

THE IMPACT OF THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN CHIAPAS, MEXICO

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Abstract. This paper seeks to determine the impact the Zapatista Movement had on women's rights in Chiapas, Mexico. I hypothesized that the movement positively, but indirectly, impacted women's rights in Chiapas by causing increased awareness of the issues in the region and influencing various aid and development organizations to begin women's rights work there since the start of the movement in 1994. Twelve non-profit nongovernmental women's aid organizations with no political or religious affiliation were selected for analysis. Using content analysis of the NGOs' websites, each organization was determined whether or not they had Zapatista ties in their founding by tracing their foundation history through information provided in various sections on their websites. After determining that at least 7 of the 12 organizations had clear influences from the Zapatista Movement in their founding, I argue that the Zapatista Movement did significantly contribute to the increased number of women-specific aid NGOs in Chiapas. However, the type of influence could be described as either direct or indirect, depending on the more specific relationship with the movement the organizers had. This study reveals an intersection of social movement and political science research because it demonstrates how one movement can spawn several other independent movements that have legitimate implications on the formation of institutions and on a broader population.

Introduction

On January 1, 1994, a group of 3,000 rebels stormed the Mexican state of Chiapas, taking over several cities, setting fire to police stations, and freeing prisoners from the state capital. The group of rebels, who called themselves the Ejército Zapatista de la Liberación Nacional (EZLN), or the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, enjoyed brief success before the Mexican army drove them back (Ross 1995, 169–187). The EZLN, a group that had been meeting and slowly gathering supporters for the past few years, chose January 1, 1994 to announce their presence to the international community in protest of the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into effect (Ross 1995, 23–35). The Zapatistas are a leftist group of indigenous Maya and non-indigenous sympathizers from the Chiapas region of Mexico who believe that the Mexican government no longer serves the common citizen, so they strive to achieve indigenous autonomy and work so that the extensive natural resource supply in the Chiapas region actually benefits the people who live there (Ross 1995).

However, one of the most unique aspects of the Zapatista strife compared to similar liberation movements is the extensive participation of women. Women have made up approximately one third of the combatants in the Zapatista army with several that have served in high ranking positions of

military authority (Speed, Stephen, and Hernández Castillo 2006). In addition, women constitute over half of the Zapatista support bases throughout Chiapas and have worked to improve a variety of both indigenous and women's rights issues by means of the movement (Speed, Stephen, and Hernández Castillo 2006).

In Chiapas, indigenous women have a long history of abuse and treatment as second-class citizens. Christine Eber and Christine Kovic describe in their extensive study about women in Chiapas, Mexico how both "mestizas and indigenous women, whether urban or rural, single or married, are united in their struggles to support themselves and their families, to curtail domestic violence and rape, and to be treated fairly in the judicial system" (Eber and Kovic 2003). Though the Zapatista women do not consider themselves feminists, they identify with the indigenous movement as a whole and define themselves as another voiceless group within the movement that needs to be heard (Ross 2000); they seek to gather support and bring awareness within the indigenous communities and to the broader national and international community about the injustices of sexism that burdens every one of them. In my study, I have sought to discover the way in which the Zapatista Movement has affected women's rights in Chiapas, Mexico since its official beginning nearly 18 years ago.

In the wide variety of literature on this topic, I discerned two dominant schools of thought concerning the impact of the Zapatista Movement on women's rights. The first and dominating school of thought focuses on women who are directly enlisted in the EZLN and how their individual standards of living have changed (and often substantially improved) as a result of their direct involvement in the movement. The second school of thought, and the one that will be the focus of this paper, centers on the women in Chiapas as a whole population and the movement's direct and indirect impact on their collective human rights status. In my study, I selected 12 non-profit non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work in Chiapas to improve women's rights, that have emerged since the start of the Zapatista Movement, and that meet various other criteria. I used content analysis of the organizations' websites along with an interview to trace the Zapatista Movement's progression as it brought awareness to women's rights issues in the region. The goal was to determine if it led to the foundation of the numerous local and internationally based women's rights NGOs in Chiapas. I have found that though the clearly stated pro-women's rights goals of the Zapatista's Women's Revolutionary Law have not yet been realized in terms of the broader population of women in Chiapas, the movement has both helped to bring awareness to the international community and also spur local activism for the improvement of women's rights. Activist organizations have gradually benefited the broader female population in Chiapas by making necessary resources accessible for women that the EZLN has not.

Literature Review

After reviewing a wide variety of scholarly literature about the Zapatista Movement, I found that there are two distinct schools of thought that dominate the study of the affect of the Zapatista Movement on women in Chiapas. The dominating school of thought in most of the reviewed publications emphasized the "Zapatista woman" as a woman who is directly involved or enlisted in the Zapatista Army. This type of research typically centers on personal, in-depth interviews with one or a few women in the Zapatista Army and typically compares their personal experiences before and after joining the EZLN. While this type of ethnographic research is very interesting and informative, it is really only

significant on a smaller scale because its results are really only applicable to a small minority of the female population in Chiapas – that is, the women who are actively and directly enlisted in the EZLN. For clarity purposes, I will refer to this first school of thought as the “Direct Enlistment” group.

The other major school of thought in the scholarship on this topic focused instead on the idea of the “Zapatista women” as the women who live in official Zapatista villages throughout the entire state of Chiapas. Zapatista villages are the small towns within the state of Chiapas that claim allegiance to the motives of the Zapatista Movement (Ballesteros Corona and Cuninghame 2000). Virtually all of the villages within Chiapas have claimed such allegiance (Ballesteros Corona and Cuninghame 2000). This school of research focuses on the broader female population of Chiapas and not specifically on the women directly enlisted in the EZLN. As a result, this school of thought varies greatly in research methods and results throughout the scholarly research in this field. While ethnographic methods such as interviews and observations are used, statistics such as literacy and maternal mortality rates often included or analyzed and heavily relied upon to demonstrate how the conditions described in a qualitative study are applicable to the broader female population of Chiapas. This school of thought will henceforth be referred to as the “Indirect Involvement” group because the women who are in focus in this scholarship are often not directly enlisted in the Zapatista Army.

The Direct Enlistment school of thought in the reviewed scholarly literature focuses on the women who are personally involved in the Zapatista Army. These women have typically left their homes and families to live and train at the Zapatista training camps in the secluded jungle regions of Chiapas (Speed, Stephen, and Hernández Castillo 2006). From this perspective, the women who were focused on have typically enjoyed great individual improvement in their women’s rights status as a part and a result of the Zapatista Movement. Also, because one of the foundational goals of the Zapatistas is to educate their members, women directly involved had almost immediate access to substantial education which has allowed them to learn not only to speak, but also to become literate in Spanish (Eber 1999) - an essential skill for any type of advancement in Mexico, yet a skill denied to the majority of indigenous women in the region (Eber 1999). Also, by living at the training camps, women in the EZLN enjoy a steady source of nutrition, which is rare because women “are often expected to wait until the men are finished eating before they can begin to eat; under the conditions of scarcity that are prevalent within those communities, the end result is that women eat much less than men” (Kampwirth 2002). A combination of steady nutrition and access to legitimate education paired with more readily available medical aid upon direct participation on the EZLN camps, women in the Zapatista army have commonly enjoyed substantial improvement the their individual standards of living. Coupled with the individual empowerment the EZLN offers, the Zapatista Movement has allowed some women access to freedom in several areas of their life, including liberty from the physical and sexual abuse that is rampant in the region (Munoz Ramirez 2003).

This Direct Enlistment school of thought focuses specifically on the change in individual women’s lives and the improved lifestyles they enjoy as a result of their own involvement in the Zapatista Movement. By focusing on individual interviews with a limited number of women who have seen a great change in their own lives due to their direct involvement in the Zapatista Army, many of the scholarly sources in this school of thought portray an impressive change in women’s rights in Chiapas. Such sources seem to assume that joining the Zapatista Movement is the answer to solving women’s rights problems in the region. However, as a young Zapatista woman named Daria described,

joining the movement for many women involves the difficult choice between marriage and family life or involvement in the Army. "I'm not going to marry because then I won't be free to attend meetings, to visit other communities, whereas where I am, I can go to my meetings, I can stay and chat, but if I had a husband he wouldn't let me, so I don't marry" (Speed, Hernández Castillo, and Stephen 2006). As a result, the idea that the majority of the women in Chiapas will give up marriage and family life to join the movement is highly unlikely and as a result, there remains thousands of sexually and physically abused, monolingual, illiterate, and malnourished women at home in Chiapas who can not directly benefit from the individual opportunities the EZLN have to offer.

The Direct Enlistment school of thought is very limited in the context of the overall impact of the Zapatista Movement on women's rights in Chiapas. As stated above, the majority of the research focuses on very few personal experiences of great change, but does not account for the rest of the female population in the region. As a result, this school of thought primarily outlines statically unusual or insignificant cases that would not be applicable to the rest of the population in assessing the broader impact the Zapatista Movement had on women's rights.

The second major school of thought, or the Indirect Involvement group, focuses on this broader majority of the female population in Chiapas. The common argument explains that though there have been substantial changes for the women directly in the EZLN, these women are a distinct minority in the region and there has been relatively little immediate success for the common women of Chiapas in improving their human rights status as a result of the movement. The individual women who abandon their families to join the EZLN often do enjoy much improved living conditions, but they are often looked down upon as deserters of traditional family and tribal values (Speed, Stephen, and Hernández Castillo 2006). This Indirect Involvement school acknowledges that even though the Zapatistas as a whole encourage forward-thinking, the whole population's mindset will not change as rapidly. Though changing the minds of their fellow indigenous men towards their treatment of their wives clearly poses a challenge, an obstacle within the female population also exists because some of the older generations of women believe that it is the husband's duty to beat his wife to ensure she upholds her own responsibilities (Kampwirth 2002) - as has been traditionally taught. Since this school of thought acknowledges that the common women of Chiapas have not enjoyed the same benefits as those in the EZLN, it argues that one of the most important ways that the Zapatista Movement has helped to indirectly improve the greater female population's rights status in the region is by calling more domestic and international awareness to the substandard living conditions of the indigenous women in the region.

The Indirect Involvement school of thought discusses concepts and questions that are much more applicable to the broader population of indigenous women in Chiapas. This particular school more readily supports the concept of increased awareness from the Zapatista Movement that may result in greater successful activism and subsequently improve women's rights in the region. Likewise, the Indirect Involvement school of thought is more realistic in acknowledging that while the EZLN has greatly impacted some women, the vast majority of women in the region remain oppressed and have only experienced marginal improvements as an immediate result of the movement.

Within these two distinct twos of thought, I have found that the individual researchers of the reviewed publications have typically employed either qualitative or ethnographical methods, statistical analyses, or, most frequently, some combination of the two methods. Through the utilization of these

research methods, the literature on this subject collectively discusses several common themes and topics of dispute, often with a primary goal to firstly give an assessment of the common indigenous woman's rights and lifestyle prior to and since the beginning of the Zapatista Movement, and thusly providing a level against which one can measure change or improvement. The most pressing human rights violations that most of the researchers and indigenous women alike emphasized are issues involving the indigenous woman's lack of power and ability make decisions for her self, uncontrolled cases of physical and sexual abuse, and the lack of accessibility to basic resources, such as education, healthcare, and substantial nutrition. By utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of research, the literature on this topic paints a picture of the pre-Zapatista and current situation for the women in Chiapas – both those directly enlisted in the EZLN and not.

During the first Declaration in the Lacandon Jungle, the Zapatista women, led by EZLN military leader Commander Susana, proclaimed a list of ten nonnegotiable demands for justice and respect, both to their own community and to the Mexican government (Anon. 1996). This subsection of the Zapatista Declaration in the Lacandon became known as the Women's Revolutionary Law (see page 25 for the list of demands). As much of the statistically-based research shows, there was good reason for such demands. At the beginning of the Zapatista movement, Chiapas had the highest maternal mortality rate in Mexico: 117 out of every 100,000 women died in child birth because of a lack of adequate female health services (Speed, Hernández Castillo, and Stephen 2006). With 60% of the population under the age of 20, most adolescent girls were sold into marriage by their parents and gave birth to an average of 7 children (Ross 1995). In the state of Chiapas, 67% of the population was malnourished, with 33% classified as extremely malnourished (Ross 1995).

In addition to lack of appropriate female health care and nutrition, women have been kept under the control of men by their lack of education. Approximately 60% of women in Chiapas in 1995 were illiterate (Eber and Kovic 2003). At least another 40% were monolingual- meaning that they only spoke the native language of the village, and not Spanish (Ross 1995). Since indigenous women lacked the accessibility to an adequate education, they never learned to become literate in Spanish, which is the language of business and self sufficiency in Mexico. As a result, keeping women monolingual has long prevented them from rebelling against traditional expectations and dependency on men in order to become independent (Eber 1999).

The multiple researchers' use of statistical data to demonstrate the women's rights situation in Chiapas prior to and during the beginning of the Zapatista Movement allows the reader to understand that the basis for the Women's Revolutionary Law was a result of the undeniably oppressive gender roles and cultural implications of being a woman in Chiapas. A major part of the debate between the two major schools of thought is a question of how much this declaration actually impacted indigenous women's lives. In order to determine an impact, statistical information involving both the women directly involved in the EZLN and the common indigenous women of the Chiapas is crucial to compare and analyze. The researchers from the perspective of the Indirect Involvement school of thought commonly employed various statistical data and changes (or lack there of) in maternal mortality rates, the availability or usage of birth control, average number of children, literacy rates, among others to demonstrate that the Zapatista movement has largely not benefited the majority of the female population (Munoz Ramirez 2003). In contrast, the Direct Enlistment school of thought uses such statistics to demonstrate the initial need for change and how the successful women have beaten the

odds (Munoz Ramirez 2003). By focusing on the very small percentage of women who have beaten the odds and directly benefited from the Zapatista Movement, this school of thought does not adequately address the broader population, making the subsequent research much less statistically significant.

However, in order to more completely portray the impact of the Zapatista Movement on women's rights, researchers from both schools of thought commonly employed more qualitative research methods, perhaps to determine the real-life implications of these numbers. By integrating qualitative methods, both schools of thought were able to more completely develop their respective argument, often by integrating personal experiences of indigenous women from the region. By far the most common qualitative method to be used in the literature on this topic was the interview. Not quite as popular, but none-the-less common, were the observational study, another qualitative method. Along with ethnography, such methods are used in both schools of thought about women involved in the movement in order to better understand their experience in the EZLN. All of the researchers traveled to Chiapas and many stayed for an extended period of time, interviewing, observing, and living alongside of women both directly in the EZLN and those who are not.

By including personal experiences, both the researcher and the reader are able to understand the motivation that many women experienced to join the revolution when opportunity presented itself. Christine Eber, the author of the article "Seeking Our Own Food: Indigenous Women's Power and Autonomy in San Pedro, Chiapas," chose to live with an indigenous women named Antonia (who spoke Spanish as well her native language) and her husband for multiple extended stays. Throughout her research, she includes anecdotes and commentary Antonia's personal experiences with the Zapatista movement and uses these experiences to demonstrate the individual improvements Antonia has enjoyed as a result of her involvement in the movement. Eber uses these anecdotes to demonstrate that there is not only validity in the numerical statistics, but personal interviews and experiences also add insight into cultural norms and traditions that explain these statistics, rather than just recording them for their numerical significance.

This type of qualitative methodology, such as ethnography, interviews, and observations are similarly employed in the Indirect Involvement school of thought, though in these cases such personal experiences are used to demonstrate the opposite point – how the common woman still suffers despite the goals of the EZLN and the real-life drawbacks that prevent all women from being able to join the EZLN. As a result, the qualitative methods of research demonstrated the inherent differences between the two main schools of thought that statistics alone could not portray. For example, an important theme that many of the interviews and ethnographic research uncovered was the question of traditional indigenous values and roles of women and how these values conflict directly with the new Zapatista ideology (Millan Moncayo 2006). Most researchers found that according to many of the indigenous women, there was a need for a change from traditional beliefs (Harcourt and Escobar 2005). In other words, the combination of crippling domestic and sexual violence, the lack of education, resources, and adequate nutrition, have long since worked to keep women submissive to men and stuck in a position of slave-like dependence, with no hope of advancement (Ross 2000). With the changes and arising opportunities that the Zapatista army had to offer, more and more women began (and are still beginning) to realize that their right to be respected as a human being is more valuable than traditional, yet personally detrimental customs (Millan Moncayo 2006).

Through a careful combination of both qualitative research methods and intensive statistical collection and analysis, the research about the impact of the Zapatista Movement on women's rights in Chiapas explores the experiences of both women directly in the EZLN and the common indigenous women from Chiapas, Mexico. Within the two dominating schools of thought, several debates center on the women's struggle to remain true to their indigenous roots and traditions, while still demanding respect and seeking better lives for them and their children. Another frequently discussed point in the literature was the concept that the Zapatista movement is multifaceted. It is as much a women's movement as an indigenous one and the women's strife within the group mirrors larger indigenous struggle against Mexico. Another universal theme is that is it up to the individual women work for change rather than waiting for society to transform. The Indirect Involvement school of thought is more effective than the Direct Enlistment school in providing possible answers to the question of how the whole population of women in Chiapas has been affected by the Zapatista Movement. The wide variety of literature on this topic reflects the ever-changing and controversial atmosphere that has existed in Chiapas since the start of the Zapatista Movement nearly eighteen years ago.

Research Design

For this study, I chose to focus on the Indirect Involvement school of thought that centers on the impact of the Zapatista Movement on the broader female population of Chiapas. The existing scholarship in this school of thought frequently discusses other possible ways the movement has less-directly improved women's rights in the region and some reference a variety of independent pro-women's rights organizations that have developed since 1994 when the EZLN first took action. I predicted that the movement brought awareness to the local, national, and international spectrum and therefore indirectly caused a substantial number of pro-women's rights organizations to start work in Chiapas, with the goal of helping the women of the region improve their human right's status. Though there is always a limit to how much an organization can help a large population, there are multiple non-governmental organizations that seem to carry out the pro-equality values that the Zapatistas expressed in their Declaration. I hypothesized that the Zapatista Movement has positively impacted the women's rights status in Chiapas, Mexico. With the Zapatista Movement as the independent variable and the subsequent human rights organizations as the dependent variable, an improvement in women's rights would result if it holds true that the movement caused an increase in local women's rights organizations.

In order to study the effect of the Zapatista Movement on the creation of pro-women's rights organizations in Chiapas, I originally intended to primarily use a process tracing methodology in order to follow the impact of the movement as an influence in the founding of these organizations through a series of personal interviews and website analysis in order to discover the histories of certain organizations. Process tracing is a method social science research which uses historical context to trace the progression of an event over time in order to form a theory (Falleti 2007). However, as will be explained shortly, I had to adjust the methodology to primarily content analysis due to a lack of adequate responses in obtaining interviews. Content analysis in social science is a research approach in which the context of the "text data" is categorized or coded in order to determine a theory (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Content analysis was applied by analyzing the information on the websites of specific NGOs in order to determine whether or not the organizations had Zapatista ties in their founding.

The selected organizations were chosen because each adhered to several requirements that sought to eliminate external bias in the study. Twelve organizations were selected for analysis and all have offices directly in Chiapas, Mexico, though some may have additional offices in other parts of the world. All organizations are independent, non-governmental organizations, not-for-profit and also unaffiliated with any political party or religious group. These organizations were selected based on these credentials to eliminate possible ulterior motives for their aid, such as increased political support, religious conversion missions, or certain government requirements. In order to further eliminate possible bias and ensure that none of these organizations had hidden political or religious ties, all of the selected organizations explicitly stated that they were not affiliated at some point on their website. All of the selected organizations were either specifically women's rights organizations or human rights organization with unique programs designed specifically for women. The women's programs offered in the variety of organizations differed greatly and included a range of aid from gynecological and maternal care to educational services and microfinance opportunities specifically for women to help them become financially independent.

A primarily qualitative study, the original goal was to utilize interviews as the main source for data collection in order to discover the history of the founding of the twelve elected pro-women's rights organizations. By investigating the organizations' founding history, I sought to uncover their motivations to starting women's work in Chiapas and thus determine if they had any links to the Zapatistas. Unfortunately, though several of the organizations responded after some prompting, only one followed through with a legitimate interview. Though several asked for questions via email, none actually sent back responses to the questions and others simply referred me to certain sections on their web pages. Fortunately, all of the selected organizations do have extensive websites with in-dept founding history and mission sections. Instead of relying on interviews with the organizers, I collected data that was provided on the organizations' various web pages to see which ones identify with the Zapatista Movement, or if they cite another reason as a cause for their organization, by analyzing the "History," "About Us," and "Mission" sections of their websites.

The analysis of these organizations and their founding demonstrates how a social movement can be successful for a population, other than the people directly involved, by spreading awareness and subsequently causing more activism. Though some organizations have other motivations for initiating their work, analyzing each organization's background determines to what extent the movement has indirectly aided the larger population of women in Chiapas.

Findings

Before investigating the 12 human rights organizations, I hypothesized that the Zapatista Movement caused women's rights organizations to open in Chiapas, Mexico and in this way, indirectly improved women's rights in the region. The 12 organizations in Chiapas that were focused on were both foreign-based and locally based (meaning within the state of Chiapas specifically). There were five foreign-based organizations. These included:

1. Marie Stopes International
2. Chiapas International
3. ProMujer

- 4. The Chiapas Project (1)
- 5. The Chiapas Project (2)

The two Chiapas Project organizations are completely separate, but will be distinguished by use of a (1) and (2). The remaining seven organizations are all based locally in Chiapas, Mexico. They are as follows:

- 1. The Center of Women’s Rights of Chiapas
- 2. Father Bartholomé de las Casas: Center of Human Rights
- 3. Alsol Contigo
- 4. CIAM (Center of Research and Action for the Latin American Woman)
- 5. CIEPAC (Center of Economic and Political Research of Community Action),
- 6. SiPaz: International Service for Peace
- 7. Committee of Human Rights: Saint Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada

Though several of the organizations returned messages, only Dr. Joanne Leigner from The Chiapas Project (1) followed through with a legitimate phone interview. However, the remainder all provided useful information for analysis about their founding on certain sections of their websites.

After carefully reviewing each website and directly questioning Dr. Leigner, each organization was put in to one of four categories to determine its relationship with the Zapatista Movement. These categories are as follows:

- 1. No Mention of Specific Influences
- 2. Clear Zapatista Influence
- 3. Other Specific Influence Mentioned (but no mention of Zapatista support)
- 4. Other Reason for Founding Mentioned (but express clear support of Zapatista Movement)

As demonstrated in Table 1, the majority of the reviewed organizations showed some kind of Zapatista influence or support with seven of the twelve in the “Clear Zapatista Influence” category and the remaining organization in the “Other Reason for Founding (but express clear support of movement)” group.

Name	No Specific Influences	Clear Zapatista Influence	Other Specific Influence	Other Reason for Founding but express clear support
Totals:	3	7	1	1

Table 1: Results

However, within the “Clear Zapatista Influence” category, there was some variation between to what extent the Zapatista connection was emphasized. CIEPAC and the Center for Women’s Rights of Chiapas both include images of Zapatistas and direct references to the movements of the group on

their web pages (Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas A.C.; CIEPAC). For example, the Center of Women's Rights of Chiapas cites the 1999 meeting in the EZLN center of San Cristobol de las Casas of a group of Zapatista women who were rallying against violence against women as an influential moment before their organization officially opened (Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas A.C.). The Center explains that at this point, and along with other instances, the founders saw a need for a more organized and official center for pro-women's rights activism (Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas A.C.).

It is clear from both of these websites that the people creating these organizations are either Zapatistas themselves or loyal sympathizers. Both CIEPAC and the Center describe how they saw a need within the social and political changes that were going on for organized centers for research and the emerging women's sub-movement (Centro de Derechos de la Mujer de Chiapas A.C.; CIEPAC).

Also included in the "Clear Zapatista Influence" category were several organizations that mention the Zapatistas as an influential factor, but from a more neutral perspective. It is unclear whether individual members from The Chiapas Project (2) or the CIAM have actual Zapatistas working in the organizations, but it seems unlikely that they were founded by people directly involved in the movement (The Chiapas Project; CIAM, AC). However, both groups mention the EZLN by name as a factor that brought awareness to the issues at hand and even include links to exterior web pages about the Zapatistas, though with more neutral discussion of the group on their actual website (CIAM, AC; The Chiapas Project). Also, SiPaz, an international organization for peace mentions that they saw the Zapatista Movement as reason to work in Chiapas, not necessarily because they supported what the EZLN was trying to accomplish, but because they wanted to help bring about changes in a peaceful way. Finally, neither the Committee for Human Rights: Saint Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada nor Chiapas International cite the Zapatista Movement explicitly by name as a factor for starting their organizations, but both cite "the social and political unrest and the human rights violations in Chiapas, Mexico" (Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada A.C.; Chiapas International) at the time of the height of the Zapatista Movement as direct influences for starting their organizations.

Though neither the Committee for Human Rights nor Chiapas International explicitly say the word Zapatista in describing the situations that influenced their founding, it is clear by the descriptions of the situation they heard about or experienced in Chiapas was referring to the strife of the Zapatistas. Though some of the other organizations within the "Clear Zapatista Influence" category did not have qualms about mentioning their allegiance with the movement, it is understandable why some of the Zapatista-influenced organizations were more hesitant to speak too extensively about the EZLN or outwardly express support or influence for the movement. Since all of these organizations are non-governmental organizations that claim to have no political affiliation, they may not want the readers of their web pages to think that they are too closely involved with the Zapatistas, since the group is notoriously leftist and it would be difficult to claim no political affiliation or bias with too many apparent leftist tendencies.

In addition to the seven organizations that describe some level of Zapatista influence on their foundations, The Chiapas Project (1) represents an important distinction. This organization is the sole member of the "Other Reason for Founding (but express clear support of movement)" group. In an interview, Dr. Joanne Leigner, co-founder of the organization, admitted that before her son Nick went to Chiapas to volunteer in an orphanage, she knew very little about the women's rights issues

in the region, nor about the Zapatista Movement (Leigner 2011). However, when the nuns working at the orphanage discovered that Nick's parents are a gynecologist (Dr. Leigner) and a dentist (Dr. Dave Brody), they asked if they would come down to Chiapas to give medical assistance to the children (Leigner 2011). Several years later, the family has now set up a medical care center that specializes in women's health and reproductive services in a small village in Chiapas (Leigner 2011). Dr. Leigner explained that after treating several EZLN members, living among the Zapatistas and witnessing their strife, she and the members of the Chiapas Project (1) absolutely support and sympathize with the group's motives, especially as they pertain to women's rights, even though The Chiapas Project (1) is not directly affiliated with the EZLN (Leigner 2011). It is important to note that no mention of the Zapatistas or their goals were present on the Chiapas Project's (1) website.

As a result, this presents the possibility that other organizations who do not have mention of the Zapatistas on their websites do in fact sympathize with the group, even if the EZLN was not one of their initial influences. Had more organizations followed through on an official interview, there may have been even more evidence of at least removed support for the movement, if not outright influence in their founding. Since three of the organizations only stated their goals as an activist group in their foundation backgrounds and did not include specific or individual influences, it is possible that organizations such as these may have also revealed similar tendencies with more personal contact.

Because the majority of the organizations studied demonstrated clear influence from the Zapatista Movement as part of the reason for their founding, I argue that the Zapatista Movement did cause women's rights organizations to initiate work in Chiapas, Mexico and through these organizations the Movement has indirectly benefited women's rights in the region. However, the way in which the Zapatista Movement influenced the creators of these organizations must be divided into two categories. While some of these organizations are direct results from members of Zapatista communities who wanted to take the women's movement and initiatives within the EZLN further, a substantial few seem to have been influenced not by the movement itself, but by the deplorable women's rights conditions in the region that the Zapatistas were successful in bringing to the national and international forefront. This distinction is crucial because though groups such as Chiapas International and the Committee for Human Rights: Father Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada both credit the Zapatista strife for how they found out about the issues, the movement itself was not the reason the two groups chose to work in Chiapas (Chiapas International; Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada A.C.). Nonetheless, the Zapatista Movement did undeniably yet indirectly cause the creation of these specific organizations because without the increased international attention on region and the issues the group exposed to the larger national and international community, organizations such as these would have most likely remained unaware of the deplorable conditions for women in the state and perhaps chosen to work elsewhere.

Though some of the organizations, namely CIEPAC and the Center of Women's Rights of Chiapas have more obvious Zapatista roots, it is still important not to mistake these are "Zapatista organizations" as one might assume. Organizations such as these are influenced by the movement to form autonomous aid organizations, but are not branches of the Zapatista Movement itself. Though both organizations clearly credit their roots to the initiatives and ideology of the EZLN, each group has taken on aspects that are not entirely Zapatista goals by choosing to focus solely on research and women's rights to improve social justice, rather than directly working for indigenous autonomy –

the primary goal of the movement. As a result, such organizations should not be considered simply part the larger Zapatista movement. Organizations such as these have taken Zapatista initiatives, as stated in the Women's Revolutionary Law, to a level past those of the Zapatista Army and became independent organizations that are living out Zapatista ideals.

Though these results indicate that the Zapatista Movement did influence the founding of the majority of the women's rights organizations that were studied, a substantial minority credited a specific other motivation for starting their organization (two out of twelve) or did not provide enough specific information to really determine what the influencing factors were (three out of twelve). Since all of the organizations that were studied were founded after the start of the Zapatista Movement in 1994, it is safe to assume that even these ambiguous or otherwise motivated organizations had most likely heard of the EZLN in Chiapas at the time of their founding. However, it remains unclear based on the attained data whether the founders did experience any direct or indirect influence from the Zapatista Movement, such as newly acquired awareness of women's rights issues in the region due to increased media coverage of the goals and conditions in the region as well as the actions of the Zapatista Army. Further research into the backgrounds of these organizations, perhaps through personal interviews with the founders, could be extremely useful in determining further the extent of influence the Zapatista Movement had on these organizations.

Though there was substantial variety within the organizations that fell into the "Clear Zapatista Influence" category, the data collected from the twelve prominent women's rights organizations in Chiapas indicated that the majority of these women's aid and development organizations were influenced either directly or indirectly by the Zapatista Movement.

Conclusion

Since the majority of the research on the impact of the Zapatista Movement on women's rights in Chiapas has focused on the women directly involved in the EZLN, I elected to discover if there was a less obvious way in which the Zapatista Movement has benefited the common women of Chiapas, since only a small minority of the female population actually benefits from the substantial advancements the EZLN offers women directly involved in the movement. After extensive reading, it became apparent that a surprisingly large number of non-governmental aid organizations that specialize in human (and specifically women's) rights protection and aid have cropped up in Chiapas since the Zapatistas officially became active in the region in 1994. In order to discover how these organizations might connect the goals and ideologies of the Zapatistas with real-life improvement in women's rights, I hypothesized that the Zapatista Movement caused an increase in women's rights organizations to become active in Chiapas. Through a combination of website content analysis and one successful interview, I used process tracing to determine the historical backgrounds of each organization and look for trends in Zapatista ties. Process tracing applies historical contexts to track an event, or in this case, organization, as it progresses in order to form a broader theory or trend in social science research (Falleti 2007). The data collected from twelve non-governmental aid and development organizations supported this hypothesis, but also demonstrated that the Zapatista influence is prevalent in various definable forms and that there are possible implications for the organizations to communicate Zapatista ties or influences – which may have skewed the results.

The hypothesis answered the original research question about the impact of the Zapatista Movement on women's rights in Chiapas by explaining that the actual extent of the movement has been much more widespread than the impact that was restricted to women directly enlisted in the EZLN. I argue that the majority of the indigenous women in Chiapas who are actually benefitting from the Zapatista Movement have profited through indirect results because of the multiple women's aid and development organizations that have cropped up in the region. This research demonstrates that the impact of a social movement such as the Zapatista Movement has larger implications than the most obvious. Unlike other social movement research, this study demonstrates how a singular movement can spawn other movements that are in fact, very separate from the original. The question here is not simply whether a social movement causes more activism, but to what extent other, separate entities become influenced, either directly or indirectly, by such a movement in their own foundation. In this case, the goals of the Zapatista Movement are actually achieved or striven for in these resulting organizations, even though they are no longer considered to be a direct part of the movement.

This study sought to bridge the gap between traditional social movement research and political science. Classical social movement research tends to revolve around two opposite schools of thought which, in short, focus on either resource mobilization, or "the mechanisms by which movements recruit participation" and a structural approach which focuses on how "social problems become social movements" (Peterson 1999). This study connects traditional social movement research with political or social science by focusing not only on how it was initiated, but how a movement affects institutions, how one movement can spawn other movements, and the implications for the populations that are affected by these changes. The success of a movement such as this can not be measured solely by the immediate and obvious realization of its goals by the members directly involved in the group. Rather, the arguably more significant impact of such a movement may be carried out indirectly by the people and groups it impacts nationally and internationally by bringing awareness to certain issues and subsequently spurring on separate social activism. ✕

Appendix

Women's Revolutionary Law:

1. Women, regardless of their race, creed, color or political affiliation, have the right to participate in the revolutionary struggle in any way that their desire and capacity determine.
2. Women have the right to work and receive a just salary.
3. Women have the right to decide the number of children they have and care for.
4. Women have the right to participate in the matters of the community and have charge if they are free and democratically elected.
5. Women and their children have the right to Primary Attention in their health and nutrition.
6. Women have the right to education.
7. Women have the right to choose their partner and are not obliged to enter into marriage.
8. Women have the right to be free of violence from both relatives and strangers. Rape and attempted rape will be severely punished.
9. Women will be able to occupy positions of leadership in the organization and hold military ranks in the revolutionary armed forces.
10. Women will have all the rights and obligations which the revolutionary laws and regulations give. (Anon. 1996)

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