journal of peace RESEARCH

Zapatista and counter-Zapatista protests: A test of movement–countermovement dynamics

Journal of Peace Research
49(3) 459–472

DOI: 10.1177/0022343311434238
jpr.sagepub.com
SAGE

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Abstract

This study represents the first systematic analysis of the interactions between pro-Zapatista and counter-Zapatista protestors in Chiapas, Mexico, and the first empirical test of movement–countermovement theories in a transitional democracy. Three claims are tested: (1) movement protests trigger countermovement protest activity; (2) different political parties at different levels of government trigger movement–countermovement protest activity; and (3) victories won by one side of a conflict, viewed as procedural concessions, trigger further pro- and countermovement protest activity. These hypotheses are tested using negative binomial models and data on Zapatista-related protest activity between 1994 and 2003. The results show that: (1) movement and countermovement protests have a positive, reciprocal effect on both groups' future protest activity; (2) movement and countermovement protesting groups use the dominant political party as a target of protest. The characteristics of the electoral cycle and rise of multi-party competition at all levels of government do not have a consistent effect on protest activity; (3) granting procedural concessions to pro-movement actors generates more protest activity among both groups. However, granting procedural concessions via social programs and public works to the population irrespective of its sympathy to either side of the movement–countermovement conflict decreases movement protests and increases countermovement protests.

Keywords

divided government, elections, movement–countermovement, procedural concessions, protests, Zapatistas

In 1996, David Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg opened a door to the understudied field of movement and countermovement dynamics by proposing 14 different hypotheses to be tested by future researchers. They argued that support for these hypotheses could come from three different types of studies: comparisons between movements that do and do not generate countermovements; comparisons of different, historical movement–countermovement conflicts; and cross-national comparisons of movements and countermovements (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996: 1631). Scholars have responded to this call by undertaking various studies to test the proposed claims. Kenneth Andrews (2002) analyzed the intended and unintended effects of movement versus countermovement mobilization in his study of 'white-flight' schools in Mississippi, finding that pro-movement victories generated opportunities for countermovement mobilization. Lee Ann Banaszak & Heather Ondercin (2009) looked at the effects of media coverage on generating countermovements during the development of the US women's movement. Joseph Luders (2003) investigated the interactions among countermovements (and varying state and federal government responses to countermovements) in

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the context of racially contentious politics in the American South. Aaron McCright & Riley Dunlap (2000) studied the conservative anti-global warming movement and analyzed how countermovement claims influence public opinion about social problems. Michael Peckham (1998) looked at how Scientologists and their critics have used the Internet in their opposing campaigns. Finally, Regina Werum & Bill Winders (2001) analyzed how gay rights movement and countermovement actors use different tactics when targeting different levels of government.

All these studies look at movement and countermovement interactions in the United States. Very few theoretical insights have been drawn from movement–countermovement dynamics elsewhere (Della Porta & Diani, 1999). There are a few empirical studies based on European movement–countermovement interactions (Maguire, 1993), but no such studies exist on Latin American movement–countermovement relations. Furthermore, there are no studies that test the relationships and consequences of movement–countermovement activity in transitional democracies. This study does both. First, it offers an analysis of the interaction between movement and countermovement protesters in Latin America. By testing theoretical claims developed from studies of social movements in stable Western democracies against the reality of mobilizations in Mexico during the 1990s, this study offers a robustness test to these propositions. To the extent the claims are not confirmed, this study provides a correction to the movement–countermovement literature and new insights into how movement and countermovement actors behave within transitional democracies. Second, it offers a new perspective on the development of the Zapatista conflict in Chiapas, Mexico. The Zapatista uprising, as the most influential social movement in Mexico in the last 20 years and catalyst for indigenous rights campaigns around the world, has been widely studied. But this is the first quantitative analysis of the contentious interactions between pro- and counter-Zapatista actors in the region. The study examines the effects of specific governmental responses to pro- and counter-Zapatista demands on mobilization activities, which allows for better understanding of the inter- and intracommunity conflicts generated by the Zapatista movement in the northern Lacandon jungle regions (Agudo, 2005, 2007; Estrada, 2007).

The Zapatista movement emerged after an armed suprising by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or EZLN) on 1 January 1994. Direct military hostilities between the EZLN and the Mexican Army ended after just 12 days, but the Zapatista movement was born. Its overall mission was to demand basic rights for the least privileged segment of the Mexican population: the peasant Indians of Chiapas. During the armed conflict, Zapatista sympathizers and unaffiliated peasant groups seized land from rich cattle ranchers, coffee producers, and other peasant communities. Support for the Zapatistas' cause grew rapidly inside and outside the region due in part to the legitimacy of the Zapatistas' claims of impoverishment in rural Mexico and in part to national and international media portrayals of the war as a David and Goliath fight between the underdog EZLN and the dominant Mexican federal army. Righteous cause or not, affected landowners immediately demanded compensation for their losses, which launched a cycle of pro- and counter-Zapatista protest across the 111 *municipios* of Chiapas that lasted for nearly a decade.

Pro-Zapatista protestors included residents in the zone of conflict, students, peasants, human rights activists, and members of some nongovernmental organizations in the region. Counter-Zapatista protest groups were formed by cattle ranchers and coffee producers, businessmen concerned about the economic impacts of armed conflict, and Chiapas residents who condemned violence in favor of stability. The counter-Zapatista movement also included rural communities and peasant organizations affiliated with the authoritarian political party, the Revolutionary Institutional Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional or PRI). As Figure 1 shows, this pro- and counter-protest activity continued over the years as new conflicts erupted between Zapatista and non-Zapatista supporters and each side launched demonstrations designed to get attention from the federal government. Both sides conducted marches, road blockings, rallies, meetings, sit-ins, strikes, and land and building seizures. Although pro-Zapatista protest events usually drew more people and lasted longer than counter-Zapatista protest events, the countermovement survived as long as the Zapatistas. Waves of protest by the two groups followed more or less the same pattern: there was an initial spike in activity during the first two years, a significant decrease in mobilizations during 1997 and 1998, an increase in protests around 2000 and 2001, and a final decline during the last two years of the period studied. The ebb and

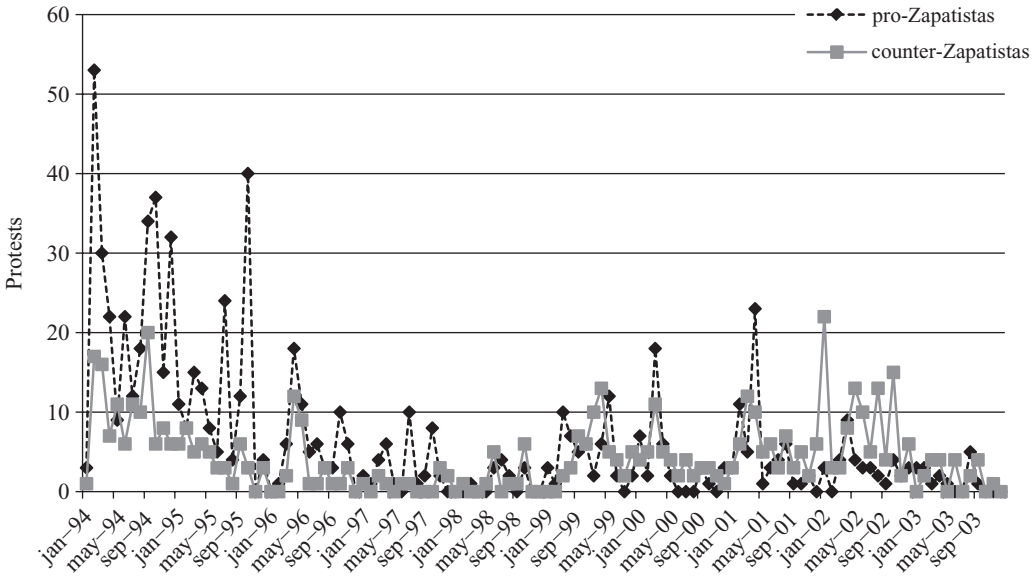

Figure 1. Pro- and counter-Zapatista protests, 1994–2003

flow of protests coincides with major events surrounding the Chiapas conflict. The military attacks by the EZLN in 1994 sparked the initial increase in protest activity by both pro- and counter-Zapatista groups. As time passed and demonstrations lost the element of surprise and innovation, protest activity on both sides decreased. Also dampening activism was the heavy military presence in *municipios* across Chiapas, especially during 1997 and 1998 as inter- and intra-community conflicts intensified. A resurgence in protest activity coincided with the 2000 federal elections, which brought the PRI's 70-year reign to an end. The establishment of electoral democracy brought new hope to social movement actors across Mexico, and they intensified their efforts vis-à-vis a more open state. But as the Zapatistas began to turn away from using direct protest activity as a tactic for pressing the Mexican government to respond to their demands, counter-Zapatista organizing diminished considerably. By 2003, the Zapatistas had turned to the construction of their autonomous authorities exclusively, ending the cycle of protest.

The fact that pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity went on for so long makes this a good test case for some of the movement–countermovement hypotheses proposed by Meyer & Staggenborg in 1996. The time lapse makes it possible to analyze not only the relationship between movement and countermovement protests over time, but also the effects of changing political conditions on protest activity. Differentiated government responses to each group's demands affected both movement and countermovement protest behavior.

Until 1994, the PRI controlled all local governments in Chiapas. Electoral reform brought new parties into office. These changes opened new opportunities for political access and mobilization to previously neglected social groups like the Zapatistas. They also created incentives for groups who had enjoyed prerogatives, rights, and benefits under the PRI regime to protest the new parties in power to protect their interests. This study analyzes the behavior of these social movement actors within the new electoral environment to test whether pro- and countermovement actors aimed their protests at a specific party, whether having multiple parties in power at the local and national levels encouraged protest activity, and whether transitional elections played a role in triggering protest activity on either side of the conflict.

Protest–counterprotest dynamics

In 1996, Meyer & Staggenborg proposed 14 different hypotheses for explaining movement–countermovement dynamics. The data available on the movement–countermovement protest dynamics on the

Zapatista movement have been used to test three of these propositions.[1] First, I analyze the proposition that successful protest movements spark countermovement protest activity (Proposition 2). Pro- and counter-Zapatista interaction offers a good test of this hypothesis because both movements arose in a context of changing political conditions while its original proposition was supposed to hold under stable democratic conditions. Second, I investigate whether a divided government tends to trigger movement–countermovement conflicts (Proposition 1). Given that the Chiapas conflict began just as electoral reforms were being enacted, it is possible to test the impact of a transitional environment and the role of emerging political parties on protest activity. Finally, I look at whether victories won by one side of a conflict tend to trigger further pro- and countermovement protest activity (Proposition 7). I extend this proposition by analyzing how different types of government responses impact the behavior of protest groups.

Movement–countermovement interaction

Meyer & Staggenborg's (1996: 1638) second proposition states that 'when movements effectively create or exploit events, they are likely to encourage countermovement mobilization at the same time that they advance their own causes'. The more successful these events are, the more countermobilization they create.

The images of an uneven war between the Mexican federal army and the poorly-armed indigenous guerrillas of Chiapas that circulated in print, broadcast, and virtual media triggered a strong social movement with a wide audience and support base. The affected landowners, seeing the favorable attention being generated for the Zapatistas, began a counter-Zapatista protest movement to demand compensation for their losses. (Some non-Zapatista communities in the conflict zone later joined the counter-Zapatista mobilization efforts, calling attention to the intercommunity nature of the conflict.) Figure 1 shows how pro- and counter-Zapatista protests followed more or less the same ebb and flow, although at different rates. Counter-Zapatista actions followed relevant Zapatista mobilization efforts, EZLN actions, and periods when the EZLN negotiated with the Mexican federal government. Triggering events included the EZLN's uprising in January 1994, the land seizures that followed, the Zapatistas' peaceful seizure of 38 municipal governments in December 1994, and the National Democratic Convention held in Zapatista territory in August 1995. The opposite dynamic also occurred. Major counter-Zapatista events drove pro-Zapatista mobilizations. The massacre of 45 Zapatista sympathizers in Acteal, Chiapas, in December 1997 was followed by massive pro-Zapatista demonstrations calling for an end to hostilities. The same thing occurred after violent intercommunity conflicts in northern Chiapas between Zapatistas and the PRI-affiliated organization, *Paz y Justicia*, between 1997 and 1999. To test whether these pro- and counter-Zapatista protest events had a systematic effect on each other and drove future protest activity, the following hypothesis is suggested:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Mobilizing events conducted by one side of the conflict tend to trigger protest mobilization by its counterpart.

Movement–countermovement interaction, divided authority, and transitional elections

In their first proposition, Meyer & Staggenborg (1996: 1637) state that 'movement–countermovement conflicts are more likely to emerge in states with divided government authority'. They hypothesize that a federal system in which different levels of government are run by different political parties allows movement and countermovement actors alike to find political allies and political targets in government bureaucracy. Depending on which side's allies are in positions of power, one side will have greater access to government and the other side will conduct more protests. What represents a political opportunity for one side represents an obstacle for the other. Other authors have suggested that movements grow when they have influential political allies (Cress & Snow, 2000; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Tarrow, 1994). When such alliances endure and the movement gets closer to achieving policy changes, protest activity decreases (Jenkins et al., 2003; Minkoff, 1997). But when such

[1] Other limitations derive from the characteristics of the development of the Zapatista movement. For example, given that counter-Zapatista actors were not able 'to portray their conflict as one entailing larger cleavages in society' (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996: 1639), then Meyer & Staggenborg's hypothesis related to how movement and countermovement actors use national public opinion to gain leverage cannot be tested here. Although the Zapatista movement generated large collective action efforts and was able to control the framing of the Indigenous movement in the country, counter-Zapatista demands never reached national or international relevance. This also makes it impossible to test Meyer & Staggenborg's proposition regarding the ability of these actors to use frames and demands to threaten powerful existing interests. Media coverage of the Chiapas conflict was massive, both at the national and international levels. This, as Meyer & Staggenborg suggest in their fifth proposition, most likely encouraged counter-Zapatista actors to mobilize. However, precisely because the same media outlets covered pro- and counter-Zapatista activity, it is difficult to assess the systematic effect of mass media on the mobilization of each side of the conflict.

alliances do not lead to a realization of the movement's goals, having the cover of powerful political allies empowers the movement to pursue more contentious means of struggle (Della Porta & Diani, 1999; Katzenstein & Mueller, 1987; Kriesi et al., 1995). In 2008, Kathleen Bruhn investigated whether changes in power in young democracies had an effect on the protest behavior of various urban dissident organizations in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico City. Her results showed that dissident actors tended to target political parties during their first year in office, in order to influence the new government's agenda.

Pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activities in Chiapas provide a useful case study to test these claims. First, I analyze whether the electoral democratization of Mexico's federal system during the 1990s and the end of one-party rule encouraged protest activity. Second, I identify whether movement and countermovement actors targeted potential political allies and opponents with their protest activities. Third, I look for a temporal trend in protests directed against parties new to power.

Relatively transparent and competitive elections began being conducted in Mexico after the electoral reforms in the 1990s. From 1929 to 1994, the PRI dominated politics in Chiapas by preventing opposition parties from participation and manipulating election results. Finally, in 1995, the PRI faced the first of what would be many local electoral defeats. The rightist National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional or PAN) won four municipalities, and the leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Democrática or PRD) won 18 localities.[2] By 2001, the PRI had lost a total of 46 out of 111 local governments. At the state level, the PRI continued to dominate politics throughout the 1990s.[3] The first non-PRI governor of Chiapas since the Mexican Revolution, Pablo Salazar Mendiguchía, was elected in 2000.

Despite these electoral defeats, the PRI was able to maintain strong ties to the landowning elite in the region and to peasant organizations loyal to the PRI-affiliated National Confederation of Peasants (Confederación Nacional Campesina or CNC), neither of whom supported the Zapatistas. Other scholars have also highlighted the fact that electoral democratization was not enough to destroy the PRI's strong clientelistic relationships with elites, corporatist labor, and peasant unions (Fox, 1994; Camp, 2007). The PRI formed alliances with counter-Zapatista groups for mutual benefit. Counter-Zapatista organizations, like *Paz y Justicia* in northern Chiapas, worked to restore the former political order. In exchange, the PRI provided legal cover for their actions. When 45 Zapatista sympathizers were massacred in the highlands of Acteal, Chiapas, in 1997, their crimes were also covered-up by the local PRI (Agudo, 2005, 2007). The massacre itself was the natural, tragic consequence of prolonged anti-Zapatista organizing permitted by local PRI authorities (Hirales, 1998). Other counter-Zapatista actions were covered up by the PRI in the Lacandon Jungle (Estrada, 2007; Washbrook, 2005).

The EZLN, in contrast, never formed the same attachment to a political party. In a communiqué published on 18 January 1994, Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos rejected an offer from the PRD to form an alliance, arguing that Zapatistas did not have the support of any political party and that no party was truly willing to take up their cause. Nevertheless, many Zapatista supporters were sympathetic to the PRD's political agenda. While the PRD condemned the initial Zapatista uprising, the party supported Zapatista demands. In the end, competition for control over local jurisdictions and the PRD's unwillingness to promote the Zapatista agenda once in power led to a final split.

Following Meyer & Staggenborg's proposition, it is expected that having different parties rule different levels of government should increase protest activity. It is also expected that protestors would have less incentive to mobilize against government offices held by their political allies (Jenkins et al., 2003; Minkoff, 1997). PRI sympathizers should have protested less in PRI-ruled localities and more in PRD-ruled localities. Similarly, in the early years, the Zapatistas should have protested more in PRI strongholds and less in PRD-run *municipios*. In the long run, the Zapatistas should have protested in both PRI- and PRD-ruled localities, once the

[2] Source: Instituto Federal Electoral, http://www.ife.org.mx.

[3] However, as tensions surrounding the conflict in Chiapas increased, the government of Chiapas was led by five different *PRIista* governors from 1994 to 2000. At the time of the uprising, Elmar Setzer Marseille was interim governor. In the immediate aftermath of the Zapatista uprising, Elmar Setzer Marseille was replaced by Javier López Moreno on 18 January 1994. López Moreno governed until 18 December of that year, when Eduardo Robledo Rincón took office, wining the state elections under a cloud of allegations of electoral fraud. Because of strong dissatisfaction with his government, Robledo Rincón remained in power only until 14 February 1995, when Julio César Ruiz Fierro was appointed interim governor. After the Acteal massacre in December 1997, Ruiz Fierro was replaced by Roberto Albores Guillén.

PRD proved to be an ineffectual ally and solely concerned with winning elections (Marcos, 2000).

Electoral campaigns and elections could also trigger protest, especially during transitional moments. Given the uncertainty that surrounds the first free and fair elections in a transitional democracy, it is common for the citizenry to be highly motivated to participate in the elections and express their political preferences and socioeconomic grievances through mobilization events. The same uncertainty can also trigger post-electoral mobilizations, especially if the losers are suspicious of the electoral outcomes. While the movement's momentum is still high, people see these post-electoral periods as an opportunity to exert pressure on the incoming government. Finally, according to Bruhn (2008), pro- and counter-Zapatista protestors should have protested more during the first year of a new regime in order to influence the government's agenda.

In the case of pro- and counter-Zapatista mobilization during Mexico's transition to electoral democracy, I expect to observe the following propositions:

> *Hypothesis 2a:* Having different parties in power at local and federal levels of government tends to trigger protest events from movement and countermovement actors.
>
> *Hypothesis 2b:* Protestors tend to target parties who are not their political allies.
>
> *Hypothesis 2c:* Protest activity from pro- and countermovement actors tends to increase around elections, particularly during a transitional period.
>
> *Hypotheses 2d:* Regardless of political alliances, pro- and countermovement groups tend to protest more in the first year a party is in power.

Movement–countermovement interaction and procedural concessions

The final Meyer & Staggenborg hypothesis tested in this study is Proposition 7, which suggests that 'a victory for one side will spur the other in a movement–countermovement conflict. In the long run, neither side can maintain itself without victories; the side that fails to win any victories over many years will decline' (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996: 1647). Other scholars studying the effects that concessions have on mobilization have shown that they tend to have a positive effect on future protest activity, especially when concessions are only partial (Rasler, 1996; Goldstone & Tilly, 2001). William Gamson (1990) defined partial concessions as low-level accommodations granted by the state to dissident actors as a signal of its willingness to negotiate. Partial concessions even tend to increase protest activity by the affected groups when implemented by a new regime as part of a major package of reforms (Olzak, Beasley & Olivier, 2002). Partial victories trigger further mobilization because activists have hope of achieving additional, significant victories. (Protest activity diminishes as concessions become more specific and substantial.)[4] Partial concessions not only trigger further mobilization by the victorious actors, but by their counterparts as well. Seeing their competitors win concessions has a tendency to stimulate unrest.

I consider most of the concessions granted to the Zapatistas to be partial or procedural, rather than substantial. They were intended only to manage the conflict and maintain a tense but peaceful truce. These concessions signaled the government's willingness to negotiate, but did not represent any willingness on the part of the authorities to concede to the movement's demands. This study recognizes two types of partial concessions. First, the federal government granted procedural concessions to the Zapatistas during negotiations, which included suspending arrest warrants against rebel leaders; creating Zapatista controlled areas (*zonas francas*);[5] freeing political prisoners; creating a mediation commission with representatives from all political parties in the legislature (Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación or COCOPA) and a mediation commission formed by the Bishop of San Cristobal de las Casas (Comisión Nacional de Intermediación or CONAI);[6] and removing military checkpoints around Zapatista supporting communities.

Second, local governments granted procedural concessions in the form of increased expenditures on

[4] Giugni (2008) highlights that specific opportunities and discursive contexts tend to be more influential on minority groups' claims and their success than general political opportunities. In this case, claims from counter-Zapatistas were directly related to the losses they suffered from the emergence of the EZLN. Thus, responding to these claims was easier for the government than responding to Zapatista demands. At the same time, compensation claims were difficult to maintain vis-à-vis the Zapatistas' push for recognition of indigenous autonomy. Hence, counter-Zapatista protests decreased sooner than pro-Zapatista events.

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

[6] Bishop Samuel Ruiz proposed the formation of the CONAI in August 1994 to foster the resumption of a dialogue between the EZLN and the federal government. After President Ernest Zedillo was inaugurated in December 1994, the COCOPA was also created. It was formed by legislators from all parties in Congress to make it representative and give it an air of independence from the executive branch.

public works and social programs.[7] Public works and social programs received additional funding to curtail inter- and intracommunity conflict and assuage protesting groups in pro- and counter-Zapatista communities alike. They are considered procedural concessions in that they indirectly help the federal government maintain a peaceful negotiating environment with protest groups from both sides. By responding to protesters' demands by increasing public works and social program expenditures, the government may have been incentivizing additional protest activity.

There are a number of relevant examples of federal procedural concessions to the Zapatistas. In March 1995, President Ernesto Zedillo signed the Law for Dialogue, Reconciliation and Just Peace in Chiapas, which guaranteed the suspension of military operations against the EZLN and the suspension of arrest warrants against EZLN leaders for the duration of negotiations. The EZLN accepted the Law for Dialogue and met with representatives of the federal government, the COCOPA, and the CONAI in San Miguel, Ocosingo, soon thereafter to discuss the agenda for upcoming peace talks. Negotiations between the EZLN and the federal government were held off and on from 1995 to 1996 that came to be known as the Dialogues of San Andrés. The EZLN and government negotiating delegations signed the first draft of the so-called San Andrés Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture in February 1996.[8] The EZLN and the government met again in August 1996 to discuss democracy and justice, but no further agreements were reached. Since no consensus could be reached, the government proposed to leave this subject for later talks and move on to the next topic, wealth and development. In the meantime, President Zedillo's advisers reviewed the first set of San Andrés Accords and declared them to be unconstitutional.

In 2000, President Vicente Fox signaled his willingness to negotiate with the Zapatistas by declaring his support for the original Indigenous Rights Bill that had come out of the San Andrés Accords in 1996 and sending it to the legislature for consideration. Fox also dismantled seven military stations surrounding the Zapatista region of influence. This hopeful period was short-lived. In the end, the Senate passed a diluted version of the San Andrés Accords that satisfied neither the Zapatistas nor their supporters within Mexico's indigenous rights movement (Velasco, 2003).

The following two hypotheses are offered to test Meyer & Staggenborg's claims regarding procedural concessions:

> *Hypothesis 3a:* Procedural concessions granted to one side of a conflict tend to increase protest activity from movement and countermovement actors alike.
>
> *Hypothesis 3b:* Procedural concessions in the form of increased funding and attention to public works and social programs tend to increase protest activity from movement and countermovement actors alike.

The following section includes a description of methods for operationalizing necessary variables to test these three sets of hypotheses.

Methods

Data

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

Pro- and counter-Zapatista protests. Pro-Zapatista protest events are defined as public and collective demonstrations by a group of people asserting claims and chants clearly in favor of the Zapatista cause. Counter-Zapatista protests are identified as public and collective demonstrations by a group of people asserting claims and chants against the Zapatista movement.[9]

The amount of protest activity by pro- and counter-Zapatista actors was quantified by measuring the monthly number of protests held in Chiapas by each group during the ten-year period from 1 January 1994 to 31 December 2003.[10] Data came from reports of these events published in the national newspaper, *La*

[7] Concessions granted to the landowning elites are not considered in the dataset because no data were made available to me. Other studies have mentioned them, but only anecdotally or as one-time concessions (Eisenstadt, 2011; Villafuerte et al., 1999). No systematic and longitudinal data have been made publicly available.

[8] The San Andrés Accords recognized the autonomy of indigenous peoples and communities. The first document established a new pact between the indigenous groups and the state. The second document suggested specific policy proposals, supported by the government and the EZLN, to be presented to the Mexican Congress. The third document established a specific reform agenda for Chiapas. The fourth document included amendments to the previous three documents.

[9] In most cases, reports on the number of participants were imprecise. Nevertheless, the results of this study show no risk that different types of events aggregated in the analysis will wash out the effects of political opportunities (Jenkins, Jacobs & Agnone, 2003; Meyer, 2004).

[10] In 1999, seven new *municipios* were created. These are not taken into account, given that data would only be available for three out of ten years considered in the study.

Table I. Descriptive statistics

Variable	*Observations**	*Mean*	*Standard Deviation*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
Pro-Zapatista protests[a]	13,320	0.57	0.363	0	16
Counter-Zapatista protests[a]	13,320	0.39	0.25	0	6
PRI local governments[b]	13,320	0.78	0.41	68	110
PRD local governments[b]	13,320	0.14	0.34	0	19
Procedural concessions to Zapatistas[a]	13,320	0.70	1.14	0	5
Public Works and Social Programs (pesos)[b]	11,698	1,623,423	3,591,337	2000	6,026,760
Population[b]	10,584	468,900	739,400	143,100	6,943,700

*Observations = (111 *municipios* x 12 months x 10 years) – missing values.
PRI = Partido Revolucionario Institucional.
PRD = Partido de la Revolución Democrática.
[a] Monthly observations. [b] Yearly observations.

Jornada. Data were coded by one person. A panel of 13,320 observations was constructed by entering the number of protests held in each *municipio* over the ten-year period (111 *municipios* x 12 months x 10 years). To avoid data inflation, protest events were coded as one protest, even when the protest lasted several days.

One-month lagged endogenous variables were introduced for each of the protest variables (pro- and counter-Zapatista) to estimate their possible serial correlation in the models.[11] Movement and countermovement protests function as independent variables in order to discover their relative explanatory value in triggering protest activity by their opponent. For this reason, these variables are also lagged one period (one month).

Additional reports from local newspapers *El Tiempo* (later called *La Foja Coleta*) and *Cuarto Poder*, collected by Melel Xojobal (2003),[12] were used to check for possible selection and description biases. Triangulating local and national reports for all years in which data were available helped diminish potential selection and description biases. Moreover, since more events were covered by national than local sources, I was able to benefit from the 'hard news' stance (i.e. who, what, when, where, and why) common to national newspaper sources (Earl et al., 2004: 72).

Divided government. To test the divided government argument, four dummy variables were created to indicate the combination of parties in power at national and local levels: 'PRIPRI', 'PRIPRD', 'PANPRI', and 'PANPRD'. The first two indicate divided government during PRI presidencies and the second two indicate divided government under PAN presidencies. PRIPRI are localities governed by the PRI during a PRI-ruled presidency. PRIPRD are localities governed by the PRD during a PRI-ruled presidency. PANPRI are localities governed by the PRI during a PAN-ruled presidency. PANPRD are localities governed by the PRD during a PAN-ruled presidency. Each of these combinations was assigned a value of 1. Because the variable PRIPRI does not represent a division of government, it is considered to be the base category to which the other dummy variables are compared. Therefore it is left out of the model. Every month that a locality was ruled by a party combination was assigned the same value.

Party in power. Using electoral data from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Chiapas (IEE-Chiapas, 2003), two dummy variables were created to identify PRI- and PRD-ruled localities. In 'PRIlocal', 1 indicates a month that those localities were ruled by the PRI and 0 indicates otherwise. In 'PRDlocal', 1 indicates a month that those localities were governed by the PRD and 0 indicates otherwise. Local elections are held every three years in Mexico, and the change in rule begins the year following the election. To address the hypothesis regarding the timing of protest events during the first year a political party comes to power, 12 party-in-power lagged variables were created and used to assess the initial and delayed effects of changes in the party in power on pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity. A test was run between each dependent variable (pro- and counter-Zapatista protests) and all 12 lagged

[11] It is assumed that successful protest events can trigger future protest events.
[12] Melel Xojobal is a social service organization founded by the Dominican Friars of San Cristóbal de Las Casas in Chiapas on 2 February 1997, that has archived a daily synthesis of Chiapas news in local and national newspapers.

party-in-power variables to measure statistical significance. Only those with a statistically significant effect were included in the final models shown in this study.

Elections. To test whether elections triggered pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity, a dummy variable was created to indicate the month in which elections were held, the month before elections, and the month after elections took place. Local elections took place on 15 October 1995, 6 December 1998, and 7 October 2001. Each of these months was coded as 1, each of the months preceding and succeeding these months was coded as 1, and all other months were coded as 0.

Procedural concessions. Data on procedural concessions to the Zapatistas come from accounts written by both negotiating parties. Marco Antonio Bernal & Miguel Ángel Romero (1999) wrote the Mexican federal government's account and the Zapatista Front of National Liberation (Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or FZLN) wrote the account from the Zapatistas' point of view.[13] By combining these two sources, potential bias in the data was diminished. Procedural concessions were counted monthly, and a one-period lag was created to observe delayed effects on pro- and counter Zapatista mobilization.

The other source of procedural concessions comes from federal grants to local governments for public works projects and social programs. Data on local governments' expenditures comes from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI, 2008) and was measured on a yearly basis. All months of a single year receive the same value, and a 12-month (t–12) lag was created to measure the delayed effects of expenditure increases on pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity.

Models

Since the dependent variables are essentially tallies of pro- and counter-Zapatista protest events per locality per month, the most appropriate estimation procedure is an event-count model (Barron, 1992; King, 1989). More specifically, I used pooled cross-sectional time-series negative binomial models (using population size as the exposure variable) to account for strong overdispersion, and I used a one-period, lagged dependent variable to correct for serial correlation in the dependent variables (see the difference between the mean and standard deviation values for pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity in Table I) (Land, McCall & Nagin, 1996).[14]

Two models were run. Model 1 tests the effects of counter-Zapatista protests, divided government, party-in-power, elections, and two types of procedural concessions on Zapatista protest activity; Model 2 analyzes the effects of pro-Zapatista protests, divided government, party-in-power, elections, and two types of procedural concessions on counter-Zapatista protest activity. I used the statistical program STATA11 to conduct these analyses, followed 'xtnbreg' commands, and designated population size as the exposure variable to control for random effects across *municipios*. Results of average marginal effects (used command 'margins, dydx (*)') are reported in Tables II and III for pro- and counter-Zapatista protests, respectively. These results are presented and discussed in the following section.

Results

The analysis of this study offers interesting and unexpected results. First, the results confirm that regardless of political conditions, protests by pro- and counter-Zapatista groups had a positive and statistically significant effect on their opponent's protest activity. If one more counter-Zapatista protest event occurred in a given *municipio* in a given month, pro-Zapatista protest activity increased in that locality by 0.53 during the following month. Similarly, more than one monthly pro-Zapatista protest triggered a 0.21 increase in counter-Zapatista activity the following month in that same locality (See marginal effects in Tables II and III.).

The results regarding the effects of political conditions on protest behavior are unexpected. Hypothesis 2a proposed that the Mexican federal system, which

[13] The FZLN's account was electronically accessible at http://www.fzln.org.mx (accessed on 6 February 2005), but this web page no longer exists. Marco Antonio Bernal Gutiérrez (Commissioner for Peace in Chiapas from 1995 to 1997) & Miguel Ángel Romero Miranda's (1999) account was published as a two-volume book.

[14] The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between pro- and counter Zapatista protests, given the political conditions in which they occurred. I do not try to explain why some protests occurred in some localities and not in others. Hence, there is no theoretical reason to correct for the inflation of zero counts in the data. Including population size per *municipio* is sufficient to correct for the overdispersion of protests across localities. Nevertheless, additional models were run eliminating those localities with total zero counts. The results were the same. In order to control for possible contagion effects of protests across *municipios*, additional models were run controlling for heteroskedastic cross-sectional correlation. The direction of the relationships between independent and dependent variables remained the same, showing no contagion effects.

Table II. Cross-sectional negative binomial models with random effects across *municipios* for pro-Zapatista protests

Independent variables	*Average marginal effects on pro-Zapatista protests*
Movement–countermovement interaction	
Counter-Zapatista protests (*t*–1)	0.53*** (0.11)
Divided government	
PRI national*PRD local	−0.31 (0.43)
PAN national*PRI local	−0.24 (0.16)
PAN national*PRD local	−1.14 (1.13)
Targeted parties in power during first year	
PRI rule (*t*–5)	0.52* (0.33)
PRD rule (*t*–11)	0.26 (0.42)
Electoral periods	
Elections	0.009 (0.17)
Procedural concessions	
Procedural concessions to Zapatistas	0.49*** (0.04)
Government expenditures (*t*–12)	−0.005* (0.003)
Lagged dependent variable	0.02 (0.06)
Number of observations	7668
Number of groups	111
Log likelihood	−1078.385
Wald Chi2 (10)	213.11

***$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.10$.
Average marginal effects are reported and population size is used as exposure variable. Standard errors are in parenthesis.

allows different political parties to govern at different levels of government, should have triggered more protest activity from movement and countermovement actors alike. The results show that all possible combinations had a negative but statistically insignificant effect on pro-Zapatista protest activity. For counter-Zapatista protests, the sign of the relationship varied from case to case, but it also never reached statistical significance.

Hypothesis 2b suggested that protest groups will be more active when their political opponents are in power. Given the assumption that Zapatistas were more aligned with the leftist PRD and counter-Zapatistas were more aligned with the PRI, it was expected that pro-Zapatistas would have protested more frequently in PRI-ruled localities, while counter-Zapatistas would have protested more frequently in PRD-ruled localities. The results, however, tell a different story. Both pro- and counter-Zapatistas tended to protest more frequently in PRI-ruled localities; protest frequency for both groups had a positive but statistically insignificant relationship with the presence of PRD-run local governments. These results suggest that all groups had a tendency to protest the party in power at the national level, in this case, the PRI. During the period studied, PRI hegemony was crumbling, but it was still the dominant political force in the country. It was the PRI who the Zapatistas first targeted with their uprising, and it was the PRI that was responsible for compensating the aggrieved landowners. Both pro- and counter-Zapatistas had a specific interest in targeting PRI governments to press for their demands.

Hypothesis 2d proposed that protest groups tend to target local governments during their first year in office in order to impact the new government's agenda. This did prove the case for PRI-led local governments. Both pro- and counter-Zapatista groups conducted more protest events during a PRI government's first six months in office than they had during the previous months, even when the PRI was in office during the previous administration. Five months into a PRI-led local government, pro-Zapatista protest activity increased by 0.52, and, six months into a PRI-led local government, counter-Zapatista activity increased by 1.51.[15] The fact that a significant increase in pro-Zapatista protest activity occurred five months into a PRI administration, and counter-Zapatistas activity increased during the sixth month, suggests that the counter-Zapatista protests were linked in part to the government's response to the pro-movement actors. Neither group's protest activities increased in the six months after the PRD won control of a municipality. This may be because, after 70 years of PRI rule, citizens were more likely to view opposition parties with more sympathy and tolerance. Results on the effects of the 'election variable' provide some support for this claim: while pro-Zapatista protestors continued to mobilize during campaigns and elections, counter-Zapatistas significantly decreased their protest events around elections.

Finally, both types of procedural concessions were expected to increase movement and countermovement protest activity. Indeed, both types did positively correlate with an increase in counter-Zapatista protests. A single additional partial concession to the Zapatistas in a given month increased counter-Zapatista protest by 0.10 the following month in a given *municipio*. Although statistically significant, the increase in counter-Zapatista protest activity due to an increase in local government expenditures was negligible. For an increase of 3,591,337 pesos (one standard deviation) (approx. 292,000 USD) in local government expenditures on public works and social programs,

[15] Initially, the PRI-led local government variable showed a statistically significant relationship with counter-Zapatista protest events at the seven-month mark. But it lost its significance once it was included in the final model.

Table III. Cross-sectional negative binomial models with random effects across *municipios* for counter-Zapatista protests

Independent variables	*Average marginal effects on counter-Zapatista protests*
Movement–countermovement interaction	
Pro-Zapatista protests (*t*–1)	0.21*** (0.08)
Divided government	
PRI national* PRD local	−0.12 (0.50)
PAN national* PRI local	0.24 (0.17)
PAN national* PRD local	−1.11 (1.13)
Targeted parties in power during first year	
PRI rule (*t*–6)	1.47* (0.90)
PRI rule (*t*–7)	−0.49 (0.93)
PRD rule (*t*–8)	0.75 (0.56)
Electoral periods	
Elections	−0.73*** (0.29)
Procedural concessions	
Procedural concessions to Zapatistas	0.10* (0.06)
Government expenditures (*t*–12)	0.009*** (0.003)
Lagged dependent variable	0.33*** (0.11)
Number of observations	7674
Number of groups	111
Log likelihood	−890.950
Wald Chi2 (10)	68.27

***$p < 0.01$; *$p < 0.10$.
Average marginal effects are reported and population size is used as exposure variable. Standard errors are in parenthesis.

counter-Zapatista activities increased by 0.009 in that *municipio* the following year.

Pro-Zapatistas did not respond to procedural concessions the same way as their counterparts. Procedural concessions granted to the Zapatistas during negotiations with the federal government had the expected positive effect of triggering further pro-Zapatista protests. A single additional partial concession granted to the Zapatistas in a given month led to a 0.49 increase in pro-Zapatista protests in a given *municipio* the following month. However, procedural concessions granted in the form of social program and public works expenditures had a negative but statistically significant effect on pro-Zapatista protestors. The same increase of 3,591,337 pesos in local government expenditures decreased pro-Zapatista protests in that *municipio* by 0.005 events the following year.

Conclusions

The literature on movement–countermovement dynamics lists 'generating a countermovement' as one of the characteristics of an influential social movement (Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996). Although the significance of the Zapatista uprising has been demonstrated in many ways – it pushed democratization of the country and invigorated the indigenous rights and anti-globalization movements inside and outside of Mexico – the results of this study support the conclusion that the Zapatista movement was influential, as it generated a countermovement. And once the countermovement began, protest activity triggered additional protests and counterprotests throughout the period studied, despite changing political factors that impacted the protest cycle. The altered political conditions affected the protest activity of each side differently. Democratization and multi-party governance at the federal and local levels did not significantly affect either pro- or counter-Zapatista protests, although including these variables in the model allowed for better identification of the targets of each group's protests. Pro- and countermovement protest activity was directed primarily against the remaining local PRI strongholds, especially during their first year in office. Protesting groups might have seen protest as the only way to influence an incoming government's agenda. Meanwhile, democratization shielded parties new to power from protest activity because the fact of open elections diffused some conflicts and dissident actors showed more tolerance to officials from former opposition parties.

It is interesting to note that actors more sympathetic to preserving the status quo decreased their protest activity during electoral periods. This unexpected result may be due to the fact that protest groups like the counter-Zapatistas (who were also PRI sympathizers) wanted to avoid being seen as troublemakers during elections, when the political environment was most uncertain. It is also interesting to observe that even pro-Zapatistas decreased their protest activities once the PRI lost power, despite the EZLN's reluctance to ally with any political force and eventual condemnation of the political system as a whole. These results indicate that elections effectively, if temporarily, focus attention on institutions rather than protest and also suggest that pro-Zapatistas did indeed sympathize with the leftist parties, even though this attitude went against the accepted discourse (Marcos, 2000).

Procedural concessions granted to the Zapatistas as part of negotiations between the EZLN and the federal government had the expected effect of increasing pro- and counter-Zapatista protest activity alike. The literature predicts that partial concessions will trigger further protest activity by the beneficiaries, as they raise the hope of additional substantial concessions (Almeida,

2008; Goldstone & Tilly, 2001; Meyer & Staggenborg, 1996). Meyer & Staggenborg (1996) also predict that countermovement actors, seeing their counterparts win partial concessions, will be motivated to increase their protests to gain some victories as well. Counter-Zapatista actors, especially landowners affected by land invasions, received economic compensation for their losses promptly after their initial protests (Villafuerte et al., 1999). Other land disputes between peasant communities were also resolved over time.[16] Unfortunately, at the time this study was conducted, no systematic data on land distributions were available. Having these data would help clarify the effect that these concessions had on pro- and counter-Zapatista mobilization activities and could substantiate the results presented in this study. Further research should incorporate this information, when it becomes available.

Procedural concessions from local governments in the form of expenditures on public works and social programs had different effects on movement and countermovement actors. While they significantly decreased pro-Zapatista protest activity, they significantly increased counter-Zapatista protest activity. The obvious explanation is that increasing expenditures appeased Zapatista protestors: better health and education services were part of the Zapatistas' original demands.[17] But this argument is complicated by the fact that the EZLN asked their base supporters to reject any government programs as part of their resistance campaign after the San Andrés Accords failed.[18] Further research is necessary to disentangle the relationship between the decrease in Zapatista mobilization activities and the increase in social program and public works budgets in certain localities.

Counter-Zapatista actors increased their protest activity as a result of expanded government programs. Perhaps seeing the capacity of local governments to respond to social demands and improve local infrastructure motivated these actors to press authorities further. Better data and further research will increase our understanding of the effects of these types of concessions on countermovement actors.

In sum, the results of this study provide a test of several movement–countermovement concepts to see whether the hypotheses stand up in a new political context. Most importantly, this study confirms that movement and countermovement protest behavior are interconnected, regardless of political conditions.

Testing these hypotheses under conditions of widespread political upheaval also refines our understanding of political targeting by protest groups. Kathleen Bruhn's (2008) study on urban protests in Mexico and Brazil suggested that protest actors in young democracies protest more during the first year of a new local administration, regardless of political alliances. This study, however, suggests that during a time of major political transition, protestors will give parties new to power some leeway during their first year in office and direct protests against the remaining enclaves of a previous authoritarian regime.

Finally, analyzing the effects of procedural concessions under changing political conditions provides some confirmation of the theory that concessions trigger movement and countermovement protest activity because both sides hope to gain more substantial victories in the future.

Data replication

The dataset, codebook, and do-files for the empirical analysis in this article can be found at http://www.prio.no/jpr/datasets.

Acknowledgements

I want to give special thanks to Lee Ann Banaszak, John McCarthy, Bert Klandermans, and Jacquelien van Stekelenburg for their comments on a previous version of this manuscript and for inviting me to present my work at their research seminars. I enjoyed and benefited from the suggestions I received from members of the research workshop at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and the Social Movements' Reading Group at Penn State University. I also want to offer thanks to Javier Aparicio for his help on the final revisions and to the two *JPR* reviewers. Their comments improved the quality of the manuscript significantly. All interpretations and errors are mine.

Funding

The fieldwork for this study was conducted between 2002 and 2003 and was funded by the National Council

[16] This information came from a presentation given by then-chief of judicial affairs of the ministry of agrarian reform on land disputes in the Lacandon Jungle in Chiapas at the Center for US–Mexican Studies at the University of California, San Diego, February 2006.

[17] In their declaration of war they stated: 'We ask for your participation and support in our struggle for jobs, land, housing, food, health education, independence, liberty democracy, and justice and peace ...' (published in the newspaper *El Financiero* on 2 January 1994, p. 16).

[18] This information came from a personal interview with a member of the Centro de Capacitación para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, February 2003.

of Science and Technology (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, CONACYT) in Mexico and the Department of Political Science and the Graduate Studies Office at the Pennsylvania State University.

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