced harassment, occupation and violence by federal, state, paramilitary and 'parallel' armed forces. The incident that gained widespread international and domestic scrutiny was the repression that occurred on 22 December 1997 where parallel organizations affiliated with the PRI and armed by state police attacked a church in Acteal, Chiapas. The action resulted in the killing of 45 indigenous people, mostly women and children. The 84 people held responsible for the attack at Acteal were never brought to trial and the government stepped up the militarization of the conflict zone. In 1998 a campaign by the government to expel human rights observers from Chiapas began;, in total 150 people were expelled over the next two years (Hayden, 2002; Foley, 1999; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999).

The Zapatistas broke a five-month silence following the elections of President Fox. They critiqued President Zedillo and expressed three prerequisites for resuming peace talks that included troop withdrawal, release of Zapatista political prisoners and the implementation of the San Andres accords. President Fox responded with the dismantling of military checkpoints in Chiapas, and over the next five months he dismantled seven army encampments and released most political prisoners (Hayden, 2002; Foley, 1999). Despite the reorganization of military forces in Chiapas, there have been reports suggesting further violence, primarily by paramilitary forces, against the Zapatistas (Mistry, 2003; Latin News Daily, 2001; Latin American Weekly Report, 2001).

EZLN Political Access

Mexico's efforts to participate and sustain its position in the world economy demanded greater sensitivity to the call for democratic openness by the human rights community, anti-NAFTA groups and indigenous rights organizations. Mexico's effort to bolster its

record on human rights internationally created 'small cracks' or political openings within Mexican society where the Zapatistas were able to take action (Fox, 1994; Tarrow, 1998). Newly acquired political access, in regimes previously lacking such access, increases the likelihood of protest (Tarrow, 1998, 1988). In the same vein, increasing political access can result from the socialization of norm-violating states through a process of instrumental adaptation to domestic and international pressure (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). Adaptation involves making concessions to these two pressure points in order to ensure some form of material benefit such as foreign aid, overcoming international sanctions, or in the case of Mexico, guaranteeing the implementation of NAFTA. The concessions result in increased tolerance for political participation giving opposition groups opportunity for express grievances. As Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, (1999) state, concessions by norm-violating states are significant for 'social mobilization' rather than modifying government behavior.

President Salinas' determination to reform Mexico economically necessitated a restructuring of the country's political landscape; however, it is important to note that this economic restructuring began in the 1970s (Nash, 2001). The fact that the rebellion was initiated in the context of NAFTA ratification was merely a pretext to the actual concerns of the movement, which pointed to NAFTA as a clear example of one of the many grievances between the Zapatista movement and the Mexican government (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999; Harvey, 1999). Zapatista grievances ranged from the historic exploitation and income disparity found in the region to changes in communal land tenure laws institutionalized under article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. Additionally, Mexico was pressured by international business interests as well as governments to resolve the conflict, thus constraining Mexico's ability to be meet the goals of Zapatistas and their supporters due to ongoing negotiations between the movement, the nation and international actors.

Shifting Alignments

Scholars point out that broad social processes such as industrialization, urbanization, war, migration and global economic integration influence the political environment, which in turn makes protest more probable (McAdam, 1982, 1999; Tarrow, 1998; Pagnucco, 1996). The preceding forms of expansion or intervention by transnational actors provide opportunities for protest due to the destabilization of existing alignments (Maney, 2001). Tarrow states that electoral instability occurs when deviations in interests between political parties and governments emerge; this 'creates uncertainty among supporters, encourages challengers to try to exercise marginal power, and may even induce elites to compete for support outside the polity' (1998, p. 78). This same process occurs in 'less-than-democratic regimes' where there is a struggle for power among elites and in that process aggrieved groups take the opportunity to protest.

One form of intervention assessed in this paper is that of the impact of global economic integration on Mexico, contributing to the vulnerability and destabilization of the political system. The changes in the economic system transformed the relationship between the indigenous communities in Chiapas and the state. Nash (2001) examines the way in which wealth distribution policies and programs of the 1970s, which were created by the PRI, resulted in a dependent relationship between indigenous communities in Chiapas and the

state. This relationship was subsequently modified by the debt crisis of 1980 and the export-oriented development polices that followed.

It is in this period (1970–94) of economic transition that men and women began to delve into non-traditional forms of civic participation, which involved the formation of peasant organizations independent from PRI-sponsored organizations. As Nash (2001) shows, these new peasant organizations provided experiences for indigenous communities, which were initially supported by the Mexican government, and became avenues from which the Zapatistas and other indigenous groups could draw capital to wage protest. The significance of the changes to the land tenure law and other agricultural policies is linked to discontent that led to the formation of independent peasant organizations outside state control (Nash, 2001).

A number of organizations broke away from government-sponsored organizations, such as the Emiliano Zapata Campesino Organizations (OCEZ) and the Independent Center of Agricultural Workers and Campesinos (CIOAC) (Nash, 2001). These two organizations are said to be the most important organizing bodies in the Lacadon rainforest (Nash, 2001). The work by OCEZ and CIOAC is significant as it demonstrates the organizing and alliance-building capacities against government policies at the regional and national levels during the 1980s (Nash, 2001). Additionally, during this period (1970–90) women's artisan cooperatives organizations provided women with opportunities to participate in politics (Nash, 2001).

Nash's work showed that before the 1994 protest women were provided some space to participate in politics given their presence in these cooperatives; the events highlighted above speak to experiences that would later serve the movement.[1] Nash (2001) gives an account of a woman and president of a cooperative who was assassinated when she ran for local office in Amentango. After 1994, Nash describes the increased participation of women, which included forming agrarian and *campesino* (farmer) organizations and the organization of protest actions. She states: 'these women's groups represent the most revolutionary change in Chiapas society, bringing the half of the population that was restricted from political participation into active civil society' (Nash, 2001, p. 179). Scholars state that the involvement of women (40 per cent according to Nash, 2001) in the EZLN had the additional benefit of drawing support from women in Mexico and internationally (Schulz, 1998; Millan, 1998).

The Zapatista Support Network

Scholars have stressed the ability international allies have at 'getting the word out' about movement causes; they serve to amplify or develop new opportunities for alliances (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Smith, 1995). Aggrieved groups are more likely to voice claims when they have allies who can act as 'friends in court, as guarantors against repression, or as acceptable negotiators on their behalf' (Tarrow, 1998, p. 79). The benefits of forming alliances are that with support from individuals, groups and nations, movements gain 'tangible' (money) and 'intangible' (moral legitimation) resources (Pagnucco, 1996).

The process of building international alliances may begin with a severe violation of international norms by a state resulting in its placement on the transnational human rights network agenda (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). These violations mobilize international human rights networks to act; first in cooperation with the target-state's domestic human

rights groups to disseminate information. As Evans states, the transmission of information is simple but crucial and 'in itself is a weapon' (2000, p. 232). Second, these networks lobby international human rights organizations as well as Western countries. The significance of lobbying public opinion and policy-makers in Western states is that these states are reminded of their human rights record of accomplishment and are persuaded to be consistent (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). The 'shaming' of Western states works to pressure them to take action on claims made by networks to change the practices found in the target state (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). This shaming also works in the direction of the target state (example: Mexico), whereby states that feel disturbed by being labeled a human rights violator agree to make 'tactical concessions' to the human rights community. These concessions may involve the release of prisoners or tolerance for protest activities, setting the stage for more claims-making (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999).

The international human rights community served as a crucial ally for the Zapatista movement. The Zapatista support network intensified the spotlight on Mexico's deficits in the political and electoral realm. The process of information gathering and dissemination, coordinated with domestic human rights groups, served to alter the Mexican government's relations with the Zapatistas. Human rights work in Mexico began before the implementation of NAFTA (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999). Sikkink (1993) points out that the increase in international attention to human rights violations in Mexico provided the political space amenable to a significant growth in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), from the four that existed in 1984 to 200 in 1993. In President Salinas' time in office, many NGOs were founded including anti-NAFTA organizations, indigenous groups (Schulz, 1998) and human rights advocacy groups (Sikkink, 1993). Sensitive to the country's human rights record, President Salinas had to tolerate these notable changes within Mexican civil society (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). Additionally, Walton & Seddon (1994) have pointed out that new forms of movement opposition to the Mexican government grew in the 1980s after the debt crisis of 1982.

Domestic support for the Zapatista movement was not limited to NGOs. The movement has gathered national support since the beginning of the conflict from influential individuals and the mass public. The Zapatistas repeatedly called upon the Mexican people for their support:[2]

> Mexican Brothers and Sisters: Our struggle continues. The Zapatista flag still waves over the Mexican Southeast and today we say: We will not surrender! Facing the mountain we speak with our dead so that they will reveal to us in their word the path down which our veiled faces should turn. The drums rang out and in the voice of the earth our pain spoke and our history spoke. 'For everyone, everything', say our dead. 'Until it is so, there will be nothing for us.' Speak the word of other Mexicans, find in your heart an ear for their word. Invite them to walk down the honorable path of those who have no face. Call everyone to resist, so that nobody accepts anything from those who command commanding. Convince them not to sell out a flag that belongs to everyone. Ask that we receive more than just words of hot air to alleviate our pain. Ask that they share, ask that they resist, ask that they reject all the handouts that come from the powerful. Ask that today all the good people of these lands organize the dignity that resists and does not sell itself out, that tomorrow dignity organize itself to demand that the word that lives in the heart of the majority is met

with truth, and is welcomed by those who govern, that the good road is imposed, in which the person who commands, commands obeying (EZLN, 1994).

There are many examples where the movement was able to gain support from the Mexican public; several public protests took place in pursuit of a peaceful end to the conflict (Nash, 2001; Ross, 2000; Harvey, 1999). In 2001 there was an Indigenous Dignity March (*Marcha por la Dignidad Indígena*) in Mexico City to lobby the Congressional Peace Commission (Cocopa) law, which is another example of massive support for the movement (Smith, 2001; EZLN, 2001). Bishop Ruiz, a staunch advocate for indigenous rights, helped mediate and presided over the peace commission – the CONAI (National Commission of Mediation) that handled the peace talks between the EZLN and the Mexican government (Nash, 2001). The Zapatistas movement also won support by allowing people to participate in the decision-making by holding plebiscites or *consultas* whereby participants in Mexico and abroad could vote on the topics the EZLN would discuss in their negotiations with the Mexican government (Nash, 2001; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999). The first was held in 1995 during a downturn in peace talks that subsequently brought the government back to the negotiation table. The second was held in 1999 in order to pressure the government to honor the peace accords of 1996 (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999).

Another example where activists have involved themselves with the movement is with their presence at peace camps within Chiapas. Their presence at these camps is significant because the act of participating in such camps served as a proxy human rights monitoring system. For example, following the invasion of federal troops in early February of 1995, Nash asserts that the camps 'made the difference between the Mexican Amy's low-intensity warfare and the Guatemalan war of extermination in the 1980s' (2001, p. 139). The presence of these camps modified military tactics for engaging the EZLN.

Information Politics

Part of the explanation for the success of the Zapatista support network is the use of the Internet and other types of media reporting. These resources played a part in creating a communication infrastructure, which worked to mobilize external support for the movement. The Zapatista support network's ability to take advantage of improved technologies and communication structures increased its ability to mobilize transnationally (Kriesberg, 1997) and provide information about the movement's conflict with the government. These technologies allowed for organizations within Mexico, such as the Center for Economic and Political Research, to send communiqués through the network during a period of military aggression in 1995 (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999). It is through information politics that the EZLN has received attention from activists in France, Australia and the US as well as international agencies such as Amnesty International, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Global Exchange. Given all the attention the movement has received, it is important to discuss how the Zapatista image was crafted to invoked support.

The Zapatista Image

Part of the puzzle as to how the EZLN gained supporters was the way in which it 'sold' its movement. EZLN employed various symbols and images to get its message across. It was

able to package its message by playing on the historic memory of the Mexican Revolution and EZLN's namesake Emiliano Zapata (Benjamin, 2000; Gilly, 1998; Rajchenberg & Heau-Lambert, 1998). In effect, the Zapatistas used the well-established cultural icon in Emiliano Zapata and EZLN as the authentic heirs to this legacy as a strategy to sway domestic and international opinion (Swidler, 1986). Furthermore, the images of masked and poorly equipped 'indians' seeking *democracy, liberty*, and *justice*[3] made the EZLN attractive to the local, national and the international press (Bob, 2002).

The methods used by the Zapatistas to attract public opinion are consistent with Brysk's assessment of how the marginal status of domestic indigenous opposition groups in Latin America has support within the Western media (1996). Images, testimonials and interviews of movement members were used by the Zapatista network to engage in affective and information politics to reach out to international 'peer lobbies' which included indigenous, human rights and environmental organizations, and activists (Brysk, 1993). Brysk (1996, 1993) states that the use of this affective politics by domestic opposition groups is useful in drawing support and establishing legitimacy. Through the use of various technologies, the Zapatista 'advocacy network' (Keck & Sikkink, 1998) found a market for the movement's new collective action frame to confront the Mexican government.

The 'attractiveness' of the Zapatistas may also have to do with the fact that they did not violate human rights norms, despite their status as an armed movement. The decision by the Zapatistas to respect human rights norms may have been done for instrumental reasons in order to gain wider support among international and transnational networks (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). It is also likely that such an approach has to do with the fact that Zapatista insurgency began only after other forms of collective action and grievances were attempted (Nash, 2001). Therefore, the Zapatistas and their supporters had a record of unarmed protest action before and after the 1994 insurgency. In addition, in 1994 when the Zapatistas seized a number of towns in Chiapas, they did not target non-combatants (Ross, 2000; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999). However, the Zapatistas did kidnap the previous governor of Chiapas and, given the nature of the combat, the casualty rate among the civilian population was considerable despite their efforts not to target non-combatants (Nash, 2001; Ross, 2000). The Zapatistas' approach to combat is significant in light of Schmitz's (1999) analysis of transnational activism. The case provided by Schmitz (1999, p. 48) demonstrated that in Uganda in 1986 the rebel army garnered domestic support due the fact that it showed a 'significantly higher level of respect for basic human rights' towards the civilian population than did the Ugandan government army. Finally, the Zapatistas have not broken the ceasefire that was implemented in 1994 and have moved towards creating a stronger political front (General Command-CCRI, 2005; Nash, 2001; Harvey, 1998).

The Zapatista advocacy network emerged, first, in the context of a shift in NGOs' organizational goals from alleviating the symptoms of poverty to making a concerted effort to provide individuals and groups with the tools for participatory democratic social change (Macdonald, 1997). Many NGOs in the North have also adopted new methods for working with counterparts in the South, which are described as more egalitarian and which attempt to provide non-monetary forms of support such as technical training and human rights advocacy (Macdonald, 1997). Examples of this new international climate and its methods may have been applied in the maintenance of EZLN's web page by the University of Texas-Austin and the short-wave radio program *News from Chiapas* broadcast from Costa Rica by Zapatista supporters (Bruce, 1999).

Second, the emergence of the Zapatista advocacy network might also be considered in the context of what Risse, Ropp & Sikkink (1999) have described as a 'norms cascade'. A norms cascade, involves an expansion of 'transnational human rights NGOs and advocacy networks' where states and networks built the 'international social structure of human rights norms and institutions' (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999, p. 21). The groundwork for these networks was established between 1973 and 1985 (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999, p. 21). If the spread of international norms is maintained then this limits the ability of norm-violating states to deny the validity of these claims given wide acceptance (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). Given these shifts in how NGOs provided services and the growing international acceptance of human rights, Mexico's ability to resist human rights change was limited. However, the growing presence of human rights groups in Mexico has not completely shielded the movement from repression. Also, it is important to point out that there are possible drawbacks to international ties to domestic political struggles. For example, political strategy may be shaped by the dependence on external organizations for resource maintenance needs. Marc Edelman (1999) and others (Shefner, 2001) have shown how these sources of support from external organizations targeted at SMOs can result in their demobilization.

The work by human rights advocacy groups to pressure norm-violating states is important in that it allows the targeting of two key audiences: the 'power holders and the general public' (Giugni, 1998, p. 379). Giugni (1998) states that protest presses the government to recognize grievances, raises public awareness and finally forces governments to pay attention to increasing public opinion concerning movement demands. For example, Ropp & Sikkink's (1999) analysis of Guatemala's human rights networks from 1978–83, or the lack thereof, indicated that they posed a challenge to the government's socialization to international norms, given its closed society and repressive government. The authors state the 'absence of domestic human rights organizations in Guatemala, and the explicit government policy of eliminating leading members of the opposition, made the formation of transnational linkages difficult' (Ropp & Sikkink, 1999, p. 183). Therefore, the significance of domestic support in the Zapatista case cannot be overlooked; both ends of the 'boomerang' must be present in order for international network socialization activities to take effect (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999). The 'boomerang effect' outlined by Keck & Sikkink (1998) explains the significance of international human right groups for domestic protest. Social movements or political actors when denied access or repressed by their own government may utilize connections with international human rights groups and leaders through an existing extensive network of domestic and international organizations. The power of these networks is that they can work to pressure the government in question (Keck & Sikkink, 1998) provided SMOs have knowledge and connections to international actors (Bob, 2002).

Divided Political-Economic Elites

Tarrow (1998) writes that divisions among elites encourage collective action by aggrieved groups. In the same process, elites may decide to support marginalized groups and increase their political power. The Zapatista movement has been able to gain allies within the legislative branches of Mexico given intra-party elite tension that emerged (Tarrow, 1998). However, intra-party elite tension is not limited to nations experiencing protest but extends to international neighbors and rivals (Maney, 2001; Pagnucco, 1995). Evidence of divisions

within the PRI over the handling of the conflict did emerge. A group of 17 senators criticized the government's policy in Chiapas – reporting on the 'extreme poverty' within the state – and urged the government to work on a peaceful settlement (McCaughan, 1998b).

The impact of global economic integration and what this meant for Mexico's domestic politics culminated in the negotiation and implementation phases of NAFTA. NAFTA played a key role in limiting the Mexican government's repressive acts given that its supporters advocated that the agreement would advance human rights and increase political stability. For example, Vice President Al Gore stated: 'NAFTA promotes the free flow of ideas and art across borders, and that's a benefit for the entire hemisphere . . . And by promoting cultural exchange and economic decentralization, it promotes democracy' (Althaus, 1993). This point complements President Carlos Salinas' own sensitivity to Mexico's human rights record and any possible repercussions it could have on the negotiations leading to the approval and in the implementation of NAFTA (Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Sikkink, 1993).

Support from political elites for the EZLN outside Mexico included the role of the US Congress. Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont introduced resolution 76, presented concurrently by Nancy Pelotsi in the House as bill 34, which called for a peaceful end to the conflict. The Senate resolution called for the Secretary of State to increase efforts to ensure that US military aid to Mexican security forces was used primarily for counter-narcotics purposes (Leahy, 1999).

Financial Elites

This research also stresses the importance of what international financial pressure meant for domestic politics in Mexico. Maney proposes that 'During periods of heightened interstate competition, powerful states frequently intervene in other states internal affairs, either as allies or opponents of insurgents' (2001, p. 91). Given the high stakes involved in the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements such as NAFTA, there were various interests involved in its completion.

Markoff (1996) points out that international financial networks pose a serious challenge to democracies and countries transitioning towards democracy. Decision-makers have increasingly less control over national economies given the increasing mobility of capital (Markoff, 1996). The impact of neo-liberal reforms on Mexican society is significant in that it changed the policies that were the basis for the social contract between the state and its citizens. Many of these reforms to policy began in the previous decade and involved a reduction in food, healthcare and social security services for the general population. These reforms were accompanied by increased unemployment throughout the decade (Walton & Seddon, 1994). The state could no longer address the interests of the Mexican people through the programs, organizations and services that were in place. Changes to these long-held policies were in part responsible for the protest of 1994.

Mexico's economic reform policies were designed to facilitate the country's entry into the world economy. President Salinas' administration set out to repair the effects of the 1982 global debt crisis by accelerating the economic reform package implemented by the previous administration. President Salinas' administration was also pressured to reform by global institutions and pressed to follow economic preparations for loans from the IMF and the World Bank (Nash, 2001; Harvey, 1999). These institutions channel the flow of global resources and have great influence on the transnational financial community

(e.g. bank consortiums, governments) (Markoff, 1996). Once these international economic institutions approve a loan to a country, multinational consortia of banking institutions and governments invest money because they are more secure about the investment (Markoff, 1996). President Salinas' economic reform involved the privatization of many state-owned companies including banks, telephone companies and airlines. He facilitated these changes by denying social policies, or in Tilly's (1995, p. 17) terms, 'commitment-producing mechanisms'. According to the National Statistical Institute of the Government, the impact of President Salinas' privatization policies impoverished 37 million Mexicans, with an overrepresentation of them being from indigenous communities (Nash, 2001).

The Mexican government made changes to both the coffee- and corn-producing markets as well as to the communal land (*ejidos*) system institutionalized by article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. These changes were made in order to draw in international investment. The four main changes (Harvey, 1999) in the Agrarian Law of 1992 were the right to purchase, sell, rent or use *ejidos* as collateral by individual and private companies. Finally, 'in line with the reform's intention of guaranteeing security for private property, the sections of Article 27 that allowed for peasants to petition for land redistribution were deleted form the new law' (Harvey, 1999, p. 187). Scholars see changes to the land reform policy as most significant in understanding the motivation behind Zapatista insurgency (Burbach, 2001; Collier & Quartiello, 1999; Holloway & Palaez, 1998, Harvey, 1999). Changes in the land tenure laws no longer compelled peasant and indigenous communities to remain loyal to the PRI government and subsequently changing the political climate in Chiapas (Collier & Quaratiello, 1999).

Political Elites

In time, the development of the economic reforms by President Salinas' administration created divisions between both the political and military elites, which contributed to the decline in the legitimacy of the Mexican polity. President Salinas' reforms were accompanied by promises of restructuring the electoral process geared at reorganizing the official party, and reducing the influence of government affiliated labor unions and peasant organizations. President Salinas envisioned a 'party of individual citizens devoted to solving the problems they encounter in their homes and neighborhoods' (Cornelius, 1989).

Evidence of President Salinas' government's attempt towards democratization was apparent in 1989 when President Salinas and the PRI passed a resolution that guaranteed the PRI a majority in Congress and the possibility of ascending to a two-thirds congressional majority. This measure was passed with support from the PAN who agreed to the measure under the condition that President Salinas would ensure greater neutrality in the election process. Analysts stated that such a move ensured that his economic reforms would be implemented (Baer, 1989). These negotiations were considered moot following the 1991 victory where the PRI took a majority of the seats in the lower house of Congress. The PRI victory all but solidified the passage of NAFTA (*The Christian Science Monitor*, 1991). In 1993 President Salinas called for regulations on political party financing, limits on campaign spending, independent election authorities, and increased the access of the media to opposition parties; this was later ratified into law by the Congress (Golden, 1993).

This climate of increased international attention to Mexico's human rights record combined with the economic terrain negotiated by President Salinas' administration conditioned what social movement scholars describe as a shift in the political environment

(Tarrow, 1998; McAdam, 1982; Jenkins & Perrow, 1977). These shifts in the structure of Mexico's political processes created a climate where Zapatista insurgency shared center stage with other political crises such as the assassination of the PRI presidential candidate, Luis Colosio. The assassination has been described as evidence of serious divisions within the PRI over issues of reform; some of its elite members were linked to the assassination further heightening the image of an unstable Mexican political system (Schulz, 1998).

From the beginning, the Zapatistas were aware of the possible role they played in the political environment. In one example of the movement's awareness of the national and international political arena, Marcos stated:

> . . . we think that the time is ripe at an international level. We think that at the international level there is a sensibility for the Mexican people to rise up against a dictatorship of such long standing, in their case of a party as it was in Europe. And at the national level, there is much discontent, but what was needed was for someone to give a lesson in dignity, and this fell to the most ancient inhabitants of this country that is now called Mexico, but when they were here it did not have a name, that name. It fell to the lowest citizens of this country to raise their heads, with dignity. And this should be a lesson for all (Hayden, 2002, p. 211).

The political crisis of this period had an impact on the Mexican stock market which led investors, both foreign and domestic, to become wary of the stability within the economy. President Salinas adopted an economic strategy to combat this crisis. However, these changes ultimately resulted in an increased strain on the Mexican currency. Another assassination of a top-ranking PRI official followed by a series of occupations of towns and villages by the EZLN illustrated Mexico's unstable political system, and the Zapatistas in particular were blamed for the devaluation of the peso (Ross, 2000).

From the beginning the Zapatista movement heightened calls for political reform already in existence in the country (Castells, 1997) and pressured the political elite to make concessions to the Zapatistas resulting in the signing of an agreement for electoral reforms between the government and Mexico's eight political parties (Franks, 1994). In 1995, in another attempt to diffuse the conflict, President Zedillo's administration went into talks with the two largest opposition parties, the PAN and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), and brokered an electoral reform package that eventually collapsed (Fineman, 1995). Zapatista protest heightened and focused attention on the deficiencies in Mexico's human rights record and political openness. Linking the movement to political changes in the Mexican polity, such as the PRI's loss of a majority of seats in the lower house of Congress in 1997 (ending 68 years of one party rule over the legislative branch – Moore & Anderson, 1997), cannot be made in any causal sense. However, the movement is a part of the larger political discourse calling for institutional and social change, and given this climate the Mexican government's options were limited in how to deal with this increase in pressure.

Economic and political reforms in Mexico eventually led to a decline in the legitimacy of the governmental power structure. The failure of President Salinas' economic reforms created even greater instability and sustained an environment in which the Zapatista movement could continue to operate. The impact of economic and political reforms changed long-held military policy in dealing with popular movements in Mexico. These changes and the impact this had on the EZLN are described below.

The Costs of Militarization

Scholars note the importance of how government policy can be changed or 'reconstituted' given pressure from non-state actors (Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999; Tarrow, 1998; Keck & Sikkink, 1998; Sikkink, 1993). The policy considered in this section is that of the military. The Mexican government could no longer quell movement opposition to government policy as had been done in the past (Walton & Seddon, 1994). The Zapatista network raised the cost of repressive techniques and strategies for the Mexican government in economic and political terms. The first cost being that the government has continued to allocate resources in order to restrain the movement. Simultaneously, Mexican military policy was restrained, to an extent, for fear of *radicalizing* or lowering the risks of collective action by EZLN sympathizers escalating national and international pressure on the Mexican government (Tarrow, 1998; Jenkins & Schock, 1992; McAdam, 1982).

According to reports by Global Exchange, the Mexican military budget increased by 40 per cent after the 1994 event in Chiapas. Mexico has also received assistance from the US in the form of military equipment, training and armaments reportedly worth $112 million since 1997 (Global Exchange, 2001; Harvey, 1999). Global Exchange also reports that military aid distributed to fight a drug war is a pretext and that these funds are often used for counterinsurgency purposes (Wilson, 2001). Foley (1999, p. 5) has pointed out how other countries have used US military assistance and training in 'ways not foreseen under the terms of U.S. military assistance law'. Harvey (1999) points out that this assistance, allocated for anti-narcotics purposes, in some cases was misused. Additionally, two points made by Huntington (2000) support the suggestion that the US appears to be supporting counter-insurgency strategies: first, the US knowledge that drug enforcement agencies in Mexico are corrupt and, second, that Chiapas is not a major site for drug trafficking.

The Zapatista network's success is in part attributable to rifts that developed between the government and the military during the negotiation and implementation period of NAFTA. Following this period of NAFTA negotiations the Mexican government, as stated earlier, reconstituted its military policy given the pressure mobilized by the Zapatista network. The Mexican government has instituted a series of measures throughout the conflict in Chiapas in order to placate human rights and financial interests, which constrained military actions taken by the Mexican government given the attention by international human rights groups. Each had its own particular outcome for the Zapatistas.

President Salinas ignored earlier reports of possible unrest by the Zapatistas and kept them secret to avoid any distractions during the NAFTA negotiations (Ronfeldt, 1998; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999; Schulz, 1998). Relations between the military and the government deteriorated once more when President Salinas ordered a ceasefire 12 days after the rebellion. The ceasefire was called off due in part to the massive 'March for Peace in Chiapas' held in the central plaza of Mexico City on 12 January. This march was preceded by a peace march through San Cristobal de las Casas by civil society organizations such as Coordination of Non-Governmental Organizations for Peace (CONPAZ) and international observers that answered Bishop Ruiz's call for monitoring military atrocities (Ross, 2000). These events were followed by peace talks with the Peace and Reconciliation Commission put together by President Salinas on 10 January and sent to Chiapas on 13 January to negotiate with the EZLN.

President Salinas' decision not to take action against the Zapatistas protected the movement until the point of insurgency. The sensitivity given to avoiding any possible distraction from the NAFTA negotiations is also evident on the US and Canadian side of this trade agreement. US intelligence services were aware of the EZLN months before NAFTA's implementation. Abstention from action on this intelligence and forestalling any decisions on NAFTA by the US and Canada, points to the influence of regional interests in the successful negotiation of the agreement; thus shielding the movement from decisions in support of repressive action in a global context (Gilly, 1998).

Given the sensitivity of the NAFTA negotiations and ongoing support for the Zapatista movement, there have been multiple shifts in military policy. The impact of the steps taken by Mexico and NAFTA partners to protect the negotiations from any negative publicity provided the Zapatistas with the opportunity to prepare for the rebellion on 1 January 1994. President Salinas had received reports about the Zapatista activity in 1993. The potential for allowing any news leaks about actions taken against the Zapatistas would have proven costly for NAFTA negotiators. Such news leaks would have also harmed the work of pro-NAFTA negotiators already challenged by critiques about the lack of measures taken on environmental protection and labor rights in the agreement (Lee, 1993; Nadar, 1993). The delicate nature of the NAFTA negotiations made it difficult for the government to deal with the Zapatistas militarily given the international attention on Mexico.

The caution exercised by the government in relation to financial interests is important to explore at this point in the analysis. NAFTA, in relation to the action or inaction taken against the Zapatistas, is one instance where the Mexican government worked to maintain the country's financial interests and deal with the conflict in Chiapas. Furthermore, the Mexican government was limited by the influence and interests that transnational financial capital has on both the US and Mexico. The capitulation to international financial concerns was continued in President Zedillo's administration, which began on 1 December 1994.

Additionally, measures taken by the government to deal with the conflict took place in the context of the period when Chase Manhattan Bank's Emerging Markets Group circulated the 'political update'. The update stated that while:

> Chiapas, in our opinion, does not pose a fundamental threat to Mexican political stability, it is perceived to be so by many in the investment community. The government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and of security policy (Cockburn, 18 February 1995).

In Washington, DC, during this period, representatives from New York's financial sector participated in policy seminars (one of which was broadcast on C-SPAN). At these seminars statements were made which advocated that President Zedillo eliminate the Zapatistas as a condition for bailing out the Mexican economy that had suffered a peso collapse two months earlier (Cockburn, 1995). President Zedillo did launch a military offensive against EZLN in hopes of capturing the movement's leadership in 1995 (Harvey, 1999). Zedillo called off the offensive due to national and international opposition to the military operation and the publication of the Chase Manhattan memo by Mexican newspapers (Foley, 1999; Schulz, 1998). This is another clear example of how military

policy was reconstituted in favor of the Zapatista movement. However, with this shift in military strategy, President Zedillo militarized the state of Chiapas by installing over 60,000 soldiers. The installation of troops within the conflict zone further illustrates another change in military policy, designed to be amenable to national and international financial and human rights interests by maintaining a military presence but without officially engaging in conflict.

The limiting of military action to low-intensity conflict and militarization rather than all-out war was initiated to show that the government could maintain order and create a stable climate for current and future domestic and foreign investment. This decision to alter domestic policy 'reconstituted' the movement-state relationship where the Mexican government was pressured to recognize the legitimacy of international influence from both the financial community and the Zapatista advocacy network. The policy change toward militarization demonstrated President Zedillo administration's sensitivity to the concerns of international finance from corporations, which included International Paper and other 'big pulp' industries that wanted the government to protect their investments (Ross, 1998).

The 1995 military action by the Mexican government brought the Zapatistas to the attention of international and domestic public opinion. For example, three mass protests were held in Mexico City where participants demanded a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the reinitiating of peace talks and an end to the repression of communities sympathetic to the EZLN. After the 1995 military offensive in Zapatista communities, the presence of NGOs in the conflict zone increased. Organizations from the midwestern and western areas of the US arrived in San Cristobal de la Casas, Chiapas, where they coordinated their efforts to assess the current state of the conflict with Global Exchange, International Services for Peace, and in conjunction with the CONPAZ, a local organization (Nash, 2001; Harvey, 1999)

The domestic and international presence in Chiapas, along with the Mexican Congress' pressure on President Zedillo, led in part to the end of the offensive once the army had control of Zapatista communities (Foley, 1999; Harvey, 1999). The result was that the Zapatistas were in part protected by world attention, increasing domestic and international allies and obligating the Mexican government to consider peace talks. Nash (2001) points out that religious and secular NGOs worked with Mexican civil society organizations to bring the Mexican government to the negotiating table.

Further evidence of inter-state pressure on the Mexican government's approach in dealing with the movement is illustrated by the Clinton administration's show of support for militarization over military conflict (Harvey, 1999). Inter-state support in the Chiapas case took the form of counter-narcotics training for Mexican soldiers at elite US military bases (Burke, 1998). In 1995 the US State Department issued a report that described the Mexican military apparatus as 'unprepared to face the Zapatista rebels in prolonged guerrilla warfare' (McCaughan, 1998a). Following this report hundreds of Mexican soldiers began training at US military installations. A 1997 report from the Washington DC-based Latin American Working Group stated that Mexico ranked 'first or second among Latin American countries in the amount of military training received by Mexican officers at various military institutions' (Foley, 1999, p. 5). The impact of this increase in training of Mexican soldiers in the US would prove to be negative for the Zapatistas; however, this shows how military policy shifted once again.

The Mexican government, which is traditionally cautious about accepting military aid, may have been pressured to do so in order to deal with the conflict (Foley, 1999). The

pressure to accept military aid from the US suggests a lack of faith in the capabilities of the Mexican military on the part of the US. This could potentially be a source of conflict with Mexican military institutions, which would have to reorganize strategy and training programs given this influx of aid. The level of military expenditure both direct and indirect aimed at the Zapatistas is substantial given conflicting reports about the actual size of the EZLN and their military capabilities (Foley, 1999; Ronfeldt, 1998).

This increase in military aid has been part of the counterinsurgency strategy used by the Mexican government in Chiapas (Nash, 2001; Harvey, 1999). This counterinsurgency strategy included the use of parallel-armed groups of PRI supporters that repress indigenous communities. These armed groups have killed many indigenous people with the events in Acteal, Chiapas, receiving extensive criticism by human rights advocates such as US Secretary of State Madeline Albright, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and UN Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights proposed the opening of a monitoring center in Mexico and two US congressmen traveled to Acteal and interviewed survivors (Nash, 2001; Foley, 1999). The result of this international pressure led to an investigation by the Mexican government into Acteal. Although the events at Acteal led to further scrutiny of the Mexican government's handling of the conflict, this did not produce a reduction in the militarization of Chiapas (Nash, 2001). However, repeated examples of Mexico as a human rights violator kept the focus of advocacy groups in Mexico and abroad on the conflict in Chiapas, which stimulated further sympathy for the Zapatistas.

The military costs incurred by the Mexican government were necessary given that the appearance of stabilization in the region was important to financial interests both within and outside the nation. As lethal as the militarization of Chiapas would be for the Zapatistas, the costs taken on the part of the US and the time and energy taken by the Mexican government to reorganize military strategies can be seen as a form of success for the Zapatista movement. These costs include domestic and international critique of militarization by domestic and international actors. The outcome for the Zapatistas is ongoing sympathy for the movement through the period of conflict. This sympathy has carried over to the administration of President Fox who has also capitulated to Zapatista support by reducing the military presence in Chiapas (Hayden, 2002).

In summary, the Zapatista support network created a situation where it was able to 'force' the government to constrain their traditional military policy towards popular movements. This is in part due to the need to placate financial and human rights interests in Mexico and internationally. However, the tactics used by paramilitary groups and low-intensity measures taken by the military to deal with the Zapatistas are not under similar constraints, leaving space for their liberal application.

Conclusion

This paper addresses the lack of attention given to the way in which social movements alter the actions of opponents. The constraints on a military option for the Mexican government for dealing with Zapatista protest were limited and in part attributable to the pressure from international finance and human rights groups. The dramatic effects of the Zapatista movement's reappropriation of the historic figure of Emiliano Zapata along with the image of a poorly equipped indigenous army led by a Robin Hood-like figure captured the attention of many human rights groups and activists domestically and internationally

which have given their support up to the present. This support network was able to draw attention to not only the EZLN uprising but also the plight of indigenous communities. The presence of human right groups protected the movement from having to engage the Mexican military in full-scale conflict. As I have shown, a military solution to deal with the Zapatistas was altered by the presence of these groups since 1993. The Mexican government, also under pressure from international financial interests, had to shore up the perception that it was ensuring a stable political environment, thereby making the country 'safe' for investment. As such the Mexican government had to rethink and retool its military capabilities in its decision to engage in low-intensity warfare in Chiapas.

Given the research presented here, the Zapatistas and their support networks' ability to alter the Mexican government's military policy provides a better understanding about the way in which governments weigh in multiple points of pressure when making political decisions, particularly when domestic protest has been integrated into the interests of international financial and human rights organizations. What is lacking is an understanding of the internal decision-making process on the part of government to take action over domestic protest. What are the mechanisms, procedures and discussions that take place when protest occurs? An ethnographic perspective from the point of political parties and state officials present during periods of domestic conflict would be a significant avenue of research to better understand the situation from the point of view of 'opponents'.

The Zapatista movement has been in existence for 12 years while surrounded by the Mexican military, pointing to one type of success. In this period they have built schools and autonomous communities (with the help of international financing) and have maintained a ceasefire and are working towards building an alternative political project. The Zapatistas have and continue to draw domestic and international attention to their movement by continuing their dialogue with the world. The reemergence of the Zapatistas has led to speculation about their impact on the presidential elections of July 2006, such as their potential for dividing the Mexican Left (Roman, 2005). Clearly, the Zapatistas have influence over local level politics in Chiapas (Foley, 1999); however, this reemergence could have larger electoral implications at the national level. However, their impact was found to be minimal. In the new political campaign declared in the 6th Declaration from Lacandon Jungle they have called on various sectors of Mexican society and organizations on the Left to help develop this project. They declared in the opening paragraph in June 2005:

> This is our simple word which seeks to touch the hearts of the humble and simple people like ourselves, but people who are also, like ourselves, dignified and rebel. This is our simple word for recounting what our path has been and where we are now, in order to explain how we see the world and our county, in order to say what we are thinking of doing and how we are thinking of doing it, an in order to invite other persons to walk with us in something very great which is called Mexico and something greater which is called the world. This is our simple word in order to inform all honest and noble hearts what it is we want in Mexico and the world. This is our simple word, because it is our idea to call on those who are like us and to join together with them, everywhere they are living and struggling (General Command-CCRI, 2005).

Appendix: Zapatista Timeline

Zapatista Actions	Year	Government actions	Actions by other actors
Formation of the EZLN	1983		
The EZLN enter indigeneous communities.	1986		
	1992	President Salinas reforms Article 27 (agrarian law) of the Mexican constitution.	
Zapatistas communities approve armed struggle by the EZLN and form the CCRI.	1993	The Mexican Army and the EZLN clash for the first time.	
3,000 members of the EZLN rebel against the government. Zapatistas reject the results of the peace negotiations that began in February.	1994	24 hours later the army begins bombing indigenous communities. A cease-fire is declared 10 days after the conflict.	Mexican civil society holds massive protest against military actions.
The Zapatistas respond to army invasion by building 5 centers of indigenous resistance. Release the 3rd Declaration from the Lacandón Jungle.	1995	In February, the army enters Zapatista territory. The next five years 60,000 troops are deployed throughout Chiapas.	Mexican citizens hold 3 massive demonstrations in Mexico City in response to military action.
EZLN and the government sign the San Andres Accords.	1996		
Members of the EZLN arrive to for the Zapatista National Liberation Front, the civil political arm of the movement	1997	In December, paramilitaries attack a church in the community Acteal, killing 45 people President Zedillo's administration denies the presence of paramilitaries in Chiapas. The army begins a campaign to disarm the EZLN, but not the paramilitary groups.	The Mexican Congress and civil society protest military actions. This is accompanied by concern raised by international leaders about the conflict.
EZLN issues 5th Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle	1998	In February, the Mexican government begins a campaign to expel foreign visitors In April, the army begins to dismantle autonomous Zapatista communities. During this year President Zedillo begins to publicly attack Bishop Samuel Ruiz.	Pressure from civil society puts temporary halt to dismantling military operations.
In March, the Zapatistas organize a Consulta on Indigenous Rights and Culture. Later in the same month over 3,000,000 Mexicans vote agreeing that the San Andres accords be implemented.	1999	In April state police occupy the community of San Andres Sakamchem, site of the historic San Andres Accords, and install a PRI mayor.	

Zapatista Actions	Year	Government actions	Actions by other actors
3,000 unarmed Zapatistas following the incident in Sakamchem nonviolently remove police and reinstall their elected representative.			
The day President Fox takes office; the Zapatistas break silence with critique of former President Zedillo and prerequisites for the government to meet in order for the Zapatistas to come back to the negotiation table.	2000	Vicente Fox wins the presidency. In August, Pablo Salazar, representing a PAN/PRD alliance, wins the governorship of Chiapas, ending decades of PRI control. President Fox takes office promising to "resolve the problems in Chiapas in 15 minutes."	Before the election, Tom Hansen of the Mexico Solidarity Network becomes the first expelled human rights observer to return to Mexico legally.
In February, Marcos and Zapatista commanders, begin a 14-day caravan from Chiapas to Mexico City to lobby for the COCOPA law.	2001	In June, President Fox and Central American leaders sign the Plan Puebla.	Mexican citizens greet the caravan, resulting in a demonstration of 250,000 participants.
Zapatistas restructure their organization. Indigenous communities to work independently from EZLN.	2003		
The EZLN general command-CCRI releases the 6th Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle.	2005		

Sources: Hayden, 2002; Ross, 2000; Foley, 1999; Harvey, 1999; Collier & Quaratiello, 1999.

Notes

1. The Zapatista movement was able to draw on such experiences, just one example from Nash's (2001) observations of the security belts that provided protection throughout the peace dialogue and international conferences where women from a cooperative in Amantengo, Chiapas, were seen joining arms with indigenous men and international peace observers.
2. Common recitation found on EZLN communiqués.
3. Testimonials/communiqués by movement members available on the official homepage (www.ezln.org) from 1993–2005.

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José A. Muñoz is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. His dissertation research investigates the extent to which coalitions of social movement organizations manage these internal conflicts. The data collected for his research involved fieldwork based out of Mexico City (2004–2005). His research interests include social movements, immigrant political behaviour, and globalization.