Tell Them We Are Equal[1]

Oppositional Cultural Capital, Organizational Capacity, and the Zapatistas' Challenge to Transnational Social Movement Theory

Revised May 2008

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Introduction

Scholarship on alliances between left wing groups in the Global South[2] and their sympathizers in the Global North, or "transnational advocacy networks" (TANs) (Keck and Sikkink 1998), assumes that prevailing hierarchies of economic, political, and social privilege echo inside TANs. External circumstances, these theories imply, create a static and North-dominated distribution of control between participants, precluding change from within. This paper challenges that assumption. It explores the reasons why the Zapatista Movement, based in Southern Mexico, has been able to claim control over the terms of its relationships with outside supporters and redefine legitimacy around Southern leadership. I argue that 1) *Within* the field of their transnational advocacy networks, over time, the Zapatistas fostered a culture wherein outside sympathizers valued their particular cache, or "oppositional cultural capital." They then leveraged that cache as a resource to shift the North-South balance of resource-dependence and demand more respectful treatment. 2) In conjunction with this cache, the Zapatistas constructed a strong organizational structure that gave them the infrastructure to confront outsiders.

Since January 1, 1994, when the Zapatistas[3] rose up in Chiapas, Mexico, to demand basic social rights, the global left has elevated them as a paradigm of radical politics and transnational solidarity. Although the Mexican army drove the indigenous Zapatista peasants into remote areas within a few weeks of their revolt, for 14 years, the rebels have continued to build self-governing communities. Throughout their history, the Zapatistas have sought out alliances with grassroots organizations from more than 70 countries (EZLN 2007). Their partners include non-

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[2] I use the terms "Global North" and "Global South" in a conceptual sense, rather than a strictly geographic one, to differentiate the relatively economically, politically, and geographically privileged members of social movement networks from those with less privilege. Likewise, I use the term "transnational" to refer to partnerships that cross such "North-South" divides.

[3] "Zapatistas" is the most commonly used name for the EZLN, which stands for *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), the contemporary group named after the Mexican Revolution hero, Emiliano Zapata.

governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, hippies, filmmakers, tourists, collectives, academics, neighborhood movements, students, farmers, indigenous organizations, teachers, and feminists (Leyva Solano 2001; 2006). Some of these groups materially support the Zapatistas, while others radiate off their inspiration (Swords 2007). This paper focuses on allies that directly intervene in Zapatista communities, because such relationships accentuate the power dynamics between participants.

The Zapatista Movement has made transnational allies central to its political strategy. Because the Zapatistas refuse all money from the Mexican government, most of their resources come from donations[4] (Stahler-Sholk 2006; Burguete Cal y Mayor 2003). Outsiders' donations and information help sustain Zapatista-run schools, clinics, and autonomous governments, and their publicity and connections physically protect the movement from state and paramilitary violence. As the founder of a think-tank close to the movement attested, "The proximity of civil society is the most important safety belt protecting the Zapatistas in the face of foreseeable military actions against them. The survival of everything ... depends on nurturing and keeping that vital link" (Gutierrez[5] 2008). Outsiders also provide strategies, such as one respondent's idea of imposing a 10% tax on all donations (Costa 2008). Finally, they affirm the Zapatistas' struggle.

Remarkably, in spite of this support, the Zapatistas have questioned their transnational allies. At first, the Zapatistas welcomed most outsiders interested in collaborating and "supporters" regularly imposed their agendas, strategies, language and organizational forms. In recent years, however, the movement denounced external control of programs, imposed

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[4] For instance, eighteen of twenty-nine solidarity groups interviewed donate to the Zapatistas, and their contributions range from $500 to $10,000 annually, in cash or kind.
[5] For the respondents' protection, I use pseudonyms for all interviewees, organizations, and Chiapas locations in this paper.

guidelines for its partnerships, monitored contributions, and sanctioned outsiders who conducted solidarity projects without their consent. Though control is never complete, the very indicators that marked Northerners' influence over the Zapatistas early on now appear in the reverse. Comparing the two periods highlights the mechanisms of the movement's increased leverage.

The Zapatistas' empowerment did not, as one might assume, result from better funding. On the contrary, as the Zapatistas have gained dignity, they have lost money. Though the movement relies on outside money, ideas, and publicity for its survival, in order to champion their autonomy from outside influence, the Zapatistas expelled meddlesome outsiders and repelled others unwilling to cede control. Their defiance coincided with the end of one-party rule in Mexico and the September 11 attacks on the United States, both of which caused NGOs to scale back their operations in Mexico (Benessaieh 2004; Castellanos 2008). Thus, over the course of several years, the Zapatistas' set of sympathizers has shrunk, and pro-Zapatista funding has plummeted. To explain why the Zapatistas were able to resist unwanted Northern influence, therefore, I look beyond economic resources.

Instead, I argue that the change in Zapatista-outsider relations corresponds to an increase in supporters' dependence on the movement for "oppositional cultural capital." I define oppositional cultural capital as recognition tied to successful efforts to build an alternative to the dominant, neoliberal world order. While early allies tended to value the Zapatistas as a nonspecific "other," current sympathizers rely on the movement to achieve their goals of overturning mainstream power hierarchies. From 1999 to 2003, as the Zapatistas began to exclude meddlesome outsiders, they ostracized groups in the former category and attracted others in the latter. They also began to foreground alliances in which supporters not only brought resources to Chiapas but also carried the Zapatistas' principles to other locales, diffusing

the Zapatistas' status and creating additional demand for contact with the movement. In their current networks, the Zapatistas give admirers strategies, connections, moral support, and a set of questions that challenge Northerners' role as privileged activists. By requiring that outsiders follow their lead, the Zapatistas also affirm allies' status as progressive, reflexive, and anti-capitalist. As they work hard to achieve intimacy with the Zapatistas, Northern allies also gain credibility vis-à-vis each other.

The Zapatistas' legitimacy takes on meaning not only in on-the-ground interactions in Chiapas but also as it disseminates from the Zapatistas through the field of their multifaceted, fluid social movement network. In the context of progressive, transnational solidarity, the Zapatistas' unique dynamism gives them leverage over activists who rely on their inspiration. The path of their influence subverts scholars' assumptions that solidarity flows between stable, binary poles, from North to South. Instead of the Zapatistas competing for scarce, Northern resources, Northern NGOs compete for scarce, Zapatista "oppositional cultural capital."

In conjunction with this intangible "resource," the Zapatistas' recent defiance reflects their growing internal capacity to manage alliances and exert leverage. Early on, outsiders haphazardly formed un-structured, un-systematic alliances with Zapatistas families and communities. Then, beginning officially in 2003, the Zapatistas' autonomous governments began to monitor and channel contributions, enforce guidelines for their partnerships, and sanction those who did not conform. Not only do the Zapatistas' autonomous governments enable the Zapatistas to supervise outside supporters, but they also provide a straightforward way for outsiders to contribute to the movement on the Zapatistas' terms.

I focus on the case of the Zapatistas because their transnational advocacy networks markedly changed character over the course of their fourteen-year history, setting up a natural

longitudinal comparison. In keeping with theories that cite Southern movement's dependence on transnational resources, as the Zapatistas affirm, "global civil society" has played a crucial part in supporting their struggle. Because they defied existing analysis *in spite of* this dependence, they present an intriguing empirical puzzle. As an unusual example where a movement has inverted dominant North-South power dynamics, the case provides the empirical basis to challenge and extend theory (Burawoy 1998).

My analysis draws on field research conducted in Chiapas and the United States between June 2007 and May 2008. It includes 32 in-depth interviews with Zapatista solidarity leaders, observations of Zapatista-supporter meetings and events, and official Zapatista and solidarity group documents. Participating in solidarity groups' activities enabled me to get to know activists as well as to apply pressure at various levels of the Zapatistas' support network, revealing the tensions among the Zapatistas and their various supporters. Interviews and documents from across the Zapatistas' history illuminated the shifts in Zapatista-outsider relations over time.

I begin the paper with current theories of transnational movements. Then, I trace the trajectory of Zapatista-supporter relations. I explain that at first, the Zapatistas welcomed external supporters and accepted their agendas. Later, however, tensions with outsiders compelled the Zapatistas to 1) intervene in and 2) refuse outside programs, asserting their power vis-à-vis sympathizers. Although the Zapatistas continued to depend on outside economic resources, I argue that their increased oppositional cultural capital and their greater internal organizational capacity made it possible for them to stand up to supporters. Finally, I propose to reconstruct transnational social movement theories to account for oppositional cultural capital, organizational capacity, and Southern leverage. In doing so, I consider how the possibilities and

limitations examined in this case might map onto other movements in the Global South.

Transnational Advocacy Networks and North-South Power Dynamics

To explain North-South movement power dynamics, existing studies of TANs rely on external power relations. As a result, they inadequately theorize the ways Southern movements can influence Northern sympathizers, and they assume away change from within. Their assumptions take two forms. First, a group of scholarship, which I call the "convergence" perspective, suggests that alliances of activist groups across borders empower disadvantaged movements vis-à-vis local power holders (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005; Evans 2008). Canonically, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) argue that outsiders provide essential resources to Southern movements, raise awareness about isolated groups, pressure repressive governments, deter violence, and bestow finances, legitimacy, and psychological support on poor movements. Building on this view, writers like Evans (2008) suggest that progressive activists, North and South, share in the same struggle against an entrenched, dominant, neoliberal order. Relative to those they oppose, these analyses insinuate, all participants within transnational social movements are politically vulnerable. Northern influence does not conflict with Southern interests; rather, the two interchange ideas and strategies (Pithouse 2006). In keeping with the prevailing social movement literature (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1982; Snow et al 1986), this perspective assumes that Southern participants do not *want* to challenge their Northern counterparts. As the Zapatistas' ongoing clashes with supporters make clear, the idea of "convergence" neglects the power struggles within social movements. It disregards the ways transnational advocacy networks, in particular, convert geographic and class disparities into immediate experiences of inequality and contradiction (Thayer 2001, 246).

A second set of research, which I call the "social movement market" perspective, insinuates that movement participants who come from the Global North more closely resemble the Northern power-holders they oppose than the movements in the Global South that ostensibly share their views (*e.g.*, Hulme and Edwards 1997; Cooke and Kothari 2001). According to these works, power imbalances permeated TANs. Because Northern participants hold mainstream cultural, social, and political status and provide their partners with scarce economic resources, they can control Southern movements. Following theories of resource mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1982), these scholars represent transnational social movements as "a global morality market" (Bob 2005, 5), in which resource-poor organizations vie for support from a few influential Northern NGOs. Where outside organizations provide scarce, vital support, this perspective argues, they can control their beneficiaries (see Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Therefore, the Southern movements that best "sell themselves," conforming to donors' discourses and practices, "win" resources and survive. Just as "convergence" theories assume that Northern and Southern movements intrinsically coincide, "social movement market" scholarship takes it for granted that, given global political economy, Northern and Southern movements' interests conflict.

Social movement market scholars focus on two indicators to gauge Northern control. First, they highlight Northern ability to reject beneficiaries or refuse their requests. As Clifford Bob (2005) puts it, "[Northern] NGOs can be circumspect in picking clients and need not reinvent themselves to do so" (5). Second, these theorists emphasize Northern capacity to change partners' conduct in the face of resistance (Leyva Solano 2001; Wood 2005; Speed 2006;

Benessaieh 2007).[6]   To obtain support, these scholars maintain, Southern movements must translate their ideals into "transnationally resonant language" accessible to outsiders (Benessaieh 2007). Strategically, Northern supporters may also demand efficiency, accountability to donors, and quantitative results, pushing Southern movements to become hierarchical, bureaucratic, and detached from their own constituencies (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Pearce 1997; Hulme and Edwards 1997).   Southern groups, this perspective suggests, depend too heavily on their Northern counterparts to challenge them.

By portraying Northern NGOs as juggernauts, social movement market theories unduly minimize beneficiaries' influence. First, they characterize all "donors" as large institutions, when many Northern groups represent haphazard, grassroots constituencies. Second, these analyses assume power inheres in resources the dominant order defines as valuable: money, publicity, and recognition from existing power-holders. They overlook the ideas and inspiration that flow from South to North. Lastly, they deny the dynamism of TANs, inadequately theorizing change.

A third set of scholars defines TANs as ongoing exchanges, in which Southern groups gain leverage from the authenticity, symbols, prestige, and ideas they provide to allies. Millie Thayer (2003), for instance, demonstrates that Southern organizations can take advantage of supporters' reliance on information, efficiency, and intimacy with a grassroots base. The "social movement market" would not exist, she points out, if Southern movements did not grant their Northern counterparts legitimacy. Therefore, Southern organizations may take up ideas, resist imposition, and debate with supporters. Nevertheless, Thayer concludes that the balance of power ultimately favors participants from the Global North. Writers like her do little to explain

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[6] So doing, they follow in the tradition of Richard Emerson (1962), who points out that power relationships become empirically observable when one organization (A) makes a demand counter to another (B)'s interests and effects "*change* in conduct of B attributable to demands made by A" (33).

shifts in North-South dynamics.

I extend Thayer's analysis by arguing that, as a result of active, internal contestation, through which they have reshaped their transnational advocacy network field, the Zapatistas have upended Northern control. Viewing the Zapatistas' transnational partnership as an ongoing process helps to incorporate seemingly contradictory prior accounts of the movement's alliances. Descriptions like Clifford Bob's (2005), of the way the Zapatistas "marketed themselves," make sense in the period before the movement clearly began to defend its interests in contradistinction to those of Northern supporters. When projected across time, however, they fail to explain the case. Meanwhile, understanding the Zapatistas' evolution also helps to contextualize descriptions by scholars such as Thomas Olesen (2005) that highlight the movement's recent campaigns for radical democracy and against neoliberalism, heralding "international Zapatismo" as a paradigm of "mutual" solidarity. Understanding the shifting dynamics of power is crucial to recognizing that the common interests Olesen describes arise not from participants' shared position as "weak" in a global hierarchy but from their interactive struggles to redefine their goals. Conceptualizing each schema in terms of the other helps explain how power gets contested and reshaped in TANs.

Findings

The Zapatistas' Shift from North-Dominated to South-Led[7]

The Zapatistas provide an ideal case because of the market shift in their relationships

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[7] In my paper (2008, unpublished) "Transforming Transnational Activism: The Zapatistas' Defiance of North-South Power Dynamics," I provide a detailed description of the shifts summarized in this section.

with outsiders. In the movement's early years,[8] scholars of TANs often describe the Zapatistas as a prototypical transnational social movement. When outsiders heard about the Zapatista uprising, they inundated Chiapas with volunteers, donations, training, and plans for projects ranging from school construction to women's health workshops. At first, Northern supporters guided most of these projects, and the Zapatistas accepted and adapted to outside goals and strategies. For a few years, the movement embraced almost anyone who expressed interest; only later would it refuse aid or exclude prospective allies. The convergence perspective suggests that this state of affairs resulted from the Zapatistas' appeals for outside sympathy and new ideas. Social movement market theories, in contrast, imply that economic necessity pushed the Zapatistas to alter their tactics and agendas to appeal to distant audiences, shifting from armed insurgency to nonviolence; from socialist rhetoric to that of civil society, multiculturalism, and democracy; and from local to international "anti-globalization" goals (Bob 2005).

Nevertheless, beginning around 1997, regional[9] Zapatista leaders started to reject Northern agendas, explicitly differentiating their interests from those of supporters. They denounced outside interventions in their communities, and they insisted that solidarity groups defer to Zapatista priorities. Then, they expelled those that could not conform. So doing, they ostracized most of their former partners, forsaking resources in exchange for greater control. In August 2003, Zapatista formalized the changes that had been sweeping through their relationships with supporters. They announced that they would require anyone who wanted to donate money, volunteer, work with or learn about the Zapatistas to obtain the permission of

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[8] Ruptures between the Zapatistas and their supporters have occurred from 1994 to the present and varied by region. They climaxed, however, starting in 1997, when the Zapatistas expelled the NGO that had, to date, mediated all of their TANs. Conflicts intensified between 1999 and 2003. I follow respondents in referring to these particular years as central turning points.

[9] The Zapatistas thirty-eight or so self-governing, or "autonomous," municipalities are divided into five regions, each with its own municipal center and semi-independent government.

"Good Government Councils," rotating, civilian collectives, that oversee each of the movement's five zones.[10] The councils have allowed the Zapatistas to manage their relationships with outsiders, ranging from peasant groups to global NGOs; enforce their methods of running their movement, such as collectivism and redistribution; and preempt co-optation (Swords 2007, 91; Stahler-Sholk 2006). Though has neither been clean nor complete, it has proclaimed the Zapatista Movement's autonomy not only from the government but also from its own supporters. It demonstrates that the Zapatistas built up both the will and the capacity to challenge Northern imposition from within.

By the end of my fieldwork in 2008, the solidarity groups that remained in Chiapas conformed to the Zapatistas' protocols, deferred to their authority and actively sought out their inspiration. Thereby, they almost inverted the early dynamics wherein transnational allies refused and intervened in the Zapatistas' programs. Now, Northern participants reiterate the Zapatistas' message that sympathizers are not altruists, on whom the Zapatistas depend, but that both share the same struggle for radical democracy and against neoliberalism. With the movement's encouragement, many have begun to promote "Zapatismo" elsewhere. Adopting activists' normative language, some writers insist that these newer networks represent a "mutual solidarity" (Olesen 2005). They suggest that in "mutual" TANs, "globalization lacks an obvious direction," and they hint at a natural convergence among Leftists worldwide (Olesen 2005; Holloway 2005; Brand and Hirsch 2004). Their characterization, however, neglects the evolution of Zapatista-ally relations. Therefore, it obscures the ways the apparent "mutuality" between North and South has resulted from the Zapatistas' explicit, continually reinforced redefinitions of legitimacy. The rest of this paper seeks to explain the mechanisms that stand

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[10] The fact that the Zapatista communities are rural has facilitated tracking outsiders and contributions (see Mora 2007; Stahler-Sholk 2007).

behind the Zapatistas' successful redefinitions of their transnational networks.

The Context: Zapatismo and the Progressive Social Movement Field

The Zapatistas have accomplished the shifts I just described in the context of the progressive social movement field. Due to its structure, which radiates out and draws energy from the Zapatistas, the organization of this particular network of Zapatista allies has helped make it possible for the Zapatistas to defy dominant South-on-North dependencies.

The field is structured as follows: Zapatista supporters vary in location, duration, organizational structure, size, formality, level of activity, and proximity to the Zapatistas (Leyva Solano 2001). They rarely just relate one-on-one with the Zapatistas. They challenge and support each other, constructing a "Zapatista culture" even outside of Chiapas. All the sympathizers I interviewed had shifting relationships to the movement over time, played multiple roles, and intersected with each other in various ways: marrying across race and nationality, merging academia and activism, and integrating nationalities and classes. As a result, they did not collaborate along binary, linear North-South lines. Instead, they related to each other through interconnected, overlapping, variegated networks of groups and individuals constantly in flux and operating at different levels and rhythms. The Zapatistas empowerment, then diffuses through these networks, supporting the movement's efforts to directly challenge dominating outsiders.

Supporters disseminate and enforce the legitimacy of reflexive activism and participatory solidarity. They honor the Zapatistas' effective resistance as "oppositional cultural capital." In doing so, they help the Zapatistas hold other outsiders accountable not only to outside goals but also to the movement's culture and priorities. In this context, Northern sympathizers of the

Zapatistas *want* to be sympathetic, supportive, and subordinate to Southern partners; being denounced as unreflexive can affront activists' self-images. As a result, Zapatista supporters vie for position in a hierarchy of the "most dedicated" and "most intimate with Zapatistas." Sympathizers describe a pecking order based on whether people have been in Chiapas "since 94" (Rodriguez 2007). Just as activists gain legitimacy by resisting the dominant order, they lose legitimacy through association with it, such as by being from the United States. For instance, Elena Rodriguez, from Mexico City, said that she had long thought "all US Americans are … evil." She advised me, "Many organizations … won't talk to you at all. Don't even try, because they say, 'Americans, pshah!'" (Interview, 2007). Likewise, activists denigrated academics, and group leaders belittled other solidarity organizations. By competing with each other for status, supporters reveal that they are more vulnerable to the Zapatistas than vice versa.

To build their own oppositional cultural capital, supporters often echo the Zapatistas' exclusion of people they mark as not-radical-enough. To a degree, sympathizers police the network, sanctioning those who fail to invert dominant power hierarchies. So doing, they disseminate the Zapatistas' protections, messages, and prohibitions. For instance, many pro-Zapatista organizations, particularly those based in Chiapas, refuse to grant interviews. The leader of an alternative medicine organization explained to me, "It's not as easy as you think. There are rules you have to abide by," (Fieldnotes, August 5, 2007). Another solidarity leader said, "We don't give interviews without the permission of the Good Government Councils" (Fieldnotes, July 30, 2007). Paradoxically, some of the organizations that restrict access to the movement have themselves been castigated by the Zapatistas. By becoming enforcers, and marking themselves dedicated enough to refuse others, they reaffirm their privileged positions vis-à-vis the Zapatistas. In this particular field of transnational NGOs, many Northern

organizations challenge the power hierarchy that privileges them and, in their fight to get close to the Zapatistas, demonstrate their own dependence on this Southern movement.

In recent years, the Zapatistas have also gained power by influencing the ideology and organizational forms of people outside of Chiapas. Increasingly, rather than coming to Chiapas or forming direct relationships with Zapatista communities, many outsiders have adapted the Zapatistas' ideas, concepts, and cultural rhythms elsewhere. In particular, the Zapatistas' most recent effort, the Other Campaign, begun in 2006, urges existing groups to link to the Zapatistas' struggle from their own locales, categorizing affiliated organizations as "adherents" to the Zapatista movement. Bryan Moore, from a collective that practices Zapatismo in California, explained his group's philosophy, "Let's use the Zapatistas as a practice, a political practice. Not a model, but a political practice that we can be inspired by" (Interview, 2008). The Zapatistas have officially claimed the strategy of diffusion Moore described. The coordinator of a Zapatista solidarity organization in Denver commented, "The Zapatistas will say, 'No, if you want to help the Zapatistas, go home and fight for justice in your own lands, because if there is justice in your own lands, there will be justice here as well, because it is all the same struggle'" (cited in Olesen 2005:172). Inspired by this reformulation of TANs in egalitarian terms, writers have embraced such "mutual solidarity" (Olesen 2005), "urban Zapatismo" (Holloway 2005), or "alternative solidarity" (Sarabia 2008). Such voluntarily adoption of Zapatista paradigms has buttressed the movement's status, legitimacy, and leverage.

Sources of Influence: Oppositional Cultural Capital & Organizational Capacity

Early Years: Low Oppositional Cultural Capital & Organizational Capacity

The Zapatistas' recent expressions of influence over outsiders, and the surrounding culture that reinforces the movement's authority, correlate with supporters' increased dependence on the oppositional cultural capital that the Zapatistas provide and with the movement's growing organizational capacity. Early on, though the Zapatistas received immediate recognition, they did not yet have their present status as a prominent symbol of anti-neoliberal resistance. They had only begun to construct viable, alternative communities, autonomous from the Mexican government. They had yet to reinforce their legitimacy by standing up to Northern supporters. And, they had not yet begun to stress the dissemination of their particular radical outlook.

Instead, before the Zapatistas' transition, visitors and contributors often sought cultural awareness, rather than philosophical inspiration, from visiting Zapatista communities. They did not depend on the Zapatistas for such experiences. Jessica Turner, who ran a women's health project from 1997 to 1999, said the most important lesson the Zapatistas gave her was "an understanding of how incredibly different other cultures are." However, she reflected, "If I had moved to a village in East Africa, I also would have learned that. I think some of it was just the kind of stuff people get from joining the Peace Corps, from living in a different place" (Interview, 2008). For Turner, the Zapatistas were only the most convenient of many opportunities to travel. Steve Conway, who worked in Chiapas during the same period, explained that being around the Zapatistas showed him "the huge injustices of resources being extracted from the South and brought to the North." Yet, he went on, "Part of it, completely independent of the Zapatistas, is just about being around *campesinos.*[11] Not just the Zapatistas, but spending time with poor villagers" (Interview, 2008). Many respondents who worked with the Zapatistas before 1999

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[11] farmers, peasants.

explained that they chose Chiapas because it was nearby, or a friend worked there, rather than because of the Zapatistas' distinctive appeal. In keeping with the "social movement market" vision of TANs, while such solidarity workers provided crucial resources to the Zapatistas, numerous poor groups could have met their needs.

In addition, before 2003, the Zapatistas' government structures were not coherent enough to control supporters or connect them with Zapatista base communities. David Jones, who has run an organization to build Zapatista community infrastructure since 1994, described this disorder, "There were no such civilian structures, and you had to rely on people popping up in the middle of the night or sending out weird messages through who knows whom, and maybe something would happen, maybe not" (Interview, 2008). Like Jones, most supporters operated haphazardly at best. Teresa Flores, another fourteen-year solidarity worker, explained, "In that time period, the autonomous systems were still not very defined … When we arrived for a workshop, we had to look for the authorities,[12] the authorities had to find the cooks to make the food, and we had to wait. It was something we had to pull together ourselves. After '99, it was the opposite" (Interview, 2008). Lacking direction, outsiders structured all of their own programs. For some, that felt uncomfortable. Flores went on, "When we began the education work, we felt that we had to make decisions where if we made a mistake, it would be our mistake. … We also realized that it was really hard for an external project to work if it's not something chosen and organized by the community" (Interview, 2008). Even those who wanted Southern guidance often could not find a coherent body of Zapatista representatives to provide it.

To "get into" Zapatista communities and set up projects, most sympathizers relied on

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[12] "Authorities" is the generic term the Zapatistas use for the people in charge of a community or region. Early on, authorities were often just traditional leaders. More recently, the term refers to the local Zapatista councils.

personal networks. Jennifer Clark, who began training women to run co-ops in 1997, recounted, "You had to know someone to get in. You just knew someone who knew someone, and you ended up forming a project by developing those relationships. There wasn't any office you could go to and say, 'Here I am. Here is what I would like to do'" (Interview, 2008). Jessica Turner, who also worked with women in Chiapas before 1999, explained that her work "all came through friends." One Zapatista woman she befriended made every decision about her program. Turner explained, "We mostly dealt with this one person, so any time we wanted to do anything, we would just go through her" (Interview, 2008). The alternative, dealing with the Zapatistas' official structure, required outsiders to know where to find incognito, military personnel. Jennifer Clark described, "A lot of times, if you knew so-and-so was on the autonomous council, you would go to their house in the village … Those are the people who you never see without ski masks.[13] You don't know their real name" (Interview, 2008). This personalized system often resulted in patronage of those most connected with outsiders.

Later Years: Increased Oppositional Cultural Capital & Organizational Capacity

Beginning with their restructuring in 1999 and continuing through the present, the Zapatistas have gained importance, for the Northern admirers they've continued working with, as a source of ideas, strategies and legitimacy, and they have built up the capacity to mediate relationships through their radical democratic government structures. The Zapatistas' ability to inspire outsiders, and define what constitute legitimate political and organizational strategies, underlies their capacity to intervene in and refuse alliances.

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[13] Ski masks are the Zapatistas' trademark. However, base community members rarely wear the masks unless they are in public or are important figures who have reason to avoid being seen.

Three shifts have bolstered the Zapatistas' significance to outside constituents. First, the Zapatistas have proven their mettle. They have successfully established an extraordinary long-term, autonomous government outside the official corporate and political system. They have also resisted power hierarchies *within* their transnational advocacy networks, reinforcing their radical status, in the eyes of some, by the very act of denouncing supporters. Second, the Zapatistas have ostracized partners that don't value them nearly unconditionally, eliminating those that do not depend on them. The movement's exclusivity marks its remaining allies as elite and affirms their anti-systemic legitimacy. Third, the Zapatistas and their support network have championed "alternative solidarity," generating a set of organizations dedicated to disseminating Zapatismo. As these new groups seek out the Zapatistas' influence, they affirm the movement's oppositional status and push other supporters to demonstrate their devotion.

The Zapatistas' unique success at reversing their marginalization undergirds their legitimacy. Because they have construed themselves as Mexico's most historically oppressed people, they can claim what one sympathizer called "The moral legitimacy of actually having something to struggle for" (Fieldnotes, January 10, 2008). Galiana Hernandez, a professor who has supported the movement since 1994, expanded, "They have the moral high ground of being the most poor, the most oppressed; of having suffered, been assaulted, and died for 500 years; of being willing to put their lives on the line for this" (Interview, 2008). Given where they began, respondents find the Zapatistas' accomplishments astounding. A Californian solidarity group leader marveled, "The idea that this incredible project is built on land where people used to work as the lowliest of low paid workers for some horrible plantation boss, and they took it over and built a warehouse on the *finquero*'s house, is amazing" (Interview, Williams 2008). The founder of a pro-Zapatista popular think-tank in Chiapas likewise, praised, "With no government support,

there are more than 60 clinics and more than 500 schools. There are ambulances, medicine … a

government of their own, and most importantly, control of land" (Interview, Gutierrez 2008).

Though other movements strive for similar goals, the Zapatistas' capacity to *show*, in practice,

that "another world is possible," has made them preeminent among left wing social movements.

Respondents from recent years see the Zapatistas' energy as unique. Marking the

movement's historical importance, almost all interviewees considered the Zapatistas a source of

hope, at a time when the dominant logic said, "There is no alternative" (Holloway 2005). The

theme of resurrection came up repeatedly in interviews. For instance, Pablo Gutierrez, who has

dedicated his life to pro-Zapatista popular education, described:

> The uprising turned everything upside down. There was a strengthening. A rebirth of
> hope, of dreams. Of knowing that everything was not dead. Life began to regenerate
> from the people who had considered themselves dead. 'All roads were closed,' people
> had said. You could already feel the weight of the neoliberal system. But, the Zapatistas
> said, 'We come from the night, from the darkness of our peoples, because there is no
> money to buy medicine or trucks to drive sick people to the hospital. We have to
> proclaim that we are going to die struggling, because there is no alternative. Dying
> struggling is worth more than dying of illness.' - A rebirth of hope and a recognition of
> the dream. When they said, 'Another world is possible,' that's what they were talking
> about. A movement of inclusion. And, I could be reborn with them (Interview, 2008).

Sergio Avila, like Gutierrez a Mexican-born man in his early forties, echoed this theme, "I think

a lot of people from my generation had lost hope. For many of us, our idealism, our perspective

on social justice, came out of Cuba's struggles and those of the ex-Soviet Union, but then the

Berlin wall fell, and a lot of dreams fell out from under us. Many dreams, many ideas, many of

our reasons for struggling and hoping. For me, the Zapatistas revived my ideals" (Interview,

2008). In the face of a power structure that, as one pro-Zapatista journalist put it, "makes us

think there is no other system but capitalism," the Zapatistas boldly say, there *is* an alternative.

In the face of increasing disillusionment with the old left, the Zapatistas demonstrate a

revitalized radical *democratic* alternative oriented towards the complexities of the 21st century.

Teresa Flores, a Mexican activist who was in college in 1994, added, "When Zapatismo arose, it was a moment when people didn't see many ways out. In particular, I think that young people were really depressed. We were living the hangover and the failures of the things that had inspired our parents. When the Zapatista Movement arose, it opened up hope" (Interview, 2008). The Zapatistas presented an alternative path at a time and place where there were few others.

Respondents from after 2003 also considered the Zapatistas' inspiration, ideas, and strategies unique. Many mentioned the absence of such movements in the U.S.. Jennifer Clark, a long-term, U.S. born supporter, explained, "Growing up in the U.S. and not having that much access to social movements, much less radical or revolutionary social movements in the time that I've been alive in the U.S., I think it's just amazing to go somewhere where you're like, 'Wow. This is real'" (Interview, 2008). Teresa Flores, from urban Mexico, shared these sentiments, "I didn't see hope until I went to Chiapas and saw the communities, the people. From the city you couldn't see that … The people I saw in the city were always crushed by the weight of a strong discrimination. Arriving in a Zapatista community, I saw the complete opposite: super strong, organized women. They inspired you" (Interview, 2008). Similarly, Adriana Arriaga remarked, "I don't see anyone doing that anywhere else." The Zapatistas made her feel useful in ways she never does in the U.S.. She reflected, "Here [in the U.S.], I don't feel that appreciation or that participation in society. Here, everything becomes more negative" (Interview, 2008). Accessing this specific movement made Adriana feel relevant as an agent of social change.

The Zapatistas have been a historically important impetus of the anti-globalization movement, giving them particular significance to sympathizers. Angela Peterson, who worked in Chiapas before joining the board of a Latin America-wide solidarity organization, explained that the latter organization solicited her participation because "The organization supports social

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movements in Latin America, and this was a really important social movement in Latin America; it's very unique, and it's so successful!" (Interview, 2008). Other admirers have built their organizations upon the Zapatistas' critique of capitalism. For instance, Jimena Rivera, a member of a prominent "mutual" solidarity organization in Chiapas, explained that her group was "meaningless, and it could not exist, without being linked to the Zapatistas. The reason that brings our organization into existence is this radical movement that criticizes the capitalist world system" (Interview, 2008). Guillermo Morales, the director of the same organization said, "The Zapatistas give us strength to continue. We would not have been able to construct this without their inspiration and without having them as a point of reference" (Fieldnotes, January 9, 2008). Many organizations that now work with the Zapatistas owe their existence to the movement.

Current solidarity groups also rely on the Zapatistas' concepts and discourses. Many mentioned adopting the movement's slogans, such as *mandar obedeciendo,* lead by obeying; *caminamos preguntando*, we walk asking; *un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos*, a world where many worlds fit; *abajo y a la izquierda, donde el corazón*, below and to the left, where the heart is. They have also imitated the Zapatistas' recent self-characterizations as *otra*, or other. A woman who founded a Zapatista-inspired group in California underscored, "The things that are really highlighted to me are the reclaiming of the concept of alterity, the way that it's all 'the other this, the other that.' All of that I find really exciting" (Interview, Tavares 2008). Following the Zapatistas, supporters also question "global," "universal" words and practices. In a Zapatista-inspired academic workshop in Chiapas, one participant proposed:

> We have to think about how to build knowledge and what concepts like democracy really mean. Let's go to history. Democracy came from Greece. But, it turns out that theirs was a democracy of rulers. What kind of democracy is that? It didn't include slaves, poor people, landless people, women, or children. It was the kind of democracy the United States is offering us. Likewise, we have to rebuild the concept of happiness. Let's be happy struggling, because there is no revolution if we don't celebrate, if we

don't dance (Fieldnotes, January 10, 1008).

Zapatista lenses and modes of questioning help outsiders reframe standard concepts.

The Zapatistas also provided supporters with strategies. For instance, Sarah Young, an academic, and "mutual solidarity" activist, said a key thing she had learned from the Zapatistas was "the idea of the *encuentro*, creating spaces where people can come together and do this kind of analysis, community analysis, community building." This approach inspired her Texas-based efforts, wherein, "We opened a collective bookstore, a community space here in my city. One of the reasons was that my city had no central space for people to come together who were working on progressive politics of all kinds, from church people to anti-war people to all kinds of folks – youth, queer folks, whatever" (Interview, 2008). Another member of a California Zapatista collective also said his group's most successful actions had been "encounters, inspired off the politics of encounter that the Zapatistas carry" (Interview, Moore 2008). Many outsiders directly exported a Zapatista model.

Some groups also structured their organizations to mimic the Zapatistas' horizontal organizing or consensus process. For instance, long-time supporter Galiana Hernandez quipped, "When they formed the Good Government Councils, Good Government Councils began popping up all over the place" (Interview, 2008). Ricardo Gonzalez, the leader of a neighborhood association in Chiapas that identifies as an "adherent" of the Other Campaign, explained that his group mimicked the Zapatistas' drawn-out deliberations, "In order to have a collective process, you need to circle around and around something. We'll bring up a point and people will repeat it 10, 20 times" (Interview, 2008). Manuel Callahan, founder of another Zapatista-inspired collective, reflected, "[We] wanted to introduce this whole … strategy of analysis that allows for everybody in the room to make a contribution to the collective analysis" (Olesen 2005). Such

Zapatista-derived horizontal organizing strategies have permeated the Left. As Steve Conway, an early Zapatista solidarity worker who has remained active in left-wing politics in the U.S. commented, "The global justice movement now has been hugely influenced by participatory decision-making processes and non-hierarchical processes as well as a network-style organizing from the Zapatistas … Like, direct action to stop the war here in the Bay Area is run through what are called spokes councils, so that everybody's voice is heard" (Interview, 2008). Zapatista tactics appear in left wing movements worldwide.

The Zapatistas' insistence on self-critique, patience and listening especially stimulated interviewees. For example, Adam Taylor, who helped found a Zapatista-inspired collective, valued the "listening tours" the Zapatistas took around Mexico in 2006 and 2007 to learn about and collect ideas from their allies. Adam believed, "One of the most radical or revolutionary things the Zapatistas ever said, or that they ever did, was that they realized they didn't know everything and that they needed to listen" (Interview, 2008). Adam said his collective's meetings often lasted more than five hours, because they privileged letting everyone be heard. Many respondents reiterated Adam's point that, though they may be tedious, the Zapatistas' emphasis on listening and patience, as another Zapatista collective founder said, "allow for a plurality of voices to emerge, creating those spaces, not selecting who gets to speak and who doesn't" (Interview, Tavares 2008). Interviewees appreciated this reformulation of the purpose of activism.

Often, respondents insisted that they saw Zapatismo less as a set of strategies than as an alternative way of thinking about the world, "a set of questions, rather than a set of answers" (Interview, Clark 2008). The Zapatistas' logic changed the ways interviewees thought about

their own activism. Bryan Moore, from a California-based Zapatista collective, reflected, "For me, it was the questions they asked, like, 'Who are you? What are you doing? What do you want?' I hadn't heard that" (Interview, 2008). Respondents valued the ways the Zapatistas pushed admirers to be reflexive. For one respondent who had supported the movement since 1994, the Zapatistas' most important lesson was: "the movement is a process. It's not a model, and it's something that changes and that you're actively changing it as you work on it. People need to sit down and look at what they're doing and see if they're making errors" (Interview, Young 2008). Another long-term supporter echoed this point, explaining, "I feel like the lesson is: they've done what makes sense for them in their context. We should do what makes sense for us in our context and not try and replicate things exactly" (Interview, Clark 2008). Rather than serve as a model, the Zapatistas inspired people to question and work to better their own actions, in their own contexts.

The Zapatistas' emphasis on reflexivity reverberated through respondents' concepts of transnational advocacy networks. Almost all interviewees who had participated in recent Zapatista solidarity shared the belief that working with the Zapatistas entailed, as Sarah Young, who has supported the movement for 14 years, put it, "Coming together from our own spaces. Really understanding who we are and where we're coming from first, and what our struggle is, then coming together" (Interview, 2008). Adam Taylor added that for him, "It's empowering. Instead of always having Chiapas as your referent, you're being empowered to think of yourself or your community as the referent" (Interview, 2008). Listening and dialogue, a former organizer and Zapatista scholar explained, did not imply the absence of power, but instead an attempt to understand each person's position, "trying to transform how both sides understand

something through these conversations … questioning power relations" (Interview, Perez 2008). By reframing TANs, the Zapatistas have challenged supporters to rethink who they are and what their activism is about. They have also provided an example of how social movements can push back against "NGOization." Jennifer Clark, who has given workshops on the Zapatistas in the U.S., said her audience often responded, "Wow. What would it look like if we did that? What would it look like if we didn't take any state funding? Is that true for us?" (Interview, 2008). Outsiders value the Zapatistas' very efforts to transform transnational social movements.

Sharing the Zapatistas' approach to thinking and acting has given many supporters legitimacy in the form of a well-known name, connections to other like-minded activists, and even a personal identity. This legitimacy-by-association derives in part from the media attention the Zapatistas have received and the relatively widespread awareness of their movement. Their accomplishments and broad following, in combination with their particular, poetic romanticism, attracted publicity and helped draw many respondents to their struggle. Adriana Arriaga explained, "I hadn't been looking; they came to me" (Interview, 2008). Steve Conway added, "The Zapatistas, rather than any other groups in Mexico, appeared. They were suddenly on the radar screen. While there are lots of movements going on in Mexico, you don't know about them unless you look for them" (Interview, 2008). Publicity reinforces the Zapatistas' status.

The prestige of the name "Zapatista" grants legitimacy to those that adopt it. Adam Taylor explained that his collective called itself Zapatista because "It always provides a referent. The Zapatistas. Even if *you* don't know what they stand for, you still maybe know about them. Also, it's fairly well known for an indigenous peoples' movement in a very remote, historically isolated, and totally disempowered part of the world." Adam went on, "I think it's a good way

to sum up a set of ideas that if the other person doesn't know, they can be like, what is Zapatista?" (Interview, 2008). Others take on Zapatismo as a political identity. Adriana Arriaga, from a Mexican-American Zapatista collective, explained, "I call myself Zapatista because Zapatismo is something that's being created, and it's nothing with a negative connotation … I think Zapatismo is going to be an identity from now on like any other social name, like Marxism, Leninism, socialist, communist" (Interview, 2008). Because the Zapatistas successfully built an alternative when many had lost hope, Arriaga suggested, they avoid the negative associations of other radical labels.

Sympathizers also network through the Zapatistas, "building bridges of dialogue" (Interview, Avila 2008). For Adam Taylor, a powerful part of associating with the Zapatistas was "being able to be in touch with and connected to people all over Mexico and all over California and having these networks of mutual support and coordination" (Interview, 2008). Adriana Arriaga, likewise, affirmed, "Calling yourself Zapatista, you can identify with people very quickly, and I think that doors open to you within the circle of the Zapatistas … If you go anywhere and there's a Zapatista group and you say, 'I'm Zapatista,' they will open their arms and welcome you in" (Interview, 2008). Arriaga found jobs and opportunities through Zapatista circles; being linked to them gave her a means to "network."

On an individual level, "being a Zapatista" has been "a fundamental reference point" for many respondents' identities (Interview, Perez 2008). Supporters often say things like, as one participant in the most recent Zapatista "encounter" put it, "I have to thank the Zapatistas, because they gave my life meaning" (Fieldnotes, January 1, 2008). Bryan Moore, from a California Zapatista collective, reflected, "Zapatismo has become part of my everyday life … I

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think it's become like a backdrop for almost everything I'm doing … It's defined my epistemology, my ways of knowing things" (Interview, 2008). And, Sergio Avila, a Mexican who has supported the movement since it began, added, "I think many of us were born through Zapatismo" (Interview, 2008). For both individuals and groups, the Zapatista Movement has provided a critical reference point.

Finally, by participating in the Zapatistas' reversal of TAN power dynamics, respondents affirm their progressiveness. For instance, a member of a Zapatista-inspired workshop in Chiapas said of the Zapatistas' assertion that they could have made progress without outside support, "For me, it is wonderful and inspiring to hear that" (Fieldnotes, August 2, 2007). Isabel Tavares, the founder of a California Zapatista collective, likewise, explained, "Sometimes you feel like you're jumping through one hundred hoops to go buy a poster or something, but I think the way it makes outsiders uncomfortable is really productive. Really flipping the power" (Interview, 2008). The Zapatistas' resistance itself bestowed legitimacy on ongoing supporters who felt good about having succumbed to an often-challenging redefinition of power.

For their ideas, epistemology, and way of thinking about the world – as well as for their unique status - current supporters depend on the Zapatistas. Few other groups can provide the same kind of inspiration. The movement's ability to stand up to its own allies, and its increased emphasis on disseminating its inspiration, have underscored its particular importance and bolstered its oppositional cultural capital. Current supporters' reliance on this legitimacy correlates with and underlies the Zapatistas' recent assertions of power.

In turn, increasing organizational capacity has provided the critical channel through which the Zapatistas have leveraged their oppositional cultural capital. The Good Government

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Councils the Zapatistas established in 2003 have allowed them to closely manage their relationships with outsiders, ranging from other peasant groups to global NGOs; enforce their priorities, such as collectivism and redistribution; and preempt the kind of co-optation pessimistic scholars would predict. Though the councils often operate slowly or inefficiently, failing to accomplish promised tasks due to poor communication, they enable official movement representatives to oversee every project that occurs in Zapatista territory. Teresa Flores, who trained Zapatista teachers both before and after their transition, contrasted her later programs with her experience early on, "Now, they would organize everything. When we arrived everything was more or less ready … Everything flowed much more" (Interview, 2008). Jennifer Clark, another long-term respondent, also reflected, "As those structures became more formalized, it became easier for people to access them, but also easier for the Zapatistas to exert control. The more official it was, the clearer it was. There was actually this structure that could say yes or no and that people outside could go to. You didn't necessarily have to have developed this internal relationship (Interview, 2008). The councils provided a direct, official way for outsiders to undertake projects *with* the Zapatistas.

Ironically, Zapatista control has been enabling to interested outsiders, giving them better access to the movement's priorities and indicating to them how they can best respect the movement. Jennifer Clark explained that with the new civilian councils, "They use their real names, you know who they are, and you can go talk to them. That structure, by its very nature, is more open and accessible … The more the [Zapatistas' military wing] internally shifts power over to the civilian structure, the easier it is for outsiders to come in and just interact with it" (Interview, 2008). Carla Martin, who runs a Chiapas human rights organization, said, "The councils have changed everything, because they provide a civil structure. For the actors in the

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middle, that's a lot more comfortable" (Interview, 2008). Organizations now know how to interact with the Zapatista leadership. David Jones, who had described people popping up in the middle of the night in his early years of solidarity, went on, "The formation of the Good Government Councils established a civilian structure that made it very straightforward and easy for us to know how to get answers, how to put in questions, how to make decisions … Now, it's easy; you just go knock on the door and wait forever" (Interview, 2008). Though, as David suggests, the councils sometimes made collaboration more tedious, respondents almost universally appreciated the structure they provided.

The autonomous councils have also rendered intermediary organizations, such as those that had previously misappropriated support, unnecessary. Teresa Flores, who worked for the Zapatistas' movement-run coordinating organization from 1997 to 2005, explained, "In the Caracol [autonomous regional seat] where I was working, the council has Internet, they have a phone, so the office in San Cristobal is becoming less necessary … of course it remains as a way to channel resources that have to go through an NGO, but for any resources that don't have to go through an NGO, most people now just channel them directly" (Interview, 2008). Having their own functioning governments, as well as improved infrastructure, lets the Zapatistas engage directly with outsiders, a capability they lacked early on.

Finally, by making the Zapatistas accessible to almost anyone who is interested and willing to wait, the establishment of the autonomous governments has generated a new wave of solidarity that has emerged seeking to reverse dominant power roles. Pablo Gutierrez, who runs popular education workshops, told me that the restructuring of the communities gave him more demand for work (Interview, 2008). Once the autonomous governments began functioning, they became more open. Ethan Jackson, who has worked on the ground in Chiapas since 1997,

commented, "It's complicated to work here, and it takes a lot of patience. But, it's really open, and anybody can do it. You will not understand why stuff works the way it does. But, they are so open. They will talk to anyone that comes in the front door. If you come in with a project or with your organization, they will talk to you, and, at the very least, they'll listen to you" (Interview, 2008). Providing official protocols has given people a way to "plug in." So doing, in conjunction with the Zapatistas' campaign to spread their ideals elsewhere, it has regenerated the Zapatistas' solidarity network with a new kind of supporters. As Jennifer Clark, who watched these shifts occur, described, "By 2003 it grew again. That original group of people had narrowed, and then once there was an official structure where you could plug in, there was a new generation of people. Now, there are again more people working in the communities, but who've entered through that new structure that's more official and more transparent" (Interview, 2008). Having asserted themselves, the Zapatistas have attracted new Northern supporters, people who know of their cause and seek them out, so they can latch onto the legitimacy that comes from being part of such an unusual, oppositional transnational advocacy network.

Conclusion

This analysis suggests that the Zapatistas' oppositional cultural capital and organizational capacity fundamentally shifted both the set of common goals and the balance of power between Southern movements and Northern supporters, providing the Zapatistas with leverage over supporters that existing theories of transnational social movements do not explain. Where optimistic theories claim radical movements converge, the Zapatistas have refused and intervened in outside plans, negotiating and redefining shared ideals. Where pessimistic theories assume money and political power flow primarily from North to South, the Zapatistas' status and

inspiration have spread from South to North. And, where scholars portray an active global civil society impacting passive local communities, the Zapatistas influence and inspire their Northern sympathizers. For the Zapatistas, oppositional cultural capital, based in authenticity, provides the foundation for constructing a radical-democratic ideological stance towards both their opponents and their allies. This form of legitimacy fosters the Zapatistas' empowerment, allowing them to define their interests in distinction to, as well as together with supporters.

The arguments presented in this paper represent only a preliminary attempt to reconstruct existing transnational social movement theories. They are limited by the absence of the Zapatistas' perspective and by radical respondents' likely bias towards overstating the movement's power and understating their own. What's more, the supporters represented here comprise only a tiny segment of the Zapatista support network. To test general claims, oppositional cultural capital and organizational capacity would have to be better understood in other arenas and movements. More information could help specify the nature and mechanisms of Southern leverage. Nonetheless, this case study shows that poor organizations *can* leverage oppositional cultural capital, in conjunction with organizational capacity, to stand up to more powerful sympathizers. It may be possible to do so without sacrificing vitally needed support.

Still, Southern leverage has limits. In this particular case, it is too soon to know whether the Zapatistas' self-assertions will help the movement grow, or even keep it alive. In 2007 and 2008, the Zapatistas have faced diminishing resources and increased violence. Supporters who funded them early on left when the movement shifted its approach. Others, heeding the Zapatistas' call to work towards the same goals in their own homes, have gone to pursue Zapatismo outside of Chiapas.

Furthermore, even if the Zapatistas can achieve their ends, can other marginalized

movements reverse internal power dynamics as they have, taking advantage of outside attentions, even as they maintain both much-needed support and their own dignity? To what extent is the Zapatistas' cachet tied to their uniqueness? How many privileged radicals exist who will voluntarily submit to demands like the Zapatistas'? Unyielding donors are far more common. To begin answering these questions, I reiterate that power is never complete or binary. Social movements in the Global South constantly contest, reshape, and adapt supporters' agendas.[14] This case points to the particular possibilities afforded by legitimacy and strong organization. There may be other possibilities as well. The key question for future research is: how, in what ways, where, and under what conditions can others do the same?

Most pivotally, the Zapatista Movement reveals, practically and theoretically, that neither convergence nor co-optation fully explain transnational advocacy networks. Symbolically, the Zapatistas have expanded the terms on which TANs can operate and be described by placing themselves in control of their partnerships. Writers on both sides of transnational social movement theory project the universality of their own, dominant paradigms of power. Yet, the Zapatistas show that the hierarchies that give Northern supporters leverage to help economically and politically marginalized movements do not inherently echo within transnational advocacy networks, as current scholars assume. Extending both the optimistic and the pessimistic sides of existing theory requires understanding how power flows oppositionally. While taking into account the limits to Southern leverage, a reconstructed theory of transnational social movements must hear the Zapatistas' appeal, articulated in July 2007 at a meeting with sympathizers from around the globe: "Supporters from Mexico and the world, pass the message along to those who are not present. Tell them we are equal" (Fieldnotes, July 28, 2007).

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[14] See, for instance Millie Thayer's (2003) work on the Rural Women Workers' Movement in Brazil or Lesley Wood's (2005) work on the Peoples' Global Action Network.

Appendix A. Methodological Appendix

Methods

My research methods included semi-structured, in-depth interviews, participant observation in Chiapas and the United States, and analysis of documents produced by the EZLN and their sympathizers. Qualitative data was appropriate to this project because it illuminates the back-and-forth negotiations that characterize power relationships in ways that quantitative information, even if it were available, would not capture.

First, in 2007 and 2008, I conducted 32 interviews with leaders from 29 Zapatista solidarity organizations. Each interview lasted between 45 minutes and two hours, with a median of approximately one hour. I defined leaders as people holding titles that indicated status, such as "founder," "director," or "coordinator," or, in the case of collectively-run organizations, as people who had been central members of the organization for more than one year. I interviewed 16 people from 18 organizations that had worked with the Zapatistas before 1999 and 28 people from 19 organizations that had worked with the Zapatistas after 2003 (refer to table below). Twelve respondents had worked with the Zapatistas during both of those periods, and many had participated in multiple organizations simultaneously and/or over time.

Time Periods Represented	Exclusively Pre-1999	Both Periods	Exclusively Post-2003	Sub-Total Pre-1999	Sub-Total Post-2003	Total
Respondents[15]	4	12	16	16	28	**32**
Organizations	10	8	11	18	19	**29**

Respondents included 20 women and 12 men, 20 white Americans or Europeans and 12 Mexicans or Mexican descendents. Seventeen respondents were based in Chiapas and 15 in the United States. Nine of the interviewees were academics, all of whom had also participated in solidarity organizations. The organizations represented focused on more than a dozen issues, from human rights, to education, to open-ended Zapatista solidarity. Of the 29 groups, 18 primarily brought resources to Chiapas, and 11 primarily brought Zapatismo elsewhere.

Interviewing made it possible to describe processes of negotiation between the Zapatistas and their partners, integrate multiple perspectives, and interpret events and frame questions for further research. Interviews allowed me to incorporate individuals who represent a multiplicity of organizations that had collaborated with the Zapatistas in different ways, at different time periods, and over time. They enabled me to collect in-depth descriptions, viewpoints about, and empirical examples of the ways those relationships operate. I could probe individuals' interpretations of events as they compared to each other and to my own observations, complementing participant observation. Interviews also provided information to help me describe the advocacy networks that surround the Zapatista movement.

Interviewing was also practically appropriate. Both the focus of the question and the lack of systematic data (as well as the challenges of collecting statistical samples in a politically sensitive situation) make this question difficult to answer quantitatively. Interviewing provided a relatively efficient way to obtain preliminary empirical information to inform my theoretical inquiry. Interviews speak to undocumented events, such as the negotiations and decision-making processes between donor and beneficiary organizations. Though I could observe dialogues

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[15] Many respondents had worked with multiple organizations, either simultaneously or over time.

between organizations, doing so gave me only a narrow glimpse of the diverse forms in which members of transnational advocacy networks related to each other and of their evolution over time. It would be difficult to gather information about the histories of multiple organizations' relationships to the Zapatista movement without interviewing participants in those organizations.

Because I studied power relationships in a politically sensitive situation, interviews posed some limitations. Organizations and individuals may have repressed information that could be unflattering to them, such as incidents in which they offended the Zapatistas or sought to influence them. Therefore, I also attended three Zapatista conventions in Chiapas; regular meetings of three Zapatista solidarity organizations; and three solidarity group trips to Zapatista territory. In addition, I visited ten sites of organizations. Ethnography provided information and clues to attitudes that may have been biased or obscured in official documents or self reports. By interviewing many of the same people I observed and referring to our shared experiences, I could check people's claims against my observations of their behavior. A comparison between peoples' explicit rhetoric and their practices helped reveal the strategies and myths that people use to justify situations that may not have resonated with their professed beliefs.

Ethnography enabled me both to "get in" and to apply pressure at various levels of the Zapatistas' support network. Many activists surrounding the Zapatista Movement had past negative experiences with unfamiliar outsiders or extractive academics. Some respondents distrusted me or saw me as threatening. Doing interviews would not have been possible without first gaining participants' trust, joining their social networks, and identifying respondents who were well-positioned or willing to discuss their experiences with me. Furthermore, asking to interview unwelcoming Zapatista sympathizers itself served to "create chaos" as Burawoy (1998) would put it, illuminating power dynamics among the Zapatistas' sympathizers. Likewise, my own failed attempts to gain research permission from the Zapatistas revealed how I was constrained by the very point I intended to make. I applied for, but could not obtain, permission to conduct research within Zapatista communities. As I would have predicted, the Zapatistas stalled until I ran out of time, tightly controlled access and the flow of information.

Lastly, I used Zapatista writing, group websites, newspaper articles, and other case studies to document the Zapatistas' official rhetoric and supplement my descriptions of their relationships with outsiders, particularly in the first phase of the Zapatistas' struggle. This gave me a baseline to compare against outside activists' viewpoints and word of mouth descriptions of the "unofficial" Zapatista stance. Sympathetic organizations' websites also provided background information, organizational histories, and confirmation of ethnographic and interview evidence. In newspaper articles, I found descriptions of events and anecdotes that I could compare to and contrast with respondents' accounts. Other scholars' interviews and empirical case studies also provided shadow cases against which to confirm my analyses. In particular, such documents helped describe the Zapatistas' early experiences, which I would be unable to observe firsthand.

Sample & Recruitment

To explain how and why the Zapatistas have been able to influence their supporters, a case study logic made the most sense. Not only would a statistical sample be inappropriate, but also, given the vast numbers of Zapatista supporters worldwide and their fluidity and diversity, it would be impossible to take a representative sample of them. I therefore relied on a logic of sequential interviewing, treating each organization as a separate "case" that would speak to my research question (Small 2007). I also recruited academic respondents to speak to the particular relationship between the Zapatistas and researchers. I conducted both "literal replication,"

seeking out similar cases to determine whether the same mechanisms were at play, and "theoretical replication," seeking out cases that differed theoretically. Specifically, existing theories differentiated power relationship within TANs based on geography ("North" vs. "South"), organizational theme or goals, and category of solidarity (material providers vs. non-material allies). I looked for respondents who differed along those axes. In addition, I strove to include respondents who would make it possible to compare the Zapatistas' early years to their recent history. Therefore, I included people who had supported the movement throughout, as well as people who had only experienced one phase or the other. Though the organizations included were not representative, they spoke to the variation in ways of relating to the Zapatistas and the evolution of transnational advocacy relationships over time.

I recruited respondents using two snowball samples, one in Chiapas and another in California. I selected these locations in part for convenience and in part because they promised to speak to geographical (North/South) differences in ways of relating to the Zapatistas.[16] I limited my sample to two sites, because I wanted to explore both variation and organizational network structures in particular locations. To begin recruiting, I compiled existing lists[17] into a comprehensive list of documented Zapatista-affiliated groups in each of these sites. I then contacted every member of the list by email to request an interview. I followed up by phone, visited and interviewed them if they agreed, and took note of their responses if they refused. For reasons already mentioned, my initial response rate was very low.

My sample remained limited to the people willing to talk to me. Almost no one agreed to an interview without a personal reference familiar to her, and many refused to speak with me altogether. However, it is unlikely that the differences between those included and not affected the data relevant to my question. On the contrary, in sampling people who may have been less critical of dominant power hierarchies than those unwilling to talk with me because of my status as a white, American academic, I may have been better able to see how the Zapatistas overturned or challenged such hierarchies with less radical supporters. Furthermore, the refusal of many recruits to talk to me – and the ways they stated their refusals – provided an additional set of observational evidence about how organizations relate and respond to academic researchers.

I eventually recruited most respondents through snowball samples in social networks in which I had gained trust. I used my participation in Zapatista events and delegations to get to know solidarity leaders. Then, I asked them to put me in contact with other group leaders I knew about or that they might suggest, based on my research question. The snowball method spoke to the structure of interrelationships between Zapatista support organizations and the ways information and ideas flowed among them. As needed, I went to lengths to obtain personal contacts with organizations that provided variation by geography, category of solidarity, and focus of work, as mentioned above. This proved particularly important with non-material Zapatista groups and collectives, which were less documented than those directly contributing material resources to the movement. Once contacted, I interviewed every group leader or academic who agreed to speak with me. I selected one to three leaders within each organization, because they could provide information about the organization's history and decision-making.

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[16] These sites do not necessarily represent the nexus of Zapatista support globally. Much Zapatista support has come from Europe, particularly Spain and Italy. However, I selected them because, as described, they effectively spoke to the theoretical divisions my research sought to address.

[17] Specifically, I drew from Thomas Olesen's (2005) list of global Zapatista solidarity organizations, Xochitl Leyva Solano's (2001) list of participants in the neo-Zapatista network, Lynn Stephen and Jonathan Fox's (2002) list of U.S.-based Zapatista solidarity organizations, Enlace Civil's list of community-civil society partnerships (2001), Radio Zapatista's list of Zapatista collectives (2007), and an online list of NGOs in Chiapas (2007).

Challenges, Biases, and the Role of the Researcher

I encountered many challenges in the data collection process. First, my position as a white, American academic shaped the way people responded to me. Many respondents and potential respondents distrusted me or gave me curt answers and vague information. Some told me that this had to do with my being a white, American academic. Building off of the Zapatistas' indigenous identity-based claims, anti-American Mexican nationalism, and anti-globalization sentiments that target the U.S., many Zapatista supporters distrust and dislike U.S. Americans and/or white people. Meanwhile, streams of academics have exploited and extracted information from movement participants, often without bringing insights or information back to informants. In the worst cases, they have used this information to malign the Zapatistas or make it easier to harm them.[18] Academics also represent yet another outsider in a place where many outsiders want to believe they have unique relationships with the indigenous people.

Though I could not avoid this distrust, I could consider it an empirical phenomenon that spoke to academics' role in power dynamics among the Zapatistas and their supporters. To assuage the tension, I spent time as a participant observer and used snowball samples to get to know respondents as well as possible before interviewing them. When people reacted negatively to me, I let them know the intentions of my study and solicited their help. If they continued to rebuff me, I considered their reactions data, reflecting on what lay behind the hostility.

Second, respondents had incentives to portray their own actions in a positive light and gloss over conflicts that would reveal the kind of power relations I hoped to discuss. Many respondents were understandably determined to show a particular picture of themselves as respectful of and intimate with the Zapatistas. Their self-image and their raison d'être relied on believing that they were not harming or imposing on the Zapatistas. Often, they would claim that they never wielded "soft power" over the Zapatistas. I handled this, first, by looking at the context and motivations behind respondents' portrayals of their alliances with the Zapatistas. Then, I compared what respondents said with others' accounts of their actions and with my own observations of the ways they related to the movement. Contradictions in those sets of data revealed how respondents might be twisting their accounts and suggested potential reasons for doing so. I also used respondents' depictions their relationships as information about their perceptions, rather than as strictly factual accounts of power dynamics within their alliances.

Third, respondents often offered vague accounts. Generalized narratives most closely approximated public information and avoided what some may have seen as "airing dirty laundry," or embarrassing incidents. Occasionally, when I asked for specifics, interviewees balked and hedged away from the issue. In addition, because I had less knowledge of and intimacy with the Zapatista movement than most respondents, it may have seemed appropriate for them to give me their analyses rather than describing events and leaving me to analyze. In these instances, I attempted to explain why specific stories were relevant to my project or might help us both reflect analytically on Zapatista-centered transnational advocacy networks. Rather than framing the interviews as interrogations, I endeavored to build dialogues, wherein the respondent and I, together, puzzled through the set of questions I present here.

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[18] For instance, Jimena Rivera, a Chiapas-based researcher, commented, "At the moment, they're closing off spaces for any research, because recently a study was published that tries to discredit the movement and treat the movement in a very disrespectful way from the Zapatistas' – and many other people's - point of view" (Interview, 2008). She mentioned that the book, *La Comunidad Armada Rebelde y el EZLN,* came out in 2007 (see Estrada Saavedra 2007).

Appendix B. Interview Schedule

Personal
To give me some background about your personal history with the Zapatistas, please start by
    listing the organizations you've worked with that have had any kind of relationship with
    the Zapatistas and/or individual work you've done with the Zapatistas. Please tell me
    what the organization's (or your personal) goals and activities were, when you worked
    with them, and what role you played.
Why did you connect to the Zapatistas to begin with?
Why have you continued doing solidarity work with the Zapatistas?
How did you come to support the Zapatistas rather than other radical movements that have [the
    features that attracted you to the Zapatistas – refer to above]?
    [In what ways do the Zapatistas inspire you?]
What do you disagree with the Zapatistas about? [Philosophies, goals, strategies?]
What did you do or think about differently before you became involved with the Zapatistas?
How has working with or knowing the Zapatistas changed your way of talking about or doing
    things in your own life?
If you work with other organizations [*e.g.* Abejas, other Central America, etc], how does the
    Zapatistas' effect on you differ from those groups' effect?
What have you learned from Zapatistas that you could apply at home?
How have you done so? [OR: Why don't you think the Zs' goals and strategies apply at home?]

Organizational
How does your current [or past] organization's relationship to the Zapatistas work?
    How are the Zapatistas important to your organization? [What special role do they play?]
What ideas or resources do you give the Zapatistas and how?
What ideas or resources do you get from the Zapatistas and how?
How does your organization get new ideas for projects or activities related to the Zapatistas?
How does your organization decide how you are going to spend your (limited) money and time?
How have the Zapatistas set limits or constraints on your actions, if at all?
    What makes you willing to accept those constraints?
How did your work with the Zapatistas differ before and after they set these constraints?
    [How did it differ before and after the opening of the Good Government Councils?]
For organizations that have direct contact only:
    Tell me about a time when the Zapatistas confronted or questioned you, big or small.
    Tell me about a time when you confronted or questioned them.
Describe important times when the Zapatistas confronted or questioned other outside groups.
    How did these episodes affect your work?
How has working with the Zapatistas made your organization change your way of talking or
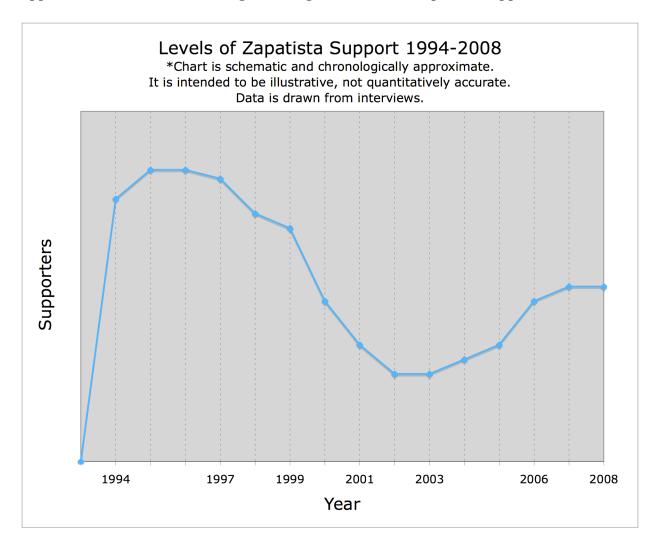   acting in your work with them?
How has working with the Zapatistas made your organization change your way of talking or
    acting within the organization or in other locations?
    [What did you do differently as an organization when you first started supporting them?]
How has the presence of your organization impacted the Zapatistas?
What have been your biggest challenges in working with the Zapatistas? Why?
What have been your greatest accomplishments in working with the Zapatistas? Why?

Appendix C. Schematic Drawing of Changes in Levels of Zapatista Support over Time.

Levels of Zapatista Support 1994-2008
*Chart is schematic and chronologically approximate.
It is intended to be illustrative, not quantitatively accurate.
Data is drawn from interviews.

Appendix D. Timeline of the Zapatista Movement's Engagement with Outsiders

Jan 1994	Zapatistas rise up, taking over eight Chiapas cities.
Dec 1994	Zapatistas declare autonomy in 38 indigenous municipalities
Feb 1995	Mexican army offensive takes 1/3 of rebel zone. Zapatistas announce five new "Aguascalientes," centers of resistance and dialogue and call for international presence.
Aug 1995	Zapatistas hold National and International Consultation to define their struggle.
Jan 1996	Zapatistas create Zapatista Front for National Liberation (FZLN) as political arm
Feb 1996	San Andres Peace Accords between the Zapatistas and the Mexican govenrment signed, never to be honored.
July 1996	Zapatistas host "First Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism." 5000 people from 42 countries attend.
1996	Zapatistas form Enlace Civil to manage Zapatista-outsider relations
1997	AYUDA, the coordinator of Zapatista solidarity and human rights support from 1994-1997, dissolves due to internal conflict and Zapatista questioning
1997	Zapatistas declare "red alert" (closure of communities) due to military incursions
Nov 1997	45 members of the independent group Las Abejas massacred in Acteal
1998-1999	Hundreds of foreigners expelled by government of Ernesto Zedillo
Mar 1999	Zapatistas hold a second National Consultation
May 1999	Zapatistas host "Second Encounter for Humanity and against Neoliberalism"
1999	Some Zapatista regional governments begin to demand that NGOs be accountable to them and distribute contributions evenly among communities
2000	Vicente Fox elected as president of Mexico, ushering in "democracy."
	NGO money and operations destined for Mexico begin to scale back.
Jan-Mar 2001	Zapatistas lead March for Indigenous Dignity (also known as March of the Colors of the Earth and March of the 1,111) from Chiapas to Mexico City to demand indigenous rights and fulfillment of San Andres Accords
Sep 2001	September 11 attacks on the United States further decrease funding for Zapatistas
2001-2002	Zapatistas remain silent for two years, break with the political class (especially the PRD party) for failing to follow through on the San Andres Accords
2002	Many foreign organizations like Global Exchange and Witness for Peace close their offices in Chiapas due to lack of funds
Jan 2003	Zapatistas break the silence and "retake" San Cristobal de las Casas
July 2003	Zapatistas announce the formation of five "Caracoles" or regional centers of resistance, to replace the previous "Aguascalientes." They form civilian governing structures called "Good Government Councils" to shift power away

from the military, and they demand to regain local control over decision making being carried out by NGOs. They criticize useless donations.

June 2005   Zapatistas announce a "red alert" and the closure of the caracoles.

July 2005   Zapatistas give the "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle" announcing that they will restructure the EZLN and will try to link up with national and international struggles in a new program called "The Other Campaign"

Aug-Sep 2005 Zapatistas hold meetings in Chiapas with outside supporters to prepare the Other Campaign. The first of these attracts 2000 outsiders.

Nov 2005   Zapatistas disband inner solidarity circle, dismantling the FZLN, eliminating the exclusive role of Enlace Civil as coordinator of NGO partnerships with Zapatista communities, and de-authorizing *Revista Rebeldía* as the sole official outlet of Zapatista intellectuals.

Jan 2006   The Other Campaign begins a "Listening Tour" around Mexico.

May 2006   Protestors are abused and raped in Atenco and the Zapatistas declare a Red Alert in Chiapas in solidarity and suspend the Other Campaign.

June 2006   Felipe Calderon wins the contested Mexican presidential election over Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Ex-Zapatista advisors denounce the Zapatistas for detracting from Antonio Manuel Lopez Obrador's presidential bid by dismissing formal politics and discouraging voting.

Fall 2007   Paramilitary and military threats increase in Chiapas

Dec 2008   Subcomandante Marcos announces he will withdraw from the public eye. Many close to the movement suggest it will announce a new program in late 2008.

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