Constructing Mutuality: The Zapatistas' Transformation of Transnational Activist Power Dynamics

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the evolution of transnational Zapatista solidarity networks. Although scholars have described an emerging "mutuality" between the Zapatista movement and its allies at the level of international framing, this article considers how the Zapatistas forged this mutuality on the ground, through active redefinition of alliances with Northern supporters. It argues that the Zapatistas delimited who was included in their solidarity networks, set new terms for partnerships, and redefined legitimacy in their transnational alliances. In so doing, they asserted their autonomy from donors. They also fostered discourses and practices of mutual solidarity and Southern leadership, shifting the balance of power between North and South. The case both illuminates the possibilities for Southern movements to challenge Northern control from within and suggests potential pitfalls of doing so; by defying Northern NGOs' influence, the Zapatistas may have risked their long-term viability.

Recent scholarship on transnational activism heralds the growth of "mutual," "reciprocal," horizontal activist networks (Eterovic and Smith 2001; Olesen 2005; Juris 2008), recognizes and examines the impact of power imbalances among participants within and across movements (Thayer 2001; Leyva Solano 2001), and highlights the dynamic nature of social movements (McAdam et al. 2001), but it rarely brings these insights into conversation with each other. The discourse of horizontal networking often ignores or conceals power struggles on the ground (Juris 2008). Meanwhile, scholars who thematize power dynamics (e.g., Bob 2005; Hulme and Edwards 1997) often assume that these asymmetries follow the North-to-South resource flows among activists. Some scholars take it for granted that disparities within movements—particularly the preponderance of Northern power—echo broader economic, social, and political inequalities and are therefore structurally stable. They also assume that Southern movements' dependence on outside resources precludes change. As a result, few scholars explore how or how much Southern movements can transform Northern control and construct mutuality from inside transnational activist networks.[1]

To fill in these gaps, this article traces the evolution of partnerships between the Zapatista movement, a grassroots, indigenous, rural social

movement in southern Mexico, and members of its extensive international support network.[2] It argues that on the ground, what now appears at the level of international framing to be a spontaneous "mutuality" or "convergence" between the Zapatistas and their allies (Olesen 2005) had to be forged through ongoing struggle. The Zapatistas had to confront power differences directly where keen interests were at stake for both Northern and Southern participants.

Over the first 14 years of their existence, from 1994 to 2008, the Zapatistas built up unusual influence over the privileged, Northern supporters on whom they rely. Today, the Zapatistas wield an extraordinary degree of leverage over essential contributors to their movement. At first, however, supporters imposed their agendas, practices, language, and organizational forms and rarely ceded to Zapatista control. The movement has also forged additional links with similarly positioned groups in other locations. Thus, overall, its variegated alliances have shifted from largely altruistic and donor-controlled toward "horizontal" and Zapatista-led.

The evidence presented in this study suggests that the Zapatistas effected this change in two ways. First, they partly redefined the contours of their transnational social movement, expelling imperious donors (at the expense of some material benefits) and seeking out new allies in parallel structural positions. These allies ranged from the international farmers' network Via Campesina to other local peasant organizations in Chiapas. Second, they altered the rules of the game within their networks, demanding influence over ongoing partnerships with privileged supporters, denouncing external control of programs, imposing guidelines, monitoring contributions, and sanctioning outsiders who violated their ground rules.[3] As a result, among their support networks, they made Zapatista direction and reciprocal inspiration central to the legitimacy of outsiders' involvement. The movement's allies from the earlier, "altruistic" phase of transnational activism did not simply disappear; many gradually accepted the importance of Southern leadership, reflected on their own entitlement, and repudiated the privileges associated with their economic, political, and cultural capital. Indeed, activists who previously participated in more traditional, altruistic solidarity projects in Chiapas actually founded several of the organizations that now define their solidarity with the Zapatistas as "reciprocal." This article contends that the Zapatistas' internal self-assertions played a key role in pushing Northern supporters to relinquish power and change their relationships with the movement.

The article uses the extraordinary case of International Zapatismo to reconstruct transnational social movement theory. It engages existing research on transnational social movements, then describes the current "mutuality" between Zapatistas and supporters, contrasts that status quo

with prior relationships, and considers how—through what kinds of negotiations and contestations—the shift from one to the other came about. In conclusion, the article reflects on the benefits and limits of such internal contestations for movements like the Zapatistas.

THE CASE OF INTERNATIONAL ZAPATISMO

"International Zapatismo" (Olesen 2005), the transnational network surrounding the Zapatista movement, provides an ideal case study because it is both prominent and unusual. Since January 1, 1994, when the Zapatistas 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. Throughout more than a decade of building self-governing communities and international antineoliberal activism, the Zapatistas have sought out alliances with organizations from more than 70 countries. Their partners include nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, filmmakers, tourists, scholars, students, feminists, neighborhood movements, farmers, and indigenous organizations (Leyva Solano 2001). Some of these groups materially or politically support the movement; others share experiences and coordinate common campaigns; still others take strategic or ideological inspiration from the Zapatistas (Reitan 2007; Swords 2007).

The international neo-Zapatista network is often cited as a preeminent success story of transnational activism, in which North-South networks have helped a grassroots, Southern social movement bypass unfavorable opportunity structures and build resistance to neoliberal globalization across borders (see, e.g., Castells 1997; Schulz 1998; Stephen 2002; Johnston and Laxer 2003; Tarrow 2005).[4] Zapatista-inspired networks, moreover, have been at the forefront of efforts to construct the much-touted new, "horizontal," "mutual," "reciprocal" solidarity (Brand and Hirsch 2004; Olesen 2005; Holloway 2005; Zugman 2005). In concrete terms, partnerships between the Zapatistas and outside allies epitomize the general shift from one-way, altruistic solidarity to a "new internationalism" (Waterman 1999; Eterovic and Smith 2001).

Although the prominence of International Zapatismo has sparked extensive scholarship, much of that writing focuses on the period before 2003. But in 2003, the Zapatistas broadly denounced solidarity activities to date and officially restructured their relationships with their civil society allies. This study adds to existing literature by reconsidering the network's early years in light of the 2003 restructuring. It argues that the evolution of Zapatista sympathizer relationships provides an example through which to illustrate how broader changes in transnational activism emerged from on-the-ground, day-to-day negotiations within alliances.

At the same time, in other ways, Zapatista solidarity networks are an extreme case. The movement's influence over Northern supporters and its drastic, qualitative transformation of transnational relations are rare among Southern social movements that rely on outside support. Although the Zapatistas' status as a grassroots social movement arguably differentiates them from Southern NGOs discussed in much of the literature on North-South NGO power dynamics, they depend, as NGOs do, on transnational allies' donations to help sustain Zapatista-run schools, clinics, and autonomous governments, as well as physically to protect the movement from state and paramilitary violence (Stahler-Sholk 2006; Burguete Cal y Mayor 2003). Most movements are not prepared to risk losing such support.

While the Zapatistas' prominence may put them in a better position than lesser-known Southern groups, their refusal of some Northern funds may still jeopardize their survival, marking the limits of Southern autonomy.[5] Extreme cases like the Zapatistas, along with a handful of similar examples in which Southern groups have defied the power of Northern donations, such as the farmers' network Via Campesina, the Peoples' Global Alliance, and the Rural Women Workers' Movement (MMTR) in Brazil (e.g., Thayer 2001; Wood 2004; Reitan 2007), help illustrate the limits and possibilities for Southern movements to influence Northern allies.

METHODS

The analysis presented here draws on 34 in-depth interviews; four months of participant observation between June 2007 and May 2008 with solidarity groups based in the United States and San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, where most pro-Zapatista NGOs reside; and background information from Zapatista and solidarity group documents on early alliances and the Zapatistas' perspective. To understand why Northern sympathizers would accede to a shift to Southern control, the semistructured interviews were conducted with leaders of 35 well-known solidarity groups, drawn from lists in Leyva Solano 2001, Stephen 2002, and Olesen 2005.[6] The interviews helped illuminate decisionmaking and negotiations between outsiders and the Zapatistas, which are rarely documented.

As key informants, the interviewees had almost all experienced changing relationships with the Zapatistas over time, whether or not in the context of the same organization. About a third of the organizations represented no longer supported the Zapatistas; a third had changed their relationship to the movement over time in response to Zapatista demands; and a third had emerged since 2003 as "horizontal" allies. Despite this distribution, almost all the individual respondents had par-

ticipated in multiple organizations simultaneously or over time. For instance, although the numbers are not statistically representative, of the 34 people interviewed, only 4 (12 percent) had ceased working in Zapatista solidarity, and only 2 (6 percent) had joined for the first time as "horizontal" Zapatista supporters. In short, although the solidarity network seemed to change shape, it actually maintained a relatively consistent (albeit shrinking) set of sympathizers.

Because interviews entailed potential sources of bias, including interviewees' involvement in the process, possible reluctance to discuss politically and economically sensitive topics, and potentially hazy memories of long-ago events, the interview process sought to note their biases, asked for concrete examples, and triangulated their claims with documents, other interviewees' accounts, and my own observations. Joining solidarity organizations and participating in Chiapas-based solidarity activities with respondents was a way to identify key informants, build trust, refer to shared experiences, and compare respondents' self-reports to their interactions with the Zapatistas and each other. When activists declined to grant interviews or share information, their refusals were considered illustrative, in their own right, of power dynamics among Zapatista sympathizers.

In addition to sympathizer interviews, I applied to the Zapatista leadership for permission to interview members of Zapatista communities. They did not grant it.[7] As a U.S. scholar, I was constrained by the very point to be underscored: the movement has not only asserted its control over outsiders but also, given its politically sensitive position, has guarded its information and private reflections with extreme care. As a result, the representation of the Zapatista perspective here is confined to in-community observations and public Zapatista speeches, communiqués, and publications. While such documents could be read as slogans or propaganda, for analytical purposes, they help to approximate the Zapatistas' perspective on the evolution of the movement's relationship with outsiders.

THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE OF POWER DYNAMICS IN TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM

This study seeks to bring together transnational social movement scholars' recent insights on the growth of horizontal activist networks, the perils of Northern participants' power over Southern groups, and the dynamic nature of movements. Lately, many writers have noted a qualitative change in left-wing alliances—Zapatismo in particular—toward what they call mutual, reciprocal, or horizontal solidarity (Waterman 1999; Eterovic and Smith 2001; Reitan 2007). Leyva Solano contends that Zapatista sympathizers' various forms of relating to the movement have

broadened the meaning of solidarity. She suggests, "Neozapatismo . . . encompasses various forms of political participation at different levels and brings together a wide range of individuals and organizations" (2001, 177). Likewise, scholars like Thomas Olesen (2005) and John Holloway (2005) consider International Zapatismo, in particular, to be an inspiration and paradigm for the new form of solidarity. They highlight the way activists all over the world have adopted, adapted, and linked with the Zapatistas' campaigns for radical democracy and against neoliberalism.

These scholars argue that whereas Northern providers' altruism held together an earlier generation of "transnational advocacy networks," reciprocity, empathy, or shared identities increasingly draw activists together in emerging "direct action networks" (Bennett 2004; Juris 2008). Scholarship on the earlier alliances (e.g., Smith et al. 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Edwards and Gaventa 2001) suggested that privileged outsiders could provide disadvantaged Southern movements with finances, legitimacy, political connections, visibility, and psychological support that would give them leverage in regard to local powerholders.[8] Recent scholars contend that the newer networks, in contrast, emphasize participants' similarity to each other, construct their grievances as interlinked, include a multiplicity of different grassroots actors in fluid network structures, and lack an obvious direction. Hinting at a natural convergence among leftists worldwide, writers such as Evans (2008) suggest that by joining forces, progressive activists North and South minimize their vulnerability in a common struggle against an entrenched, dominant order. Shared identities, others argue, are increasingly foundational to and potent for organizing transnational activism (Waterman 1999; Reitan 2007).

Most contemporary scholarship on horizontal networks acknowledges power inequalities. However, because the emergent organizing structure they describe also represents a normative ideal, such studies often understate power struggles on the ground (e.g., Juris 2008, 14). While mutual solidarity has not replaced altruistic advocacy, these studies attest, this form of engagement has diminished—and aspires to further reduce—the centrality of NGOs in left-wing organizing and the one-way dependence of South on North. At worst, in focusing on activists' shared identities and vulnerability, literature on "mutual solidarity" can blend into vaguer, more optimistic depictions of global civil society or the "multitude" (e.g., Hardt and Negri 2004) and deflect attention away from questions of power (Quijano 2005). In addition, this scholarship focuses on the level of international framing. Meanwhile, on the ground, direct interactions between seemingly reciprocal transnational allies can bring geographic and class disparities into relief and provoke contradictions (Thayer 2001).

Other researchers (Alvarez et al. 1998; Edelman 1999; Starn 1999) emphasize that power imbalances and internal conflicts permeate transnational activist networks. As Reitan (2007) points out, social movement scholars have long recognized that in spite of their altruistic intentions and promise to provide important resources, what McCarthy and Zald (1977) call "conscious constituents" can undermine poor peoples' movements by refusing to provide crucial resources or abandoning their beneficiaries at key moments. In contrast to those who highlight direct action networks, some writers (Alvarez 1999; Bebbington 1996; Thayer 2009) argue that Southern grassroots movements and NGOs have become increasingly dependent on scarce Northern resources. Clifford Bob suggests that the Zapatistas operate in a "global morality market," where only the movements that best "sell themselves," conforming to donors' discourses and practices, obtain resources and survive (2005, 5).

In this context, such scholars contend, Southern resource dependence (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978), in combination with political and cultural status inequalities, enables Northern activists to impose their agendas, language, and organizational forms on the Southern NGOs and grassroots social movements they support (Alvarez 1999; Thayer 2001; Leyva Solano 2001; Wood 2004; Speed 2006). Building on Piven and Cloward's (1977) point that middle-class "organizers" discourage disruptive activity, which is poor peoples' crucial strategy, these scholars contend that Northern supporters can 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).

Donors, furthermore, may compel movements to translate their ideals into language that resonates with outsiders (Benessaieh 2007; Merry 2006). While several scholars cite examples in which Southern groups have denounced such treatment, noting that grassroots movements may be more autonomous or inclined to be than NGOs, they also highlight the risks to resource-dependent organizations of pursuing a South-North horizontality that may select them out of the market (Alvarez 1999; Edelman 1999; Petras and Veltmeyer 2001; Thayer 2009). This more pessimistic view assumes that power inheres in resources the dominant order defines as valuable: money, publicity, and recognition from existing power holders. It also portrays Northern organizations uniformly as large, institutional bureaucracies, ignoring the multiplicity of transnational alliances and the variegated grassroots groups that scholars of mutual solidarity hold up as central.

As a result, those scholars who emphasize Northern power rarely account theoretically for the ability of poor people, limited as it may be, to act consciously and strategically to alter these dynamics, build up revolutionary organizations of their own (*contra* Piven and Cloward), or

leverage noneconomic resources, including ideas and inspiration that flow from South to North. As Millie Thayer (2009) points out, the "social movement market" does not survive on Northern altruism alone; in exchange for funding, Southern groups provide donors with authenticity, prestige, and legitimacy. Distinct sympathizers, from large NGOs to grassroots groups, depend differently on these resources.

A third set of literature that neither the scholarship on North-South power relations nor that on horizontal networks fully takes into account is that on social movement dynamics (McAdam et al. 2001; Reitan 2007). Scholarship on power relations focuses on opportunity structures and the stability of inequalities, assuming that (dominant) Northern interests are fixed and independent of their relationship to other activists and that Southern groups have little room to take up ideas, resist impositions, and debate with supporters. Instead of highlighting how movements contest Northern hegemony (Gramsci 1971), this literature tends to naturalize Northern domination and make it seem immutable. Meanwhile, emerging research on mutual solidarity focuses on describing the differences between these earlier, more hierarchical, "altruistic" forms of solidarity and newer reciprocal relationships. Thus, neither literature fleshes out the relationship between the two forms of solidarity or between Northern impositions and the emergence of an apparent North-South mutuality.

To illuminate how Northern imposition has shifted or could shift toward mutuality, research must thematize the relationship between the two and the trajectories of activists' power relations. While the literature on movement dynamics has emphasized how movements arise and how they shift quantitative scale (Reitan 2007; Tarrow and McAdam 2004), it has not done enough to probe the limits and possibilities for internal or qualitative changes in power imbalances. A few scholars (Reitan 2007; Juris 2008) point out that mutuality has emerged as beneficiaries have demanded to speak, act, and strategize for themselves. Still, some current work represents these self-assertions as rejections of outside aid, underspecifying how and to what extent Northern activists can adapt to Southern demands. This study uses the case of Zapatista-outsider relations to illuminate how active, internal contestation helps to forge "mutuality" across differences in which conflicting, power-laden interests are at stake.

Viewing the Zapatistas' transnational partnership as an ongoing process explains why previous accounts of the movement's networks seem to conflict. Descriptions like Clifford Bob's (2005) of the way the Zapatistas "marketed themselves" make sense in the period before the movement clearly began to differentiate its interests from those of Northern supporters. When projected across time, however, they fail to explain the Zapatistas' later defiance. Meanwhile, understanding the

Zapatistas' evolution also helps to contextualize descriptions of the recent mutuality of International Zapatismo. Understanding how the Zapatistas have intervened in power relations with ongoing supporters—though these allies often move between organizations—is crucial to recognizing that the common interests and identities 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 the transformation of power dynamics in the Zapatistas' partnerships.

CURRENT ZAPATISTA-OUTSIDER DYNAMICS: MUTUALITY OR REVERSAL OF NORTHERN POWER?

Today, Zapatista networks extend the mutual solidarity that recent scholars have portrayed as a core, ongoing feature of Zapatismo (Leyva Solano 2001; Olesen 2005; Reitan 2007). The Zapatistas have linked with other similarly positioned groups at the local level, such as Chiapan peasant organizations; throughout Mexico, such as groups protesting the exorbitant prices of electricity and gas; and abroad, such as the farmers' network Via Campesina. Currently, the Zapatistas are seeking not only to receive but also to provide donations. For instance, in 2005, the movement leader, Subcomandante Marcos, promised to send corn to Cubans resisting the U.S. blockade, embroidery and coffee to radical European cooperatives, or transgenic corn to indigenous people in Bolivia and Ecuador.

The research for this study suggests that horizontal networking has become increasingly central to Zapatista solidarity. Confirming scholars' depictions of "taking Zapatismo home" (e.g., Olesen 2005), interviewees described their adoption of Zapatista models for practices like collective decisionmaking (González 2008), rotating government councils (Hernández 2008), or open conferences called encounters (Young 2008).[9] Others described the Zapatistas' influence on their values, such as appreciating women's participation (Avila 2008), working locally (Moore 2008), or listening to others. As of 2008, 12 of 30 respondents still actively involved with the Zapatista movement (40 percent, albeit not from a representative sample) had switched their primary activities from traditional, altruistic Chiapas-focused solidarity to Zapatismo-at-home. Over and over, activists who had previously worked in Zapatista communities in Chiapas reflected, as Ryan Ramor (2002) put it, "So how can we best help the Zapatistas? . . . The best international solidarity is attacking the institutions that oversee and implement Neoliberal Capitalism wherever they are."[10]

Although scholars have examined the salience of common identities in mutual solidarity networks, they often imply that shared characteris-

tics emerge spontaneously. The interviews for this study, however, underscore that Zapatismo has been central in providing members of its network with a shared identity. As Sergio Avila (2008) put it, "I think many of us were born through Zapatismo." Many respondents say that Zapatismo did things such as "gave my life meaning" (Author's field-notes, January 1, 2008), provided "a fundamental reference point in my life," or "has become a backdrop for almost everything I'm doing . . . defined my epistemology, my ways of knowing things." Jimena Rivera, a member of a prominent Zapatista-inspired collective founded in Chiapas in 2005, told me 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" (2008). Certain aspects of activists' common critique of neoliberalism emerged from the Zapatista movement.

Horizontal neo-Zapatista networking is reshaping traditional alliances, too. Isabel Tavares, who runs a Zapatista solidarity group in Northern California, commented,

> These public moments where representatives of the communities are saying, "Take these ideas back to your place. Take them to your home. Take them to your community, to your struggle, and see how you can connect them." It's really disrupting these traditional solidarity models ("sending rice and beans to our brown brothers and sisters in Mexico"). That's really not what it's about. (Tavares 2008)

Whereas another 16 of the interview respondents (53 percent) remained primarily involved in altruistic solidarity, every one of them articulated a justification for choosing to work in Chiapas rather than at home. Their explanations revealed that even those not explicitly forging "mutual" alliances were responding to critiques of traditional solidarity.

Most literature on horizontal networking focuses on the ways Northern activists take ideas from the Zapatistas away from Chiapas. However, the Zapatistas also take the lead when sympathizers from the global North come to Chiapas, even though most scholars associate such visits with traditional solidarity and Northern dominance. Given the Zapatistas' ongoing political and economic dependence, scholars of power relations would expect Northern organizations to remain in control of program implementation. As the Zapatistas constantly reiterate, none of their efforts would have been possible without enormous support from "civil society" and international organizations (Author's field-notes, Chiapas, January 1, 2008). For instance, 65 percent of the solidarity groups interviewed donate to the Zapatistas, and their contributions range from five hundred to ten thousand dollars annually, in cash or kind. While this may not seem like much money, it remains

the primary source of funding for Zapatista projects ranging from schools to clinics to autonomous governments. Furthermore, while some observers suggest that the military threat to the Zapatistas has diminished since Vicente Fox demilitarized Chiapas in 2000, others disagree. For instance, in 2008, 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" (Gutiérrez 2008). Meanwhile, Subcomandante Marcos, the Zapatistas' leader and spokesman, has underscored the gravity of the recent wave of aggression in Zapatista territories (2007).

Yet in spite of this ongoing dependence, the Zapatistas' relations with outsiders invert the expectations of theorists who emphasize Northern activists' control over movement resources. In general, although control is never complete, the Zapatistas now impose their demands on supporters more than the reverse. The movement excludes possible donors, refuses programs, and enforces rigid protocols to control collaborations. Almost no large, institutional donors currently support the Zapatistas; all of the movement's ongoing supporters are grassroots activist groups.

Meanwhile, current Zapatista solidarity organizations now shape their support around the Zapatistas' convenience and agenda. Since 2003, anyone who wants to donate money, volunteer, or learn about the Zapatistas has been required to obtain permission from the Good Government Councils (*Juntas de Buen Gobierno*), rotating civilian collectives that oversee each of the movement's five zones. The long lines of outsiders waiting, often for hours or days, to meet with these councils in Zapatista communities suggest that most outsiders follow these protocols. For instance, to put on a daylong children's fair, the coordinator of one solidarity group met with each of the five Zapatista councils at least three times, traveling up to a full day to explain, reformulate, and reexplain his proposal (Jackson 2008). Sympathizers regularly wait months for the Zapatistas to approve, change, or reject projects as small as donating school supplies.

My own observations and others affirm that the councils have allowed the Zapatistas to manage their relationships with outsiders, ranging from peasant groups to global NGOs; to enforce their methods of running their movement, such as collectivism and the equal distribution of resources among communities and families; and to preempt cooptation of their agenda (Swords 2007, 91; Stahler-Sholk 2006). All interview respondents who had worked with the Zapatistas in the last few years said that when they provided funds or proposed programs, either they left the terms open or the Zapatistas changed the proposed

content, structure, timing, or location of their projects (e.g., Williams 2008). In one case, a Good Government Council spent funds raised for a pharmacy on cattle (Author's fieldnotes, January 4, 2008); in another, the leadership converted a proposed stadium into an herbal medicine clinic (Castellanos 2008); in a third, Zapatista authorities mandated that an anthropologist conduct collective discussions in 12 communities instead of interviewing spokespeople in 2 (Pérez 2008).

Teresa Flores, who ran a teacher-training program until 2007, described her acceptance of this shifted state of affairs: "We didn't like some of the reading and writing curriculum. We didn't like the content, but that was what the commission asked for, so that's what we did" (2008). Outsiders now regularly submit to the movement even when they disagree with its decisions.

Most supporters appreciate and defend the message, both descriptive and prescriptive, that sympathizers are not altruists, on whom the Zapatistas depend, but that the Zapatistas lead their shared struggle for radical democracy and against neoliberalism. Outsiders not only expect to acquiesce to the Zapatistas' formidable permission process, but they also value its pace for reinforcing the movement's ascendancy over Northern allies and emphasizing the importance of dialogue and deliberation. David Wright, who runs a Chiapas-based solidarity organization, mused, "I spend a lot of time waiting for the council. Hours and hours and hours. And really respecting that is a really important part, because that's the way things should be" (2008). Respondents positioned the Zapatistas as the experts. Ethan Jackson, a full-time Chiapas-based solidarity worker, explained, "We don't know why certain things can happen or certain things can't happen. You just have to be patient and really defer to the communities on things. They know much better" (2008). Others, such as Alice Williams, emphasized humility, explaining, "It has never occurred to us to say no. We really want to help them do what they think is important, as opposed to something we might think is important" (2008). The legitimacy of these respondents' work was based in acquiescence to Southern leadership and in commitment to both the Zapatistas and the broader movement against neoliberalism.

Instead of defining their status according to Northern categories, according to my observations and to supporters' accounts in interviews, supporters competed to commit to the Zapatistas, affirm their progressiveness, and honor Southern empowerment. Respondents described a pecking order based on whether people had been in Chiapas "since '94" and had been welcomed or censured by the Zapatistas. Activists gained legitimacy by resisting the dominant order and lost legitimacy through association with it, such as by coming from the United States. Elena Rodríguez, a graduate student from Mexico City, advised, "Many [pro-Zapatista] organizations . . . won't talk to you at all. Don't even try,

because they say, 'Americans, pshah!'" (2007). Likewise, in interviews, activists denigrated academics, and solidarity organizations belittled each other's work.

Reiterating the Zapatistas' stipulations and protections, sympathizers policed the transnational advocacy network, sanctioning peers and new-comers who appeared wedded to external power hierarchies. For instance, several solidarity organizations refused to grant interviews without the Zapatistas' permission. The leader of a pro-Zapatista alter-native medicine organization explained, "It's not as easy as you think. There are rules you have to abide by" (Author's fieldnotes, August 5, 2007). By becoming enforcers, supporters reaffirmed their status in regard to the Zapatistas. Their competition almost mirrored some schol-ars' image of Southern movements' jostling for recognition from North-ern funders, emphasizing the ways Zapatista supporters tried to distance themselves from the power hierarchy that privileged them.

Confronting neoliberalism, respondents regularly acknowledged, necessarily challenges the position of power even of sympathetic North-erners. Many suggested that interacting with the Zapatistas helped them pursue the reflexivity they aspired to, as well as their ultimate goal, related to challenging capitalism. For instance, Angela Peterson com-mented, "I think we should be played with, because we take too much power in the world. . . . I feel like they're helping me see things differ-ently" (2008). Similarly, Jennifer Clark, who worked with women in the movement until 2003, reflected, "I feel good about . . . the [Zapatistas'] assertion of themselves as equals. Interpersonally, it was more difficult for some people. I think for those of us who were fine with it, it was also acknowledging our own privilege, that we're people who walk in the world with that sense of entitlement" (2008).

The leader of a Zapatista-inspired group in California 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" (Tavares 2008). Her words suggest that current Zapatista-supporter relations entail not only spontaneous mutuality but also the reversal of Northern control. Comparing these current interactions between the Zapatistas and their supporters to the early years of International Zapatismo can help to contextualize the recent mutuality between Zapatistas and sup-porters and show how it "flips the power."

THE EARLY YEARS: INCLUSIVITY AND OUTSIDE IMPOSITIONS

Scholars who describe International Zapatismo as a paradigm of hori-zontal partnerships insinuate that horizontal networking has been a core

feature of Zapatismo all along. For instance, Reitan argues that almost immediately after the Zapatista uprising in 1994, "'Practicing Zapatismo at home' through emulative innovation became *de rigeur* for rebel supporters" (2007, 195). Yet initially, Zapatismo outside of Chiapas was less formal and less widely practiced than it is now. The movement's advocacy of Zapatismo elsewhere was initially combined with a call to outsiders to come to Chiapas.

Though many respondents who now work with the Zapatistas were also involved with the movement in the early years, most were affiliated with organizations that related to the movement differently from the organizations they now lead. Most of the sympathizers who currently focus on Zapatismo at home—86 percent of those "horizontally" networked to the movement in this study—began with "altruistic" solidarity work. In other words, the "mutuality" of many such relationships was not spontaneous but was constructed in place of an earlier, more vertical solidarity.

In its early years, the Zapatista movement was more open to vertical relationships, expansively encouraging Northerners to come to Chiapas. At first, as one movement activist put it, "The Zapatistas said, 'Come on in' to anyone and everyone" (Hernández 2008). Early communiqués from the Zapatistas welcomed any assistance they could get. For instance, their invitation to the first Encounter for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism, to be held in Zapatista territory, was addressed

> To all individuals, groups, collectives, movements, social, civic and political organizations, neighborhood associations, cooperatives, all the lefts known and to be known; nongovernmental organizations, groups in solidarity with struggles of the world people, bands, tribes, intellectuals, indigenous people, students, musicians, workers, artists, teachers, peasants, cultural groups, youth movements, alternative communication media, ecologists, tenants, lesbians, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists. . . . (quoted in Brown 1996)

As a result of such invitations, outsiders, ranging from grassroots anarchist collectives to large NGOs, flooded Chiapas with volunteers, donations, training, and plans for projects ranging from school construction to women's health workshops. Jennifer Clark, who ran a women's empowerment program from 1997 to 2003, explained, "When I started, there was a much broader range of people who had different perspectives, just in terms of how much you are willing to have the Zapatistas tell you what to do or have the communities define their own priorities for themselves" (2008). Clark implicitly contrasted this diversity with her later experience, when Zapatista groups in Chiapas became limited to organizations that respected the Zapatista communities' direction. In retrospect, Subcomandante Marcos describes the initial, immense flow of outsiders as "the multiplicity that had taken rebel ter-

ritory by storm. The storm was repeated again and again." He adds, "It was always . . . 'utter chaos'" (2003). At the time, the Zapatistas did not structure and control interactions with outsiders as they do now.

Some analysts (e.g., Bob 2005) claim that early on, the Zapatistas' reliance on outside donations made them alter their broad goals, deemphasizing armed struggle, shifting their domestically focused agenda from federal government takeover to local community autonomy, and abandoning their initial socialist rhetoric in favor of discourses on civil society and multiculturalism. As a result of outside influence, Bob claims, they started to portray themselves as nonviolent and democratic, emphasizing their indigenous roots and highlighting their opposition to neoliberal globalization. Other scholars, such as Reitan (2007), contend that these shifts represented "strategic frame amplification" (see Snow et al. 1986) rather than Northern domination.

Regardless of whether resource dependence on Northern sympathizers stood behind the movement's frame shift, by the Zapatistas' own accounts, before 2003, outsiders who visited the movement's rural communities were often disrespectful of the Zapatistas. Subcomandante Marcos recounts, "We didn't always receive respect. And it's not that they insulted us. Or at least not intentionally. But, for us, pity is an affront, and charity is a slap in the face" (2003). Regular donations of cast-off goods symbolized this disrespect. Marcos explains, "We were amassing computers that didn't work, expired medicines, extravagant clothing . . . as if people said, 'Poor things, they're very needy. Surely, anything will help them.'" In particular, he remembered the experience of receiving a single pink stiletto heel as "humanitarian aid," reinforcing the Zapatistas' feeling that they were "living Mexico's shame. In that part that has to be prettied up so it doesn't make the rest look ugly" (2003, part 2, "A Death").

Also in contrast with their current interactions with Zapatistas, all Northern respondents suggested that when they first started supporting the movement, in the mid-1990s, their organizations and others they observed presided over the programs implemented. Respondents reflected that initially, outsiders set the terms of their interventions in Chiapas on the basis of their own convenience and agendas. They modeled their projects not on Zapatista knowhow but on their own experiences elsewhere. For instance, Jessica Turner, who ran health workshops from 1997 to 1999, explained, "I'd worked at the free clinic in [my hometown] for about ten years. The idea was to use that model, because that's the model that I really knew" (2008). Other respondents brought in whatever programs they felt the movement could use, whether schools, basketball courts, or herbal medicine.

Often, at first, organizations made decisions about project timing and means of implementation on the basis of organizational expediency.

Respondents indicated that most of their organizations' choices revolved around a project's appeal and cost to NGO staff. Steve Conway gave an example: "I remember a discussion came up of doing work along the Usumacinta River, which from San Cristóbal was considerably remote, and we decided not to work there, simply because it was too far" (2008). Conway added that in another instance, "Rabbits were introduced because they're a low investment and high-return project. In some cases the rabbits would breed out of control, and in other cases the villagers didn't want to kill them and sell them for meat, because they liked them" (2008). Similarly, Julie Steinberg explained that her NGO would "do things out of convenience, because of their lack of resources" (2008). This pragmatism led to a concentration of resources in the more accessible Zapatista regions, with few arriving in the most remote.

As a result of this reasoning, solidarity projects were often inappropriate, wasteful, divisive, or even detrimental to the intended beneficiaries.[11] Zapatista solidarity activist Ryan Ramor's 2002 essay "International Solidarity in the Light of Global Resistance," which gives an account of his observations of solidarity efforts in one Zapatista community, captures these mismatches.

> The rebel communities are haunted by the ghosts of failed NGO projects and the paradox of good intentions. In Diez [the community where Ramor lived], people remember the failed rabbit rearing NGO project of '96, the failed candle making NGO project of '97, the delivery of 50 gas stoves which were thrown out a month later when the gas ran out—who could afford to buy bottled gas?—and of course the stalled potable water project of '97. Sometimes it is more than badly executed good intentions. Villagers wonder how one Chicano NGO operative had a big house, 2 trucks, and multiple foreign holidays, yet the cooperative store he was overseeing went to shit due to lack of funding and administrative ineptitude. (Ramor 2002)

As Ramor implies, some projects were not only poorly executed but also directly exploitative. Several respondents had worked closely with an organization we may call the Solidarity Coalition, a collection of several organizations that coordinated all Zapatista solidarity from 1994 to 1997. They recounted that this coalition "fundraised in the name of the Zapatistas without giving all the proceeds to them" (Pérez 2008) and misappropriated donations intended for the Zapatistas to buy fancy cars and personal items (Flores 2008; Clark 2008).

In retrospect, Subcomandante Marcos notes that support was often misdirected to unwanted or ineffectual projects or lopsided, going to the best-known or accessible communities.

> There is also a more sophisticated charity. It's the one some NGOs and international agencies practice. It consists, broadly speaking, in

> their deciding what the communities need, and, without even con-
> sulting them, imposing not just particular projects, but also the
> times and means of their implementation. Imagine the desperation
> of a community that needs potable water and they're saddled with
> a library, the one that requires a school for the children, and they
> give them a course on herbs. (Marcos 2003, part 2, "A Death")

What's more, he reflects, Zapatista families who became close with out-
siders received extra perks, fueling inequalities within and among the
movement's base communities.

Comparing their early interactions with the Zapatistas to the move-
ment's current, rigid supervision, all respondents noted a marked shift
in the Zapatistas' control over programs. On a programmatic level, of 23
respondents who worked with the movement before 1999, not a single
one remembered the Zapatistas altering projects or censuring individual
behavior in their first years of engagement. For instance, Sarah Young,
who provided herbal medicine workshops from 1997 to 2006, reflected,
"I never came up against any kind of conflicts or real changes with the
work during that [pre-1999] period" (2008). Similarly, Teresa Flores, who
trained Zapatista teachers from 1994 to 1997 and has worked with the
movement in other capacities ever since, described how "At that time,
the communities left almost all the decisions about content to the
people that supported them." Flores explained that in her early interac-
tions, when the Zapatistas asked her organization to do things it did not
agree with, "We said we wouldn't do it, and we didn't" (2008). She con-
trasted these dynamics with her later resignation to a Zapatista reading
and writing curriculum she disagreed with, mentioned earlier. Flores's
reversal represents the broader change in Zapatista-outsider relations.
But how did that change occur?

Defying Northern Power and Constructing Mutuality

How did "mutuality"—which may correspond to increased Southern
power over programs—emerge in the interactions between the Zapatis-
tas and their supporters, particularly some of the same Northerners who
initially asserted control over projects? What made some outsiders leave
Zapatista solidarity and others come increasingly to emulate the Zap-
atistas and accept their leadership on the ground in Chiapas? Existing
scholarship does not fully explain this sequence. Those who depict hor-
izontal networking and shared identity as a constant feature of Interna-
tional Zapatismo pay little attention to its alteration and amplification
over time. Instead, they make the reciprocity of direct action networks
seem spontaneous. Meanwhile, scholars who present the Zapatistas as
a case study for Southern movements' subjection to a "philanthropy

market" focus mostly on flows of money, rather than intangible resources, and assume that Northern control is stable. In both cases, portraying the dynamics between the movement and sympathizers as natural obscures the process by which the Zapatistas actively redefined their alliances.

Through numerous interventions and small-scale confrontations over the course of several years, the Zapatistas achieved two changes: they partly reconfigured the field of their solidarity networks by spurning disrespectful outsiders, and they redefined legitimacy and the meaning of solidarity within that field. They asserted their autonomy not only from the Mexican government but also within their support networks, formally and informally denouncing contributors' early treatment of them and asserting their equality with other activists. In 2003, they set strict ground rules for their relationships, taking control of programs that had previously been under outsiders' jurisdiction. In so doing, they not only demonstrated their resolve and ability to achieve internal autonomy, but they also pushed supporters to recognize the pitfalls of outside intervention, which, if not led by Southern communities, could end up failing to accomplish its goals.

The Zapatistas' 38 self-governing, or "autonomous," municipalities are divided into five regions, each with its own municipal center and semi-independent government. For this reason, conflicts between Northern and Southern activists and the promotion of horizontal networking emerged in different communities at different moments, spanning the period from 1994 to the present and varying by region. Most of these ruptures were concentrated in the period 1999–2003. They culminated in the movementwide denunciation of Northern treatment in 2003 and the initiation of an official emphasis on reciprocal solidarity in The Other Campaign of 2005.

Expelling outsiders has been an early and recurrent means by which the Zapatistas have defined their solidarity network, limiting alliances to small, grassroots supporters and excluding the type of large, institutional donors that theorists like Bob (2005) suggest impose on beneficiaries the most. Dramatically, in 1996 and 1997, the Zapatistas denounced outside organizations' attempts to appoint themselves intermediaries or representatives of the movement, expelling a swathe of groups that had failed to defer to Zapatista priorities. In particular, until 1996, a group of organizations called the Solidarity Coalition, already mentioned for its corruption and mismanagement of donations, had coordinated most transnational involvement with the movement. Yet in 1997, the Zapatistas abruptly demanded more transparency in that organization's accounting. As one respondent described it, "In '97, the Zapatistas expelled a lot of people from the Solidarity Coalition, because they hadn't respected the rules" (Pérez 2008). As a respondent who worked

for the Solidarity Coalition at the time explained, the Zapatistas told them, "If you won't be accountable to us, then we're going to create our own channel for receiving solidarity" (Flores 2008).

As the Solidarity Coalition dissolved, unable to adjust its practices, in 1996 the Zapatistas replaced it with their own gatekeeper organization, called *Enlace Civil* (Civil Link, its actual name), symbolically demonstrating that they would not tolerate unaccountable outside organizations or self-appointed intermediaries to outside solidarity.

In periodic confrontations thereafter, the Zapatistas set standards for NGO practices that pushed many solidarity organizations to withdraw, gradually delimiting the scope of the solidarity networks. In 1999, communities within the movement began a wave of local-level confrontations of Northern activists; in 2002 the movement broke all official political ties (particularly with Mexico's left-wing PRD); and in 2003 it officially restructured its autonomous governments. In 2005, almost ten years after founding Enlace Civil, the movement further disbanded its inner solidarity circle, including Enlace Civil's exclusive role as intermediary; the movement's semiofficial intellectual outlet, *Revista Rebeldía*; and its political arm, the Frente Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (FZLN). In so doing, the Zapatistas sought to block individuals or groups from exploiting their proximity to the movement (Swords 2007). Since 2003, the Zapatistas have continued to reject large and bureaucratic donors, in spite of the financial incentives such institutions may offer. In 2006, for instance, supporters reported that the Zapatistas "took hostage" and then banished United Nations Development Program representatives for failing to follow through on promised per diem cost reimbursement to Zapatista representatives who traveled to meet with them (Brigada los Nadie 2007).

Interview respondents, particularly those whose practices were constrained by their own or their funders' bureaucratic requirements, experienced these new terms as direct dismissals. For instance, for more than a year, Angela Peterson ran a women's literacy program for a U.S.-based NGO. In about 2000, the regional Zapatista government told her, "We can't have one community getting so much help, so we're not having this program any more. We'll only accept a program that will include women from all the communities." Peterson recalled that the Zapatista leaders offered to receive and distribute the project's resources themselves. However, she went on, "The people who were getting the funding didn't change it, so the Zapatista council rejected the program" (Peterson 2008). Likewise, Julie Steinberg, who managed a small pro-Zapatista foundation, explained, "When the whole [Zapatista restructuring] happened in 2003, partially because of that change in the way the communities worked, we stopped funding." In order to be accountable to its own donors, her organization needed quantitative reports of proj-

ect results that the Zapatistas were no longer willing to provide (Steinberg 2008).

Excluding some NGOs also symbolically asserted the movement's independence and made it clear that remaining supporters were auxiliary to Zapatismo. After the Good Government Councils formed in 2003, Alice Williams, the head of a longstanding grassroots solidarity organization from the United States, recalled, "A lot of NGOs got kicked out—some big organizations, and everybody knew. I was really worried, so I called Enlace Civil and said, 'Are we going to be okay?'" (Williams 2008). Such expulsions made merely getting to stay on with the Zapatistas into an affirmation. As another U.S. activist commented, "I think that they would not continue engaging with us if we didn't keep doing our work well. On some level, it was just about the validation that they continued to ask us to do more and more. Clearly, something was working, or they wouldn't have continued to have us there" (Clark 2008).

The Zapatistas' credible threats to expel sympathizers also reinforced their efforts to construct new terms for their alliances. For instance, the movement's confrontation with the Solidarity Coalition put outsiders on guard. Mexico City–born activist Rocío Pérez, who organized Zapatista women's collectives, recounted, referring to the movement's expulsion of the Solidarity Coalition, that "We began in '97, when they had already set the first limits on NGOs working in the communities. . . . So we wouldn't have been able to work at all if we hadn't respected their discussions and dialogues, asking what they needed, what we could offer, and how they wanted us to work" (2008). Alice Williams, likewise, scoffed at a fellow solidarity worker who had been excluded from Zapatista territory for failing to follow through on promised infrastructure projects. As she put it, "He disrespected the Zapatista authorities; then he has to pay the consequences. If I disrespected the Zapatista authorities, I would have to do the same thing" (Williams 2008). Once the Zapatistas began confronting them, outsiders could not expect to speak for the movement or set agendas with impunity (see also Earle and Simonelli 2005).

In conjunction with the expulsions, the Zapatistas increasingly took control of solidarity programs, rejecting Northern agendas, challenging Northern priorities, and demanding jurisdiction over practical matters like the location of projects, distribution of donations, and management of funds. Jennifer Clark, who remembers being in one of only a few organizations that did not withdraw from the Zapatista region where she worked, described the change in her relationship to the Zapatistas as "a process over time of asserting more and more 'We're going to be making the decisions'; a tone change . . . the adjustment of what [the relationship] looks like on a day-to-day level, and the assertion of, 'Now we're going to set the dates of the workshops. Not you'" (2008). In particular,

she remembers an encounter when the Zapatistas demanded control of her project's bank account. As she described it, "At one point they were like, 'Our autonomy means that we want to control all the resources of all the projects.' My partner and I had a bank account . . . at some point they were like, 'We want all the money.' There was some sense of, 'We're taking control of this project'" (Clark 2008). Communities within the movement often swiftly demanded such changes in control.

Grassroots activists who stayed through these changes, such as Clark, often found it difficult to adjust to the new terms of their projects. The series of confrontations with the local autonomous government where she worked felt to Clark like "scrapes and bruises," or "a little bit overcompensating." Of the Zapatistas' demand to take over her bank account, she reflected, "Politically, I really agreed with it, and at the same time, sometimes it would come as a negative, a shock." Considering another instance when the Zapatistas closed her program in one community, she recalled thinking, "Well, that seems really dumb to me, but not dumb. But, it was like, that's kind of a shame." In another example, Teresa Flores, who could not remember a single Zapatista intervention in her teacher-training program from 1994 to 1999, described how

> In '99, after having worked for years with one single municipality with a more or less set group of teachers, suddenly we were not going to make any decisions about workshops. Instead, it would be "together." But only sort of together, because they had already had zonewide meetings, appointed new teachers, and made their curriculum. So, it wasn't so together; it was telling us, "OK, we want you to prepare a workshop about these topics." It was really hard to unlearn a project that you had already worked on for five years. Almost a kind of pain. (Flores 2008)

Flores felt that she was losing not only the people she'd worked with and come to know but also the skills she'd built up over time. Rather than resulting from spontaneous agreement, the Zapatistas' demands for equal say felt unpleasant, even for the most accommodating supporters.

At first, the self-assertions Clark and Flores describe were haphazard and uneven. Then, in 2003, the Zapatistas published a series of communiqués called "The Thirteenth Stele"[12] (Marcos 2003), which officially set movementwide ground rules for solidarity activists, denounced past Northern interventions, and defined a structure for formally managing relations with "civil society." They asked that outside supporters seek approval from the movement's Good Government Councils for all projects. In particular, they forbade supporters from earmarking donations for specific communities or individuals; instead, the Zapatista councils would decide where help was needed. In addition, the Zapatista governments instituted a "brother tax" of 10 percent on all projects to balance donations among all Zapatista communities. Contrary to

Piven and Cloward (1977), the Zapatistas may have disrupted North-South relations more by building their own organizational structure than they would have by emphasizing disruptive protest.

The 2003 communiqués that announced these rules and governance structures also provided the discourse currently common among Northern Zapatista supporters that bases the legitimacy of solidarity around Southern leadership. First, the Zapatistas denounced Northern paternalism. Marcos proclaimed, "[Here] dies the 'Cinderella syndrome' of some 'civil societies': the paternalism of some national and international NGOs. At least it dies for the Zapatista communities, who, from now on, will no longer receive leftovers or permit the imposition of projects."[13] In a direct affront to power hierarchies based on economic status, he declared, "The Power of Money now knows who else they should fear" (Marcos 2003, part 2, "A Death"). Money would not correspond to influence within Zapatista networks, if the movement could help it.

Also, Marcos went on, the Zapatistas, not Northerners, would be the "experts" in their territory, and they would not accept Northern condescension. He insisted, "Support for the indigenous communities should not be seen as help for mental incompetents who don't even know what they need, or for children who have to be told what they should eat, at what time and how, what they should learn, what they should say and what they should think." The movement, not outsiders, deserved credit for its projects. Marcos continued, "The Zapatista communities are in charge of the projects (not a few NGOs can testify to that), they get them up and running; they make them produce" (Marcos 2003, part 2, "A Death"). In contrast, Northern "expertise" regularly resulted in inappropriate projects, favoritism, or divisions within or among Zapatista communities.

Third, the Zapatistas rejected outsiders' emphasis on Southern "need," repudiating dependence, making supporters superfluous, and stripping supporters' claims to altruism. Marcos asserted, "If the Zapatista communities wanted, they could have the best standard of living in Latin America. Imagine how much the government would be willing to invest in order to secure our surrender. . . . No. The Zapatistas have received many offers to buy their consciences, and they keep up their resistance nonetheless." Not only did the Zapatistas reject the notion that they would "sell out" for money; they insisted that help was not just about aiding a poor community but also about joining a common project to construct a new world. Marcos explained, "Whoever helps one or several Zapatista communities is helping not just to improve a collective's material situation . . . [but] is helping a much simpler, but more demanding, project: the building of a new world, one where many worlds fit, one where charity and pity for another are the stuff of science fiction novels, or of a forgettable and expendable past" (Marcos

2003, part 2, "A Death"). Altruistic charity should be replaced by engagement in a shared, global struggle.

In July 2005, the Zapatistas' "Sixth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle" reiterated the notion of a common struggle and elevated the movement's focus on horizontal networking. In this declaration, the Zapatistas announced the Other Campaign (*La Otra Campaña*), a program that not only encouraged grassroots groups outside Chiapas to adopt Zapatista strategies and declare their alignment with the movement but also gave such groups official status as "adherents." Lasting until 2007, *La Otra* formally promoted connections between the Zapatistas and other antineoliberal groups, particularly in Mexico but also worldwide, through a Zapatista "listening tour." While the Zapatistas had long framed transnational collaboration as a shared struggle and promoted South-South and South-to-North diffusion of ideas and tactics, *La Otra* reaffirmed ongoing Zapatista efforts by providing a formal framework and language for mutuality. Respondents who had long considered "practicing Zapatismo elsewhere"—especially after the movement publicly denounced outsiders' conduct in Chiapas communities—now had more language to describe their efforts. For instance, Zapatista-inspired collectives, campaigns, and coalitions began to identify themselves as "La Otra San Diego" or "Chicago Otra." The language of *La Otra* further encouraged people to adapt Zapatista concepts, discourses, strategies, and goals to their own local contexts.

Meanwhile, the growing prominence of horizontal linkages across global neo-Zapatista networks provoked more traditional, longstanding Zapatista advocacy groups to reconsider advancing Zapatismo at home. Through the Zapatistas' redefinitions, which were at times painful, many supporters began to re-envision their solidarity and their privilege.

For instance, although Julie Steinberg's organization was bureaucratically unable to adjust to the Zapatistas' consent process, she, as an individual, admired their defiance. She explained, "It's an example of indigenous people being subjects rather than objects of their own development and of their own future. I love the fact that they question the power dynamic and in essence change the power dynamic between those who have the money and those who work the land" (2008). Though their practices may lag behind their words, respondents in this study almost universally expressed sentiments similar to Steinberg's, suggesting that at the very least, the discourse of shifting power dynamics has begun to permeate the Zapatistas' networks. Sympathizers now commonly value the Zapatistas' subversion of Northern activists' status itself, seeing that defiance as one means to achieve their common goal of redefining power relationships.

Nevertheless, the Zapatistas' empowerment in regard to outsiders has come with a cost. First, by encouraging supporters to practice Zap-

atismo at home, the Zapatistas have diffused attention and resources away from Chiapas. Second, by dogmatically rejecting donors who would not fully submit to the movement's direction, they have forsaken many resources.

Over the course of the years that the Zapatistas were asserting themselves, outside events, such as the democratization of Mexico in 2000 and the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States, combined with the movement's defiance to draw funds away from Chiapas. As of 2002, key NGO economic supporters, such as Global Exchange, Oxfam, and Witness for Peace, had closed their Chiapas offices, and those that remained faced budget shortfalls (Benessaieh 2007). More recently, many Mexican activists have shifted their attention to the nation's contested election of 2006, drug trafficking, and the escalating violence and police brutality throughout the country.

Having alienated many of their early supporters, the Zapatistas find themselves increasingly alone economically and politically. Even their own grassroots constituents in Chiapas have recently been abandoning them. In December 2007, Subcomandante Marcos gave a speech titled "Feeling Red: The Calendar and Geography of War." Denouncing waves of aggression against the movement, he lamented, "This is the first time since that early morning in January of 1994 that the social, national and international response has been insignificant or nonexistent." Though he affirmed that the Zapatistas would be prepared to resist alone, the movement's desperation was evident, and without more outside attention to the violence being waged against Zapatista communities, its disintegration seemed possible.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the Zapatistas did not entirely reverse Northern funders' domination, they unsettled the foundations of Northern engagement in and theorization of transnational activism and illuminated possibilities for reconfiguring power dynamics from within. By intervening in North-South relations, the Zapatistas showed that the configurations present in their early years were not natural or immutable. They renounced Southern dependency and need, reframing supporters as auxiliary to their endeavors and elevating respect for Southern practices, agendas, dignity, and autonomy. They questioned Northern claims to altruism and expertise, and they explicitly distinguished their interests from those of external leftists. They also provided new language with which sympathizers from the North and South could reexamine and redefine their own solidarity. Even if the Zapatista movement in Chiapas eventually dies off, these discursive and conceptual accomplishments, including inspiring allies to work against neoliberalism at home, represent a success.

Analytically, the evolution of the Zapatistas' transnational alliances also makes it possible to reconstruct existing theories of the interactions among differently positioned activists. This article argues that the economic, political, or cultural status that gives Northern sympathizers leverage against local oppressors does not necessarily echo inside transnational advocacy networks. Instead, other intangible "resources" and markers of status, such as authentic efforts to resist neoliberalism and respect for Southern leadership, may be at play. While some scholars of power dynamics portray global civil society as "active," affecting "passive" local communities, the Zapatistas influence and inspire their Northern sympathizers. They have done so, in particular, by building their own form of structure to manage partnerships with Northern organizations. Meanwhile, whereas scholars of horizontal networking suggest that radical social movements inherently share agendas, the Zapatistas have both willfully contradicted supporters' desires and pushed outsiders to revise their tactics and goals, generating, rather than naturally arriving at, agreement.

This study underscores two key considerations for scholars of transnational advocacy networks. First, research on TANs must highlight transitions, analyzing North-South relationships in light of processes of engagement. Second, scholars must consider how contestations and negotiations among movement activists shape the trajectory of North-South power dynamics. They must illuminate how domination or mutuality results not only from predetermined positions in the global political economy but also from interactions between movement participants on the ground.

The Zapatistas' evolving partnerships provide important insights into the challenges all Southern organizations face in their interactions with Northern actors. For one, the Zapatistas had to want to differentiate themselves from outsiders. The data presented here suggest that this desire probably emerged from early alliances, which imposed on the Zapatistas to the point that they became willing to forsake some outside resources. At the same time, Northern groups that remained had to collaborate in "flipping the power," which their interactions with the movement apparently pushed them to do.

Second, the Zapatistas had to be able to assert their demands. One might hypothesize that the Zapatistas acquired this ability as a result of their increasing internal organization; their autonomous governments had to be functional in order to manage and control supporters. Building on Thayer's (2001) point that authenticity can serve as a resource to Southern groups, it might be argued that the Zapatistas have also gained leverage by emphasizing their unique challenges to dominant power hierarchies.

To understand better how Southern influence develops, further study should test these propositions, paying attention to intangible

resources and interrogating why Northern activists accept these shifts. Research should go beyond noting the existence of Southern capacity and specify the conditions under which shared identities and transnational reciprocity, even across power differentials, emerge.

What lessons from the Zapatistas can we apply to other movements? Can other grassroots Southern social movements challenge Northern power, taking advantage of outside resources even as they defend their own autonomy? It is important to emphasize that the Zapatistas are an extraordinary, historically unique movement. Instead of representing similar groups, the Zapatista case challenges and helps to extend existing theories (Burawoy 1998). It may be that, as a grassroots movement, the Zapatistas have more autonomy than most NGOs in the global South, and that their case may only be partly extendable to a larger set of Southern actors. However, similar cases of Southern groups defying the power of Northern money and inspiring Northern reflexivity, such as Via Campesina, the Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil, the Indian Organizing Committee of the World Social Forum in Mumbai, and Latin American feminist movements, suggest that this is not an isolated phenomenon (Reitan 2007; Alvarez 2009).

Still, such unusual cases have analytical and practical limitations. For instance, though reciprocal organizing may be efficient at mobilizing transnational alliances in some cases, it can also be precarious, leaving members unclear of their group's status and more focused on autonomous, local, and national action than on their shared project. The recent inactivity of the paradigmatically horizontal, Zapatista-inspired Peoples' Global Alliance demonstrates this risk. Some common central structure may be necessary in transnational movements to sustain collective action (Reitan 2007, 217–19).

In the present case, the Zapatistas' recent desperation implies the shortcomings of their obstinacy; their stubbornness may have threatened their viability. Day by day, the movement is losing local, national, and international support, even at the community level, and it is increasingly marginalized in Mexico. By the end of the fieldwork for this study in 2008, the Zapatistas were facing diminishing resources and increased violence from paramilitary and state forces, which, under right-wing president Felipe Calderón, had once again taken the offensive. Although the movement gained a few new supporters after *La Otra Campaña*, much of this attention was concentrated outside Chiapas.

Heeding the Zapatistas' call to work toward the same goals in their own homes, ongoing supporters have also begun to pursue Zapatismo elsewhere. Outside involvement in the movement has never again approached its very early levels. Like all movements, the Zapatistas continue to struggle for survival. Perhaps Clifford Bob's 2005 suggestion that defying donors may be too costly bears weight. The Zapatistas illuminate

the possibilities for rural peasants' agency and the critical importance of Southern discursive and organizational innovations and challenges to Northern power. Nevertheless, these innovations remain part of an ongoing, dynamic evolution of their transnational movement, always partly circumscribed by their disadvantaged position in global networks and the challenges of mobilizing activists to collaborate across borders.

NOTES

1. The term *transnational* is used loosely to include both networks that cross state boundaries and partnerships in Mexico that cross economic and political divides. Similarly, the terms *global North* and *global South* are used in a conceptual sense, rather than a strictly geographic one, to differentiate the economically, politically, and geographically privileged members of activist networks from those with less privilege.

2. Zapatistas is the most commonly used name for the EZLN, *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), the contemporary group named after the Mexican revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata.

3. As Alvarez et al. (1998) point out, movements themselves constitute fields, constructing alternative publics in which particular "ways of doing politics" and cultural-political meanings are fashioned and continually contested and in relation to which people who identify with the movement constantly renegotiate their political identities and practices.

4. Scholars have widely debated the success of the Zapatista case and the negative implications of building support networks through diffuse, Internet-based ties (see, e.g., the debate between Hellman 2000, Paulson 2001, and Cleaver 2000).

5. They did not, as some observers might assume, simply amass enough funds to make refusing additional donations viable; instead, they have defended their autonomy in the context of diminishing financial circumstances.

6. Of the 34 respondents, several had led multiple organizations, and in some cases more than one leader of the same organization was interviewed, so the number of respondents does not correspond to the number of organizations represented. One interview was conducted with each respondent.

7. While the Zapatistas did not explicitly refuse repeated requests, they persistently said they needed follow up or did not have an answer yet, asking me to return until I ran out of time (Author's fieldnotes, Chiapas, January 14, 2008).

8. Nevertheless, scholars such as Keck and Sikkink do acknowledge that the top-down advocacy model is often challenged to the point of becoming unsustainable (1998, 78).

9. From early on, scholars note, the Zapatistas showed respect for other groups' diverse struggles and the interconnected nature of their efforts, particularly through programs such as popular consultations. Since 1994, the Zapatistas' encouragement and models have helped inspire and structure activists' efforts outside Mexico, ranging from the foundation of the Peoples' Global Alliance (Reitan 2007) to San Francisco Bay Area "spokescouncils," or collective working groups, to stop the war in Iraq (Conway 2008).

10. Such reflections echo thinking that emerged from other solidarity movements as well, such as the Central American solidarity movements of the 1980s.

11. Scholars of development and transnational advocacy networks (TANs) decry such supposedly unintended "instrument effects" (Ferguson 1994).

12. A stele is an engraved stone that represents individuals, dates, names, events, and sometimes prophesies. Subcomandante Marcos used this word to refer to a series of communiqués he issued in 2003 reflecting on the history of the Zapatista movement.

13. The "Cinderella syndrome" is the notion that "poor as we are, we'll accept anything, charity and alms" (Marcos 2003, part 2, "A Death").

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