The Marketing of Rebellion in Global Civil Society: Political Insurgencies, International Media, and the Growth of Transnational Support

by

Clifford Allan Bob

J.D.
New York University School of Law, 1984

B.A., Social Studies
Harvard University, 1980

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AT THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

SEPTEMBER 1997

©1997 Massachusetts Institute of Technology. All rights reserved.

Signature of Author: ____________________________  Department of Political Science

August 8, 1997

Certified by: ________________________________  Myron Weiner

Professor of Political Science

Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: ________________________________  Barry R. Posen

Professor of Political Science

Chairman, Graduate Program Committee

SEP 15 1997
The Marketing of Rebellion in Global Civil Society:
Political Insurgencies, International Media, and
the Growth of Transnational Support

by

Clifford Allan Bob

Submitted to the Department of Political Science
on August 8, 1997 in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Political Science

ABSTRACT

This dissertation proposes and tests a theory explaining transnational support for political insurgencies from the developing world. Motivating the dissertation are gaps in the international relations, comparative politics, and political communications literatures concerning the origins of transnational alliances, the dynamics of transnational social movements, and the role of the international media in these phenomena. Further motivating the dissertation is an important empirical puzzle: Why have a few small-scale insurgencies in the developing world become objects of substantial and sustained attention from the world media and support from transnational NGOs, while most similar insurgencies remain mired in obscurity and isolation? To explain this puzzle, I analyze two highly successful cases of "transnationalization," the Ogoni of Nigeria and the Zapatistas of Mexico. In both cases, local-level insurgencies in conflict with Third World states became international causes célèbres—with important consequences in the insurgents' home states. To add theoretical rigor to my analysis, I compare these cases with the norm, international obscurity and isolation exemplified by closely-matched cases of failed transnationalization. The result is a detailed explanation for the empirical puzzle—and a new theory about the transnationalization of small-scale conflict in the developing world.

The proposed theory is fundamentally political. Insurgencies from the developing world do not gain international prominence through such general background conditions as the "CNN effect," through "natural" elevation of the neediest cases, or through random and irreducible processes. Instead, insurgencies gain international prominence through a two-step process: first, making a "pitch" to transnational actors, thereby raising awareness of the insurgency; and second demonstrating a "match" between their own goals and tactics and the interests and concerns of these actors, thereby providing a reason for support. To create a match, insurgents may strategically reframe their goals, conflicts, and identities to conform to the political goals and organizational imperatives of transnational NGOs and media. The latter entities act as "global gatekeepers," selecting only a few insurgent groups for substantial support. Gatekeeper action in turn facilitates support from broader audiences including states and international organizations.

The proposed theory substantially expands our knowledge of an emergent global civil society and should apply to a wide array of conflicts in the developing world—conflicts over ethnic, environmental, labor, human rights, and other issues. Moreover, while the theory is grounded in contemporary, transnational interactions, nothing prevents its application to historical cases or to purely domestic cases in which local insurgencies seek national support.

Thesis Supervisor: Myron Weiner
Title: Professor of Political Science
CONTENTS

DETAILED CONTENTS ........................................................................................................4

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ...............................................................................................8

LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................9

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .........................................................................................................10

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ...........................................................................................................11

2. EXPLAINING TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT: THEORY AND HYPOTHESES ..........................................................37

3. THE OGONI CONFLICT AND THE NGO-CENTERED PATHWAY TO TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT ...................65

4. THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING AND THE MEDIA-CENTERED PATHWAY TO TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT ....................170

5. EVALUATING THE HYPOTHESES AND THE THEORY ..................................................261

6. CONCLUSION ..............................................................................................................289

Appendix

1. OGONI TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND NGO SUPPORT ........................................294

2. INFORMANTS FOR OGONI CASE STUDY ................................................................302

3. SELECTED DOCUMENTS FOR OGONI CASE STUDY .................................................304

SOURCES CONSULTED .....................................................................................................313
DETAILED CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.................................................................8
LIST OF TABLES....................................................................................9
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS............................................................................10

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION............................................................................11
   Research Questions..........................................................................12
   Importance......................................................................................12
   The Theory ......................................................................................13
   The "Pitch": Raising International Awareness...............................14
   The "Match": Gaining Transnational Support.................................14
   Two Pathways to Transnational Prominence....................................15
   Theory's Range of Application.......................................................16
   The Literature: Sources for and Contributions of the Theory..........18
   Research Methodology.....................................................................25
   The Dependent Variable: Transnational Support...........................25
   Definitions of Other Terms..............................................................28
   Research Design..............................................................................29
   Plan of the Dissertation.................................................................36

2. EXPLAINING TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT: THEORY AND
   HYPOTHESES................................................................................37
   Introduction......................................................................................37
Assumptions..................................................................................37
The Theory .....................................................................................39
  The "Pitch": Lobbying and Promoting the Insurgency ...............40
  The "Match": Substantive, Tactical, Organizational, and Perceptual Factors .................................................46
Conclusion......................................................................................57

3. THE OGNONI CONFLICT AND THE NGO-CENTERED PATHWAY TO TRANSTATIONAL SUPPORT .........................................................65

Introduction.....................................................................................65
  The Argument..............................................................................67
  Design of the Chapter ................................................................69


Introduction.....................................................................................72
  1920-1989: The Roots of Conflict ..............................................73
  August 1990-August 1991: MOSOP's Formation and Pursuit of a Domestic Strategy .................................................77
  January 1993-July 1993: Successful Transnationalization.........107
  July 1993-December 1995: Maintaining the International Focus ..............................................................................116
  Reasons for Successful Transnationalization.............................118
  Conclusion..................................................................................133

Part II: Ogoni Transnationalization in Comparative Perspective: Why the Ogoni? Why Not the Bougainvilleans? ..................................................142

Introduction.....................................................................................142
  Background to the Bougainville Conflict ..................................142
  Attempted Transnationalization of the Bougainville Conflict ....146
Bougainville vs. Ogoni: Comparing Transnational Success and Failure ........................................ 150

Conclusion.................................................................................................................. 167

4. THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING AND THE MEDIA-CENTERED PATHWAY TO TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT ......................................................... 170

Introduction.............................................................................................................. 170

The Puzzle .............................................................................................................. 172

The Argument ....................................................................................................... 172

Design of the Chapter ............................................................................................ 174

Caveats..................................................................................................................... 175

Part I. The EZLN and EPR Insurgencies: An Empirical Account ....................... 177

The Zapatista Uprising and International Response ........................................... 177

EPR Actions and International Response .............................................................. 189

Part II. Zapatista Transnationalization in Comparative Perspective: Why the EZLN? Why Not the EPR? ................................................................. 192

Introduction.............................................................................................................. 192

A. Variables Controlled For .................................................................................. 193

B. The "Pitch": Raising International Awareness ............................................. 195

C. Tactical Match: Transnational Support Despite EZLN Violence ................... 211

D. Organizational Match: Low Costs and High Benefits of Support ............... 230

E. Substantive Match: Vague Goals and Strategic Reframing ............................ 240

Conclusion.............................................................................................................. 255

5. EVALUATING THE HYPOTHESES AND THE THEORY ..................................... 261

Introduction.............................................................................................................. 261

Hypothesis Evaluation ............................................................................................. 263

The "Pitch": Raising International Awareness ...................................................... 263

The "Match": Gaining Transnational Support ......................................................... 272
6. CONCLUSION ................................................................................................. 289
   Implications for International and Comparative Politics ...................... 289
   Policy Implications ................................................................................... 293

Appendix

1. Ogoni Transnational Activities and NGO Support ......................... 294

2. Informants for Ogoni Case Study ......................................................... 302

3. Selected Documents for Ogoni Case Study ..................................... 304
   Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Foreword" to Ogoni Bill of Rights, Dec. 24, 1991 ......... 305
   Ogoni Bill of Rights, Aug. 26, 1990 ....................................................... 307
   MOSOP, "An Appeal to the International Community," December 1991 .. 309

Sources Consulted ....................................................................................... 313
## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Illustration Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Two Pathways to Transnational Support</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Linkages between Key Hypotheses</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Map of &quot;Peoples of Nigeria&quot;</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Map of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Two Pathways to Transnational Support (Figure 1 repeated)</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Map of Chiapas, Mexico</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Hypotheses on Transnationalization</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Factors Hypothesized to Condition Transnationalization Process</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Comparison of Violence Surrounding EZLN and EPR Uprisings</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1.</td>
<td>MOSOP's Principal Transnational Activities, 1990-93</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2.</td>
<td>Principal Support Provided by Key Transnational NGOs</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3.</td>
<td>Principal NGOs Supporting Ogoni by Country</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the years that went into finding a thesis question and researching and writing the dissertation, I received support both moral and material from many sources. While all errors in the dissertation are my responsibility, a number of individuals and institutions provided particularly critical support.

The Social Science Research Council's International Predissertation Fellowship Program, the Social Science Research Council's International Doctoral Research Fellowship in Southeast Asian Studies, and most important, the MIT-Harvard MacArthur Transnational Security Program provided grants that made the dissertation possible. My advisor Myron Weiner provided ideas and encouragement and retained faith in me even when things looked bleakest. The two other members of my committee also helped greatly. Stephen Van Evera's methodological rigor provided a model for my work, and his enthusiasm was infectious. And Daniel Kryder gave me critically important suggestions on framing the thesis as well as thorough and thoughtful reads on my chapters. For encouragement in times of difficulty and for helpful comments on my ideas and drafts over the years, I thank Karen Alter, Russel Barsh, Eva Bellin, Rogers Brubaker, Jonathan Fox, Thomas M. Franck, Amy Gurowitz, Brian Hanson, Richard Joseph, Daniel Lev, Melissa Nobles, James Rosberg, Richard Samuels, Frank Schwartz, Taylor Seybolt, and Steve Wilkinson.

My mother, father and in-laws gave me and my family great love and support throughout, while my children, who took me away from my work as much as possible, nonetheless helped immeasurably.

Most of all, I thank my wife Joan whose encouragement, patience, and love made all of this possible.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This dissertation proposes and tests a theory explaining transnational support for political insurgencies from the developing world.¹ For many insurgencies, attracting support from foreign, non-state actors has become an important strategy. Transnational allies have the potential to shift power relations and possibly alter conflict outcomes: NGOs and media can arouse broad public interest in the developed world, can mobilize substantial assistance for certain insurgencies, and can persuade governments and international organizations to take coercive action against an insurgency's opponents including states. But when an insurgent group from the developing world attempts to gain transnational support, it invariably encounters a critical initial hurdle: attracting the active involvement of distant organizations and audiences already deluged by myriad issues potentially worthy of concern. As a result, while many insurgencies attempt to gain transnational support, few succeed. In a small number of important cases, however, political insurgents from the developing world have won substantial transnational attention and support—with important consequences for domestic politics in their home states.

¹ I define "political insurgencies" as significant, organized challenges to a society's fundamental political or economic institutions; such challenges need not be violent. "Support" encompasses transfers of money, goods, and knowledge to an insurgent group, as well as various actions on behalf of the insurgents by third parties outside the insurgency's home state. These may include publicity, advocacy, and lobbying. Support for a political insurgency is "transnational" if it involves substantial and prolonged backing by foreign, non-state actors having neither blood ties to the group nor strategic interest in its domestic conflict. Transnational support is thus a subcategory of the broader concept "transnational relations," defined as "regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent . . . ." Thomas Risse-Kappen, ed., Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1. For more extensive definitions of these terms, see below.
Research Questions

This dissertation seeks to explain the successes--both because of their intrinsic importance and, more significantly, because studying them offers an opportunity to theorize about a broad range of transnational interactions. I seek answers to questions such as these: When will political insurgents attract substantial attention from the global media and sustained support from transnational NGOs? Why do a few such insurgencies gain prominence and backing while the vast majority remain obscure and isolated? Does violence help or hinder a political insurgency in gaining attention and support? What are the motivations and goals of transnational supporters? What role does the world media play in these processes? Underlying these questions is a broader and deeper issue: Globalization for whom, and why?

Importance

These questions are clearly important for the insurgents, NGOs, and media directly involved, for states and multinational corporations against whom transnational alliances frequently form, and for the citizens and states of the developed world whose support these alliances often seek. For political insurgencies, grasping how to attract powerful, outside allies may suggest changes in strategy, goals, and even identities to increase the likelihood of transnational support. It may, for instance, indicate whether and when violent or nonviolent tactics are more likely to attract support. For states and other opponents, understanding these processes also has policy implications, suggesting strategies for averting or defusing transnational responses. Finally, for potential transnational supporters, appreciating how certain political insurgencies gain international prominence may lead to better judgments about whether to provide support.\(^2\) If, for instance, superior marketing rather than desperate need brings an insurgency to prominence, then providing support may appear less urgent or desirable. More broadly, explaining the international prominence of seemingly unlikely insurgent groups from the developing world has clear

\(^{2}\) I use the term "international" in its everyday sense, to refer to events occurring in multiple states. To refer to relations between the political authorities of two or more states, I use the term "interstate." I reserve the term "transnational" for interactions involving clearly identifiable non-state actors in at least two societies. Ibid., 8.
implications for policymakers currently seeking ways of bringing global attention and possible intervention to obscure but potentially deadly conflicts--before they become bloody.³

Beyond its practical importance for the actors involved in these processes, answering the questions at the heart of this dissertation will illuminate important aspects of an emerging and evolving "global civil society." Today's transnational relations form the interwoven fabric of this society, creating patterns that help shape an increasingly interconnected world.

While the importance of these issues is clear, understanding of them is limited.⁴ This dissertation helps fill the gap using deductive and inductive methods to propose and test new theory. The empirical heart of the dissertation compares two recent cases of transnational success--the Ogoni of Nigeria and the Zapatistas of Mexico--against two matched failure cases. In both success cases, small-scale political insurgencies in conflict with powerful states expanded these conflicts from local or regional arenas to the international plane, capturing the attention and support of critical political actors in key states in the developing world. The international media featured extensive coverage of the groups, transnational NGOs mounted sustained campaigns on their behalf, and foreign governments and international organizations investigated the conflicts and imposed diplomatic sanctions. In short, these seemingly unlikely political insurgencies became international causes célèbres--with important consequences for domestic politics in the insurgencies' home states. The question is Why? Why have the Ogoni and the Zapatistas won extensive international attention, sympathy, and support when the matched cases--like most similar political insurgencies from the developing world--have not?

The Theory

The theory proposed in this dissertation answers the specific empirical questions and provides a basis for addressing broader issues. The theory is fundamentally political.


⁴ I discuss gaps in the international relations, comparative politics, and political communications literatures later in this chapter.
Insurgencies from the developing world do not gain international prominence through such general background conditions as the "CNN effect," through "natural" elevation of the neediest cases, or through random and irreducible processes. Instead, insurgencies gain international prominence through a two-step process: first, making a "pitch" to transnational actors, thereby increasing awareness of the insurgency; and second demonstrating a "match" between their own goals and tactics and the interests and concerns of these actors, thereby providing a reason for support. These transnational actors, usually NGOs or media, act as "global gatekeepers," selecting only a few insurgent groups for substantial attention and support. Gatekeeper support in turn facilitates attention and support from broader audiences, including states and international organizations.

The "Pitch": Raising International Awareness

In the dissertation, I argue that political insurgencies from the developing world raise awareness either directly, by lobbying transnational NGOs, or indirectly, by gaining media attention which then attracts NGO support. Three factors condition an insurgent group's ability to lobby transnational actors: (1) group leaders' familiarity with key transnational actors based in the developed world; (2) the group's resources, affecting "lobbyists'" ability to present their case effectively and persistently; and (3) the group's access to transnational actors, itself conditioned largely by the home state's reaction to the group's lobbying. The likelihood that an insurgency will win media attention is conditioned primarily by factors 1 and 3 and by an additional factor, (4) the insurgency's ability to create a "spectacle" of interest to the world media. While spectacle is often violent, it need not be; indeed, if transnational NGO support is the goal, a political insurgency's violence may be counterproductive.

The "Match": Gaining Transnational Support

Even if the foregoing factors permit a successful "pitch," support by transnational actors remains rare. Many global gatekeepers are deluged by appeals for support, yet these powerful

---

transnational actors provide sustained backing to only a few supplicant groups. NGO "adoption" of a political insurgency hinges on four additional factors: Do the goals of the insurgency match those of the transnational actor ("substantive match")? Do the domestic tactics of the insurgency match the ethos of the transnational actor ("tactical match")? Will adoption of the insurgency help meet the transnational actor's critical maintenance and survival needs ("organizational match")? For each of these factors, the more powerful player in the dyad, the transnational actor, sets informal criteria which the insurgency must meet to gain support. The relationship is far from one-sided, however; insurgents may take various actions to increase the likelihood of adoption, chief among them reframing the insurgency's goals, conflicts, and identities to conform to the interests and concerns of transnational actors. Thus, a final factor also affects adoption, an insurgency's skill at lobbying, promoting, and repackaging its cause ("perceptual match").

Two Pathways to Transnational Prominence

While the foregoing factors create a unified theory explaining "transnationalization," two primary pathways to transnational prominence are distinguishable, one media-centered, the other NGO-centered. In the first pathway, insurgents first win international attention, often by creating an internationally resonant spectacle which attracts the media. Under certain circumstances, media reporting effectively promotes the insurgency, attracting widespread NGO support. In the NGO-centered pathway, insurgents start by gradually building a transnational network through persistent lobbying of NGOs who use their expertise and contacts to generate media interest. Under proper circumstances, both pathways lead to a common outcome: substantial and sustained support that can exert significant external pressure on the insurgents' opponents (Figure 1).  

---

6 Chapter Two provides detailed discussion of the proposed theory and derivative hypotheses to be tested in the dissertation.
Figure 1. Two Pathways to Transnational Support

Theory's Range of Application

The theory proposed in this dissertation is abstract enough to illuminate a wide variety of transnational interactions. While the empirical chapters of the dissertation focus on the Ogoni and Zapatistas, the proposed theory clearly applies to other contemporary instances of transnationalization involving a wide range of political insurgencies in the developing world: Why have the Tibetans succeeded in gaining great international attention and support when China's Uighurs and dozens of other Asian minority groups with equally valid claims to political autonomy have not? Why did the Narmada Dam become an object of great international controversy when many other dam projects in India and elsewhere have not, despite their having equally large environmental impacts? Why have South Asian child carpet workers become causes célèbres while child workers in other South Asian export industries have not? Moreover, for these cases, as for the cases examined in the dissertation, the theory offers not merely answers to the puzzle of successful transnationalization but also a means of analyzing day-to-day transnational interactions.

The theory's potential applicability is wider, however. The theory is not technology-driven: Despite the Internet and CNN, many contemporary Third World political movements

---


continue to go largely unnoticed and unsupported; conversely, even before these technological developments, some insurgencies gained substantial international attention and support. The theory should therefore be capable of explaining historical as well as contemporary instances of transnationalization. It could, for instance, explain the strong transnational responses to the Biafran war, but not to other major instances of internal conflict in Africa. Moreover, the theory does not apply only to transnational interactions in which insurgencies from the developing world seek support from the developed world. The defining characteristic of the cases covered by this theory is not the "direction" in which support flows but the quest for outside support by a group whose claims are weak or unsupported in its home state. Thus, the theory should cover instances in which political insurgencies from the developed world gain the support of transnational actors based in other developed countries or in developing countries. European support for the American civil rights and American Indian movements exemplify the first linkage, while the moral and material support of African leaders for Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and other civil rights leaders may be indicators of the second, "reverse" linkage. Finally, since the theory proposed in this dissertation highlights not only the active quest for outside support by Third World political insurgencies but also the responses of transnational actors based in the developed world, it may have explanatory power in cases where the groups receiving support have


10 One root of this dissertation is E. E. Schattschneider's insight that "at the nub of politics are . . . the contagiousness of conflict, the elasticity of its scope and the fluidity" of audience involvement. As a result, for Schattschneider "the most important strategy of politics is concerned with the scope of conflict." E. E. Schattschneider, The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America (Hinsdale, IL: Dryden Press, 1960), 2-3 (emphasis in original). While sovereignty typically makes the international "contagiousness of conflict" less potent than domestic contagion, the transnationalization strategies examined in this dissertation exemplify Schattschneider's insight. Moreover, in Schattschneider's domain, domestic politics, the dissertation's theory may also apply, helping to explain, for instance, why Martin Luther King's first major civil rights action, the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955-56, won great national (and international) attention and support while similar successful and largely contemporaneous protests such as the Tallahassee bus boycott remained "little-heralded." David J. Garrow, Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 81.

11 If one assumes that most non-state actors based in the developing world are likely to have relatively little power to exert against the home state of an insurgency from the developed world, one may hypothesize that such an insurgency would most likely seek "reverse" transnational linkages with the most powerful entities in the developing world, states.
taken few affirmative actions to seek it. Thus, it may help explain why certain refugee crises generate vigorous, immediate, and lasting international responses, while others do not.\textsuperscript{12}

While recognizing the importance and similarity of historical precedents, "reverse" transnationalization, and passive groups, I have chosen to focus the dissertation on contemporary cases in which organizations representing political insurgencies from the developing world actively seek the support of transnational actors based in the developed world. In this chapter and in the thesis as a whole, I state definitions, assumptions, theory, and conclusions in those terms.

The Literature: Sources for and Contributions of the Theory

The theory proposed in this dissertation has substantial relevance for scholars of international relations, comparative politics, and political communications. In each of these fields, the issues covered by this dissertation have implications both for long standing disciplinary concerns and for newer themes sparked by increasing globalization of commerce, ideas, and perhaps politics.\textsuperscript{13} Yet despite substantial bodies of literature including, since the end of the Cold War, a burgeoning corpus on "global civil society," systematic answers to the questions at the heart of this dissertation are lacking.

For scholars of international politics, transnational relations have been a major object of study since the 1970s.\textsuperscript{14} The early literature often lumped economic and political interactions

\textsuperscript{12} For discussion of the Kurdish refugee crisis following the Persian Gulf War, in which foreign intervention was swift and strong, see Martin Shaw, \textit{Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence} (London: Pinter, 1996), 156-174.


together, but more recent works differentiate transnational interactions, most notably separating
economic and technical from political relations\(^{15}\) and dividing the latter into such categories as
ideological diffusion, alliances, issue networks, and social movements.\(^{16}\) Most of the literature
both older and newer, both economic and political, however, examines a different set of questions
from those posed in this dissertation: What are the impacts of transnational relations, in particular
what are their impacts on states?\(^{17}\) Framed as a critique of realism's "billiard ball" state, little of
the mainstream international relations literature asks a critical and logically prior question, the

\(^{15}\) This tripartite division, which clearly does not exhaust the diversity of transnational relations, is made
by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink. For the political category, they use the term "transnational issue networks"
which they define to include nongovernmental, governmental, and intergovernmental organizations "bound together
by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services" and "working
internationally" on such issues as human rights, women's rights, and the environment. Margaret Keck and Kathryn
Sikkink, "Transnational Issue Networks in International Politics," Paper, Sept. 16, 1994, 2, in author's files. The
technical category refers to "epistemic communities," transnational relationships between scientists and technicians.

\(^{16}\) These categories have been proposed by Sidney Tarrow, a scholar of social movements. While they are
undoubtedly not the last word, they represent advances over earlier, more undifferentiated analyses of transnational
relations. In Tarrow's classification, diffusion refers to cross-border transfers of social movements or movement
techniques but without coordinated ties between movements in different states; transnational alliances refer to ad hoc
arrangements between particular movements in different countries; transnational issue networks refer to sustained
cross-border interactions between advocacy organizations, but without mass-based collective action; and transnational
social movements refer to instances of "integrated mobilization and sustained contentious politics in a number of
different" states. Sidney Tarrow, "Fishnets, Internets and Catnets: Globalization and Transnational Collective
March de Estudios e Investigaciones, 1996), 20-26. In Tarrow's typology, the cases I examine fall most nearly into
the category of transnational alliances, in these cases between domestic insurgencies on the one hand and
transnational NGOs and broader transnational issue networks on the other.

\(^{17}\) This is the primary theme of the contributions to Risse-Kappen, ed., *Bringing Transnational Relations
Back In*. Recent interest in the role of norms and ideas in international relations also focuses on their impacts on
state policy while paying little attention to their origins. Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On
the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1989); Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy:
Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Audie Klotz, "Norms
Reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanctions against South Africa," *International
Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 451-78. A recent work which looks beyond the direct impact of transnational NGOs
on states nonetheless maintains the focus on impacts, in this case impacts on national and global public opinion and
behavior. Paul K. Wapner, *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics* (Albany: State University of New
question at the heart of this dissertation: What are the origins of these transnational ties? Usually this question is taken for granted or answered casually by allusion to recent developments in education, transportation, communications, and media. Few stop to consider, however, that despite the pervasiveness of recent social and technological changes, transnational alliances and the transnationalization of particular domestic conflicts remain exceptional phenomena; in the terms of this dissertation, few insurgent groups from the developing world gain the support of powerful transnational NGOs and NGO networks.

There are, however, exceptions to international relations' disciplinary blind spot. Most of these are case studies on the development and dynamics of particular transnational networks or alliances. While these studies provide detailed empirical accounts of the transnationalization process in particular cases, they seldom aim at broad theory building or systematic hypothesis testing concerning the origins of transnational ties. If comparative analysis is done at all, it is limited to intra-case comparison or cross-case comparison with other successful cases. At the other end of the spectrum are a small number of theoretically-oriented overviews. The most helpful of these is Keck and Sikkink which includes insightful and suggestive points about the development of "transnational issue networks" based on examination of several successful

18 The contributions to Risse-Kappen's recent volume on transnational relations explicitly take "the existence of transnational coalitions and actors who aim to change policies in various issue-areas as the point of departure." Risse-Kappen, "Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Introduction," 5.


networks in a number of issue areas. As I do in this dissertation, Keck and Sikkink draw on the insights of social movement theory, particularly the concept of reframing, in explaining network development and dynamics. Despite these advances, however, Keck and Sikkink do not systematically test general theories explaining the development of transnational alliances or of broad international attention and support for particular insurgencies. As they conclude, "we need greater care in specifying how, why, among whom, and to what end transnational relations occur." This dissertation moves toward that goal. Its careful extrapolation and testing of hypotheses through sustained historical analysis and cross-case comparison of matched successful and unsuccessful cases directly poses the question of why support develops in some but not in other seemingly similar cases.

This dissertation also corrects a recurrent tendency in the literature, an uncritical sometimes adulatory stance toward transnational NGOs and the goals they espouse. Symptomatic of this lack of critical perspective is the rubric "principled issue networks" used to describe NGOs particularly in the environmental and human rights sectors. While this rubric may be useful as a means of differentiating these organizations from other transnational actors, e.g., commercial or technical organizations, a focus only on NGOs' often laudable goals can obscure their actual operations. As a result, analysts may downplay the fact that many transnational NGOs are large, political organizations operating in highly competitive environments. While networks of human


rights and environmental activists may well seek normative goals and engage in "principled" activity, it is politics which they are engaged in. And the groups composing these networks must also—in fact, first—deal with the mundane organizational imperatives of their own survival and growth. In this context, "principles" may be unreliable or at least incomplete guides to behavior—just as for other large organizations.25

A more important difference between the existing literature and the approach taken in this dissertation concerns the unit of analysis. Much of the literature takes a "top-down" perspective which views NGOs based in the developed world as the prime movers in these transnational processes.26 For Keck and Sikkink, for instance, the unit of analysis is the transnational issue network. If one's focus is the impact of transnational relations on states, such a top-down perspective is appropriate. But this dissertation's unit of analysis, insurgencies in the developing world, gives a very different perspective on the transnationalization process. Where Keck and Sikkink examine the growth of networks, I assume their existence and ask how insurgent groups gain their support. Not only does this perspective focus analytic attention on insurgencies rather than networks, it also mandates a discriminating view of networks themselves, one in which certain organizations and individuals act as gatekeepers for the network as a whole.

Viewing insurgent groups from the developing world as dynamic promoters of their own movements leads to a focus on the actions and strategies of particular insurgencies, a focus which places the thesis squarely in the social movements literature of comparative politics and sociology.27 The social movements literature has primarily focused on domestic movement


27 As Martin Shaw has noted, while many international relations scholars view social movements as avatars of a new "global civil society," few have applied the insights of social movement theory in their work. Martin Shaw, "Civil Society and Global Politics: Beyond a Social Movements Approach," Millennium: Journal of
activity, but aspects of the existing literature provide a theoretical springboard to understanding transnational processes, and the field is poised for expansion beyond domestic arenas. The "political process" approach to social movement analysis is particularly relevant both because of its sensitivity to the larger political opportunity structures within which insurgencies develop and because of the emphasis it places on an insurgency's gaining third party support as a means of achieving its goals. These concepts suggest both that Third World insurgencies may be cognizant of and may seek to take advantage of transnational political opportunities and that attracting the support of third parties across borders may be helpful to movement development.

Despite its focus on domestic arenas, the social movements literature also suggests several specific strategies for gaining such support. Doug McAdam and others argue that some successful movements "orchestrat[e] . . . the 'politics of protest,'" taking actions that invite repression from movement opponents to spark the sympathy and support of outside audiences. In addition to this active strategy, Benford and Snow have highlighted a largely rhetorical strategy, "framing" the

---


movement and its goals to gain outside sympathy and support. By framing, Benford and Snow mean assigning particular meanings and interpretations to events and processes. To gain support, Benford and Snow argue, insurgent groups transform, extend, and amplify existing frames, seeking to "align" them with the interests and concerns of potential participants and supporters. Benford and Snow use the term "frame alignment" for this process; I use the term "reframing" to describe strategic changes in the presentation of insurgent action, while I use the concept of "matching" to describe correspondence between an insurgency's goals and tactics (whether reframed or not) and the interests and concerns of transnational actors.

In many insurgent strategies for obtaining outside support, the media plays a crucial role, conveying news of insurgents' actions and statements (as well as opponents' threats) to potential supporters. As in the case of social movement theorists, scholars of political communications have recently stressed the need for studies systematically explaining the growth of transnational media attention for particular issues and organizations. While this general issue has long occupied theorists of agenda-setting, most of the existing literature focuses on domestic (usually American) politics and policymaking. Nonetheless, the variety of mechanisms and strategies suggested by this literature provides a basis for theorizing about transnational agenda-setting among insurgent groups from the developing world. There has also been considerable interest in policy circles in

---


34 Of particular relevance are works stressing the strategic use of language and symbols to redefine social "situations" as problems and to inject otherwise unlikely issues onto the political agenda. Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Deborah Stone, "Causal Stories and the Formation of Policy Agendas," *Political Science Quarterly* 104, no. 2 (1989): 281-82.
using the media and NGOs to enhance early warning of potential deadly conflict in the developing world. While this practically-oriented literature generally assumes that the populations needing assistance are relatively passive rather than active seekers of transnational attention and support, some of the strategies suggested in these works, closely resemble those I examine.

In several ways, this dissertation moves beyond these existing understandings of strategies for attracting outside support. First, the dissertation directly examines not only movement strategies but also third party responses and their reasons. Second, the dissertation pays particular heed to the role of direct elite lobbying and indirect media reporting in movement attempts to gain outside support; I thereby elucidate the actual mechanisms by which new frames are conveyed to potential supporters. Third, the dissertation extends analysis of these strategies across national borders. While Keck and Sikkink have used the framing concept in analyzing the behavior of transnational issue networks, this thesis highlights reframing by domestic insurgencies seeking to attract the initial support of these networks. And fourth, this dissertation distinguishes a variety of areas in which reframing and matching may occur, including substantive, tactical, organizational, and perceptual areas.

Research Methodology

The Dependent Variable: Transnational Support

The dependent variable in this dissertation is "transnational support." By this term, I mean sustained and substantial support for a political insurgency by transnational actors having neither blood ties to the group nor strategic interest in its domestic conflict. When such support is present, I often refer to it as an insurgency's "adoption" by transnational actors; in addition, I refer to the strategy and process of gaining transnational support as "transnationalization." It should be noted that my definition of transnational support does not require that support or even awareness of a political insurgency be "worldwide"; it is difficult enough for most such insurgencies to gain support from transnational actors in a few countries of the developed world. The cases I examine greatly exceeded this minimal threshold.
Transnational support entails a wide variety of actions taken by transnational actors with the intent of benefiting the political insurgency in its domestic conflict. These actions may benefit the group in two ways: indirectly, by "weakening" the group's opponent, usually the state, e.g. through notoriety, opprobrium, or transnational sanctions; or directly, by "strengthening" the group, e.g. through publicity, advocacy, and lobbying on its behalf and through infusions of money, knowledge, organizational tactics, or strategies of collective action. The most direct indicators of transnational support therefore include (1) substantial and sustained campaigns on behalf of an insurgent group organized by one or more NGOs in the developing world and (2) the provision of direct material aid to the insurgency by these NGOs. Less direct indicators of transnational support include the effects of such support, e.g., shifts in public opinion or in the policies of foreign governments and international organizations toward the insurgent group or its opponents.\(^{35}\)

The relationship between transnational support and attention is intimate and complex. On one hand, the theory of this dissertation suggests that insurgents may use a "media-centered pathway," seeking international media attention to raise support. On the other hand, in addition to being a means to transnational support, attention is often an aspect of support itself.\(^{36}\) Initial NGO supporters of an insurgency may bring attention to the insurgency by publishing information about it or lobbying issue networks, broader publics, and government entities in the developed world; often, as well, they strive to stimulate sufficient interest that the international media will report independently about the insurgency. Attention is an important aspect of support because it may

---

\(^{35}\) In defining and measuring support, however, I focus on the actions of non-state actors, rather than states and international organizations, because I assume that NGO support for political insurgencies often precedes and facilitates support among more formal entities such as states or broader groupings of governmental as well as intergovernmental entities. For discussion of some of these processes, see Willets Pressure Groups in the Global System; Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State."

\(^{36}\) In this dissertation, I seek to explain both the overarching process by which insurgents gain transnational support and the intermediate steps including, in the media-centered pathway, an insurgency's winning initial attention from the international media and its converting attention into support. I operationalize transnational attention as press coverage of a political insurgency and its conflict outside the group's home state. See Chapter Two for theory and hypotheses concerning the causes of both transnational attention and support.
shame or embarrass the insurgency's home state or other opponent into conciliatory action; because it may alert other potential supporters to situations of possible concern; and because it may lead to supportive action by foreign states. Notably, however, transnational attention does not always go hand in hand with transnational support. In some cases in fact, media attention may undermine support; attention to a political insurgency's violence may be expected to have such an effect. Thus, despite the fact that attention and support are often closely linked, the dependent variable in this dissertation is transnational support, not attention.

To further define transnational support, it is helpful to distinguish it from other phenomena involving linkages between political insurgencies and foreign entities. These include cases in which outside states have strategic interests in a conflict in the developing world; in which diaspora groups have lingering ties to populations in sending states; or in which religious communities have continuing concerns for co-religionists worldwide. There are many instances of these phenomena, including U.S. support for Miskito Indians in Nicaragua; Indian concern for diaspora communities in Fiji and Uganda; and Iranian support for radical Islam in other countries. For the reasons indicated above, intervention of external actors is relatively "easy" to explain in these cases. By contrast, the processes I examine, involving linkages between political insurgencies from the developing world and transnational actors having no blood or religious ties to the group and no strategic interest in its conflict, are quite different from and harder to explain than the foregoing phenomena. Precisely for that reason, explanation in the class of cases I examine promises to illuminate important but currently obscure processes.

In most cases, transnational support is not provided pursuant to formal agreements. While there is often substantial documentary evidence of support, the usual bases for support are informal understandings between NGOs and principals of political insurgencies. Such informality is to be expected; the parties to these understandings are relatively informal entities involved in ongoing relationships in the face of shifting home-state responses. Thus to examine only formal agreements would preclude study of most instances of transnational support. Moreover, adopting such a high standard makes little sense given scholarship in related areas: studies of inter-state
alliances, in which formal agreements are common, have examined informal as well as formal commitments.\(^7\)

Finally, it bears emphasis that the dependent variable in this thesis is not transnationalization's consequences. I assume that transnationalization has consequences for political insurgencies, states, and transnational actors; in the empirical chapters, I also discuss possible consequences of transnationalization in each case.\(^8\) But the primary goal of the research is explaining the reasons that some political insurgencies succeed in gaining substantial and sustained support from transnational actors, while most do not.

Definitions of Other Terms

A number of other key terms in this dissertation require brief definition. "Political insurgency" means a sustained, significant, and organized challenge to a society's fundamental political and economic institutions.\(^9\) I use the terms "insurgent group," "insurgent organization," and "insurgents" to refer to the organization (or organizations) which mount such a challenge. Included in these definitions are a broad range of insurgencies seeking change in the policies or practices of governments or other power-holders. Thus, I do not limit the term to the particular kinds of insurgencies examined in the case studies; instead, the term encompasses insurgencies having ethnic, religious, environmental, economic, or political goals among others. I assume, however, that whatever its specific goals, a "political insurgency" challenges fundamental social


\(^8\) For recent theory and empirical analysis about the policy consequences of transnational relations, see Risse-Kappen, *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In*. Even if one were to argue that transnational support does not have consequences for states—that the impacts of domestic politics and interstate relations dwarf those of transnational relations—the non-state actors involved in or striving for transnational support are clearly affected by these relationships. It is therefore important to explain why substantial and sustained support arises in some cases but not in others.

\(^9\) This definition is narrower than Sidney Tarrow's definition of a social movement, "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities." Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 3-4 (emphasis omitted). While the theory of this dissertation probably applies to third party support for "social movements" broadly defined, I use the term "political insurgency" to emphasize the organized and politically-focused nature of the movements I examine. For similar usage of the term, see McAdam, *Political Process and Black Insurgency*. 
institutions backed directly or indirectly by state power. I do not, however, assume that such challenges must be violent; indeed the cases of transnational success I examine in this dissertation are notable in part because of their lack of violence. Thus my use of the term insurgency (and rebellion) does not denote a focus on violent groups.

"Transnational actor" means a non-state organization based in the developed world but with interests and regular activity in the developing world. Included in this broad term are media organizations as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). While these two categories clearly overlap, I distinguish them by their central goals, with NGOs having a variety of substantive goals and media having no such goals, acting instead chiefly as channels of information. Beyond this basic distinction, I do not propose a typology of transnational actors or of particular actors within the media or NGO categories. In my discussion of the dissertation's theory, and in my overviews of the cases I use the terms "NGO" and "media" broadly; in my specific explanations of the cases, however, I focus on particular organizations and seek to avoid over-generalization. While it is necessary to speak of NGOs and media in the abstract when developing theory, use of the term can be misleading in explaining the dynamics of a particular case.

Research Design

The design and methodology of this thesis flow directly from its primary purpose, theory development. I achieve the secondary purposes of the dissertation--testing the proposed theory;

---

40 To improve clarity, I reserve the term "transnational actor" for NGOs based in the developed world, while I reserve the term "political insurgency" for movements based in the developing world. Obviously, however, the political insurgencies in this dissertation are acting transnationally, and many of the transnational actors are organizations representing broader movements that could in some cases be classified as insurgent, i.e., certain strands of the environmental movement.

41 This model of the media is clearly incomplete; the media shapes information and thereby helps shape public opinion rather than simply reporting "the facts." Nonetheless, conveying information objectively is a professional norm held by most journalists even if it is not always realized in fact. Modeling the media as a channel of communication is therefore adequate for theory-building in this dissertation, though in the case studies I also examine certain biases in media reporting. For recent discussion of some of these issues, see W. Lance Bennett and David L. Paletz, eds., Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Gulf War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
explaining important recent cases of transnationalization; and assessing the existing literature on transnationalization--within the framework developed to meet this primary goal.

**Theory Development**

*Deductive Methods*

To develop the theory, I combine inductive and deductive methods. In Chapter Two, I take a deductive approach, developing theory and testable hypotheses from several simple assumptions. Of course, this deductive method is not "pure"; I deduce the theory in the context of related theory in several literatures and my familiarity with cases of successful and failed transnationalization. Accordingly, my presentation of the theory in Chapter Two, prior to my detailed discussion of the cases, is not meant to imply that the theory came "first" or was deduced from "first principles."

*Inductive Methods*

Instead, I develop the theory by interweaving deduction with three principal inductive techniques: deviant case analysis; congruence procedures; and controlled comparison. The principal success cases I examine are deviant cases, cases which stray significantly from the norm of international obscurity and isolation. Using process tracing, I uncover candidate causes for successful transnationalization in each case. I test these candidate causes by analyzing each success case historically and by comparing the success cases with matched failure cases. In each success case there is significant variation over time on the dependent variable. Through historical analysis within each case, I uncover critical, causal factors through their presence in periods of successful transnationalization and their absence otherwise (congruence procedure).

Comparison with matched cases of unsuccessful transnationalization is also central to the theory's development. The "failure" cases are carefully paired with the main "success" cases to control for a number of potentially distorting factors. I have chosen "failure" cases from the same country or with similar grievances; moreover, the "failure" cases are nearly contemporaneous with the "success" cases, thereby holding international variables relatively constant and permitting close scrutiny of strategic and tactical differences between insurgencies. In this controlled comparison,
causal factors manifest themselves through their association with the successful cases and their absence in the failure cases.

In addition to these principal inductive methods, I use two others: Counterfactual analysis helps clarify the theory, particularly the weight of various factors within it. I also make considerable use of testimonial evidence by participants in and close observers of key events. Whether in contemporaneous sources or post hoc assessments, the statements of principals offer unparalleled insights into events, motivations, and strategies; when used with caution, this evidence offers a wealth of theory-building insights.

Theory Testing and Case Explanation

As indicated above, the dissertation's other goals are secondary to theory development. Nonetheless, it is useful to flag the closely-related means by which I meet these goals. One goal, theory testing, is virtually inseparable from theory proposal; I develop the theory by continuously alternating procedures: extracting candidate causes, testing them against the history of each success case and its matched failure case, then extracting refined candidate causes. To meet the dissertation's case explanation aim, I use two methods: cross-case comparison to explain the occurrence of transnationalization and within-case historical comparison to explain the timing of successful transnationalization.

Case Selection

Crucial to the success of this research design is the selection of cases for intensive study. Since the dissertation's central theoretical goal is to explain why particular political insurgencies from the developing world win substantial international attention and support, the core cases must be successful instances of transnationalization. The central cases are in many ways "most successful" instances of transnationalization.

- The Ogoni of Nigeria, a demographically minuscule minority group, had unsuccessfully sought increased political power and economic benefits from the state for decades. Beginning in 1991, Ogoni leaders sought international support for these goals and by 1994
and 1995 they had become objects of substantial and sustained campaigns by environmental, human rights, and indigenous rights activists from Europe and North America. Coordinating their actions with the Ogoni, these transnational supporters mounted protests against the Nigerian government and boycotts against Shell Oil Corporation even as media reporting about the Ogoni conflict mounted. In 1995, harsh Nigerian repression spurred sharp responses from many foreign governments and some international financial organizations.

- The Zapatistas of Chiapas, a few thousand impoverished Maya Indians from several distinct language groups on the periphery of Mexico were completely unknown prior to January 1, 1994. Beginning on that day, they gained great international attention through armed revolt against the Mexican state. And despite their violence, the Zapatistas won substantial international support for their cause. Their dramatic actions and resonant demands for indigenous rights and democratic reform in Mexico spurred transnational supporters to funnel material aid to Chiapas and mount solidarity actions in many other countries. Years after their short-lived, localized rebellion, the Zapatistas have maintained a significant international following.

In addition to the fact that these cases are some of the most prominent recent instances of successful transnationalization, I have selected them for three additional reasons. First, they are "data-rich," making thorough analysis and comparison feasible. Second, there is theoretically-relevant cross-case variation between the two success cases, variation which suggests the two pathways to transnational support. Third, each case includes significant internal variation on the dependent variable. Within each case, the success of transnationalization varies over time, with periods of attempted but unsuccessful transnationalization as well as periods of success.

Because of this "within-case" variation, I do not conduct full-scale examination of "null" cases. Instead, as part of each empirical chapter, I present limited comparisons with insurgencies that have failed to gain significant transnational attention. In the Ogoni chapter, the

---

Data about these cases is relatively scarce and inaccessible.
failure case is the Bougainvilleans of Papua-New Guinea who, despite their distance from Nigeria, face similar domestic issues and have adopted strikingly similar strategies to those of the Ogoni, but with far less success. In the Zapatista case, the failure case is the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR), a similar Mexican guerrilla insurgency that attacked in 1996 but has failed to achieve significant international attention, much less support. In addition to these primary failure cases, to which I give substantial attention, I make pinpoint comparisons to other instances of failed transnationalization in the empirical chapters.

Evidence

I support my analysis with two broad forms of evidence. First, I use behavioral evidence based on the historical record and gathered primarily from contemporaneous documentary and secondary sources. Second, I use "testimonial" evidence of actor intentions and motivations, the latter gathered from documentary sources and post-hoc interviews with key participants in the transnationalization process. Given the dissertation's focus on strategies by which insurgent groups win transnational attention and support, this testimonial evidence provides important information for the argument.

Methodological Challenges

Despite the advantages of the foregoing method, several challenges are worth discussing at the outset. These fall into two categories, generic challenges to the case study method; and specific challenges to this dissertation's methodology.

Generic Challenges

As a general matter, it might be argued that case study is inappropriate to theory development, that its use leads to theories in which key variables are omitted and antecedent

\footnote{Many of the ideas in this section derive from Stephen Van Evera, \textit{Guide to Methodology for Students of Political Science} (Cambridge: Defense and Arms Control Studies Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, n.d.), 26-8.}
conditions are left undefined.\textsuperscript{44} I have two responses. First, there is no better method to theorize about the issues in this thesis. Experimentation is clearly impossible. Game theory and large-N analysis, while feasible, would bleach out the key impacts of ideology, perceptions, reframing, and symbolism—in sum, the richest theoretical veins unearthed by this dissertation. The result would be correlation without explanation—and a pressing need for case studies to fill out and animate the theory.\textsuperscript{45} In fact therefore, case study is an appropriate and efficient method of inferring specific, grounded theory about the processes on which I focus. It permits strong tests of the evolving theory during the process of theory development, for instance tests about the actions of individuals in particular circumstances. And it exploits the extensive evidentiary record available in a few key cases, rather than relying on a thin if quantifiable record in many cases.

Second, the case study method's potential disadvantages are neither inherent nor intractable. This study overcomes one of the principal criticisms of case studies, their reputed susceptibility to "omitted variable bias," by selecting cases with both significant variation and extreme high values on the dependent variable and by making numerous observations of independent and dependent variables within each "case."\textsuperscript{46} Sources of temporal variation in transnational support should stand out clearly against uniform background conditions, making omission of these variables or of controlling "third variables" unlikely. I overcome another criticism of case studies, their reputed inability to uncover antecedent conditions for a theory's operation, by comparing each success case with a paired failure case and by comparing the success cases against each other. A final generic critique, that it is impermissible to use the same cases to develop and test theory, can be dismissed as well. Contrary to idealized methodological precepts,


actual inductive theory development is messy, involving repeated shifts between "development" and "testing" while immersed in empirical materials. Omitting the results of such tests would be wasteful and pointless; including such results increases reliability and eases replication.

Specific Challenges

Key concepts in this dissertation cannot be defined with absolute precision. Of particular note, "transnational support" is seldom marked by a formal document, its nature often evolves over time, and it may include incommensurable elements. This problem is not fatal to analysis, however; while the concept may be difficult to define abstractly, its presence, absence, and evolution are relatively clear in the cases.

My use of testimonial evidence from insurgent leaders and key participants in the transnationalization process is also open to potential challenge. The leaders of the Ogoni and Zapatista insurgencies, as well as principals in their transnational support networks, have left extensive written records of their actions and views. In addition, I conducted numerous interviews and have used interviews conducted by journalists. While some statements by principals are little more than propaganda, others contain unique, often contemporaneous testimony about strategies and tactics. The problem then becomes separating reliable from unreliable data. This reliability problem, however, faces any analyst who uses actor testimony to prove an argument. One obvious way of resolving the problem is to check the accuracy of particular statements against the behavioral record and against other statements by the same and other informants; I use this method extensively. But in a few instances, particularly where I seek motivations for actions, such cross-checking does not provide complete assurance of a statement's reliability. In these cases, I use actor testimony under safeguards loosely derived from legal concepts governing admissibility of evidence. Laws of evidence include elaborate controls for determining the admissibility of out-of-court statements by witnesses unavailable for cross-examination at time of trial. While many such statements are excluded as hearsay, there are a number of exceptions to this rule including an exception for declarations against a witness's interest. In this dissertation, I adopt a relaxed version of this hearsay exception, giving weight to statements based on first-hand knowledge if the
statements serve no interest of the informant, and particularly if the statements are against the informant's apparent interest. On the other hand, I exclude self-serving testimony offered for its truth value (though I sometimes include such statements for other reasons, e.g., to describe the nature of appeals for international support).

Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter Two presents a detailed discussion of the theory and hypotheses proposed in this dissertation. Chapters Three and Four analyze and explain successful transnationalization by the Ogoni and Zapatistas as well as failure in the matched cases. These chapters do not aim to provide a definitive empirical account of the insurgencies or even of their transnational contacts; the dissertation's primary aim is theory building, not comprehensive history. Nonetheless, within the overarching theoretical goals of the dissertation, these chapters present the most complete accounts so far of the origins of the transnational support networks surrounding the Ogoni and Zapatista insurgencies.

Chapter Five returns to theory development, comparing the various insurgencies' experiences with transnationalization and using this comparison to refine the theory. In the conclusion, I draw out the dissertation's implications both for relevant theories in comparative and international politics and for important policy debates.
CHAPTER TWO
EXPLAINING TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT:
THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Introduction

The primary goal of this thesis is theory building: proposing and developing propositions to explain an important transnational phenomenon. As discussed above, several literatures in comparative politics and international relations touch on issues of concern to the thesis. While these literatures can be mined for theoretical nuggets relevant to the origins of transnational support, there is no broad theoretical foundation to expand upon or critique. This thesis aims to build such a foundation.

In this chapter, I lay out the theory and discuss a series of derivative hypotheses and predictions, thereby setting the stage for subsequent theory testing and evaluation. Before proceeding, however, I discuss the assumptions underlying the theory.

Assumptions

The theory of this dissertation is premised on two assumptions. First, I assume that the field of interaction between transnational actors and political insurgencies from the developing world is marked by significant power asymmetries, with transnational actors having resources, skills, knowledge, and access which many insurgencies desire but do not have, at least initially. Thus, in most cases, transnationalization involves relatively powerful "global gatekeepers" which selectively support particular client insurgencies from a broad pool of aspirant insurgencies. This

---

by no means implies that insurgencies from the developing world are powerless, that they are
passive instruments of transnational actors or networks. Far from it. In the context of their
primary interactions with domestic opponents, political insurgencies from the developing world
may engage in pro-active strategic maneuver aimed at increasing their visibility and enhancing their
attractiveness to potential third party supporters. Moreover, despite transnational actors’ superior
knowledge of the transnational realm, in many cases they need clients—as symbolic "poster
children" for their campaigns or as concrete justifications for their continued existence.
Nonetheless, as a general assumption, the political insurgencies examined in this dissertation are in
a supplicant position, seeking the attention and support of transnational actors, while most
transnational actors are in the position of selecting from among many potential client insurgencies.

As a second assumption, I take a simplified, highly abstract view of insurgent
organizations and transnational actors, modeling them as entities having three main attributes:
substantive goals; ethical principles; and internal maintenance and survival needs. By substantive
goals, I mean the political goals which a particular organization seeks. By ethical principles, I
mean the ethos which guides the pursuit of an organization's substantive goals: What means does
an organization see as legitimate and justifiable to pursue its ends? Answering this question helps
predict the range of actions one would expect an organization to take in pursuing its goals. This
range may be quite broad, covering a variety of possible tactics, but a critically important divide,
one on which I focus, is between violent and nonviolent pursuit of goals. By internal maintenance
and survival needs, I mean the set of requirements an organization must meet to remain viable, to
maintain itself in the short term and to survive in the long term. Such needs may include adequate
funding, resources, and personnel, without which an organization will cease to function.

These three organizational attributes interact with each other and in many cases should be
seen as more or less equal determinants of a particular organization's actions. Clearly, however,
an organization's internal maintenance needs are of primary importance. For insurgent groups,
these internal needs often drive the quest for transnational support. For transnational actors, the
demands of organizational maintenance and survival force hard choices: Which among many
suppliant organizations and insurgencies can a transnational actor afford to support? Thus organizational needs may be seen as the polestar around which an organization's other attributes and activities revolve. As discussed in Chapter One, however, much of the existing literature on transnational issue networks and transnational political interactions more broadly has highlighted actors' "principled" substantive goals, probably because that attribute differentiates political actors most sharply from the many social and economic actors also participating in transnational interactions. By contrast, my theory re-focuses attention on factors fundamental to most organizations, factors which to a greater or lesser extent pervade all of an organization's decisions and activities. But, as the dissertation's theory makes clear, while organizational factors may underlie many transnational interactions, they do not do so in straightforward ways and are by no means the only consideration. Rather, the potential for insurgent groups to reframe their conflicts and demands gives transnational interactions a strategic aspect and makes simple cost/benefit analysis an unreliable means of predicting support.

Beyond the three organizational attributes discussed above, I omit most other organizational characteristics and distinctions in this theory-building chapter. Clearly, however, every transnational actor has its own set of goals and tactics; most broadly, there are sharp distinctions between the goals of transnational advocacy NGOs, typically having well-defined political goals, and global media which despite biases can be modeled as having no such overriding political goals. In the empirical chapters, I examine the particular goals, tactics, and needs of specific transnational actors, but for purposes of theory development I omit these except for illustrative purposes.

The Theory

If the foregoing assumptions are correct, political insurgencies from the developing world face formidable hurdles in gaining the support of transnational actors based in the developed

---

2 Even such well-funded transnational actors as the Soros Foundation face similar choices about which of many possible civil society organizations to support in particular states. For general discussion of the Soros Foundation's operations in Eastern Europe and its planned operations in Africa, see Judith Miller, "A Promoter of Democracy Angers the Authoritarians," *New York Times*, July 12, 1997, A1.
world. First, there are problems of distance. Notwithstanding advances in communications and transportation, knowledge of specific conflicts and insurgencies in the developing world is unavoidably limited even among organizations and individuals specializing in particular regions. For NGOs having substantive rather than regional focuses, such limitations are even greater. Distance therefore makes it critically important, as an initial matter, for an insurgency to raise international awareness about itself.

A second problem facing political insurgencies seeking transnational support is competition: As Schattschneider understood, expanding the scope of a political conflict from an arena in which a group is frustrated in achieving its goals to one in which its chances are enhanced is "the basic pattern of all politics."³ While attempting to move from the local or national to the international realm might seem an unlikely jump, it is in fact quite common, leading to large numbers of insurgent groups from the developing world who are seeking the support of international audiences and actors.⁴

In the face of distance and competition, attempts to gain the support of external allies involve two distinct if often overlapping steps: raising international awareness of an insurgency and its demands (the "pitch"); and securing international support (the "match").

The "Pitch": Lobbying and Promoting the Insurgency

In cases covered by this dissertation, initial awareness of an insurgent group is limited, minimal, or nonexistent outside of the insurgency's home state. For such an insurgency to have any hope of gaining transnational support, it must as an initial matter raise awareness of itself among critical international audiences. Hence,

³ Schattschneider, The Semisovereign People, 3 (italics in original).

⁴ Analogously, McAdam notes competition between American civil rights organizations vying for external support in the 1960s. McAdam, Political Process and Black Insurgency, 166-9.
Prime Hypothesis A. The greater the awareness of a political insurgency among transnational actors, the greater the likelihood that the insurgency will gain support from those actors.5

The theory of this dissertation posits two primary means by which a political insurgency may initially raise international awareness: lobbying NGOs; and gaining publicity from third parties, particularly the media. This dichotomy is not meant to create mutually exclusive categories; there are undoubtedly various mixed means of gaining NGO and media attention. The abstractness of the two categories is useful for theory building, however. Moreover, the two categories do not necessarily exhaust possible means of gaining international prominence. Among other possible means are a political insurgency's direct contacts with representatives of governments from the developed world. In this dissertation, however, I focus primarily on contacts with nongovernmental organizations and the media because I assume, subject to testing and possible refutation, that contacts with government representatives will, as an initial matter, be more difficult to establish given the formality of governments relative to nongovernmental entities.6

Lobbying

For purposes of this dissertation, I define lobbying as direct appeals to potential transnational supporters by an insurgency's representatives. These contacts may occur in the developed world, as the insurgency's representatives travel abroad seeking support.7 Lobbying may also occur in the insurgency's home state in the developing world, as representatives of

5 This hypothesis, like many of the others below, is a probability statement postulating a causal relationship between two variables. Its converse, "the lower the awareness of an insurgency among transnational actors, the less likely that the insurgency will gain their support," is a logical corollary. For most of the hypotheses proposed in this Chapter, I present only a single version, leaving the converse unstated. Table 1 (end of this chapter) lists all the hypotheses developed in the chapter.

6 I assume in fact that initial contacts with transnational NGOs having relative familiarity with their home governments may help facilitate an insurgency's later contacts with these foreign government representatives. For hypotheses on factors conditioning state susceptibility to penetration by transnational actors, see Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Bringing Transnational Relations Back In: Introduction," in Bringing Transnational Relations Back In, 3-33.

7 For a general discussion of attempts by foreign interests, primarily states, to influence American foreign policy, see Jarol B. Manheim, Strategic Public Diplomacy and American Foreign Policy: The Evolution of Influence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).
transnational NGOs, drawn to the region for a variety of reasons, come into contact with leaders of the insurgency.

Wherever it occurs, lobbying serves a number of functions. In addition to raising international awareness of the insurgency, it advertises the insurgency's "selling points" and familiarizes potential supporters with the insurgency's leadership.

Publicity

While lobbying involves an insurgency's raising awareness among organizations that may themselves take supportive action, the other method of raising awareness, through publicity by the world media, is indirect. If a political insurgency can gain the attention of the media, the resulting publicity can win allies even if journalists maintain objectivity and neutrality about an insurgency. In some cases merely reporting the "facts" about an insurgency can make potential supporters aware of desperate needs, common concerns, and mutual interests--any of which may incite outsiders to take supportive action even without lobbying by the insurgency itself.

Factors Conditioning Lobbying and Publicity

Given the importance of raising awareness, the factors that condition a political insurgency's ability to lobby or attract media attention become critical. Hypothesis A1 provides a generalized statement of this principle.

Hypothesis A1. The greater an insurgency's ability to lobby and promote its cause, the greater the likelihood of gaining transnational attention and support.

What factors condition an organization's ability to lobby and promote? Three factors, material resources, access, and knowledge, would seem of central importance to NGO lobbying; access, knowledge, and one additional factor, spectacle, would seem critical to media promotion.

Material resources

Material resources, which I define simply as cash, would seem likely to be important factors conditioning an insurgency's ability to lobby transnational NGOs, particularly in the NGOs' home states. The costs of financing lobbying trips to the developed world are large,
especially given the repeated visits predictably needed to raise awareness from a base of near ignorance. We may therefore hypothesize:

**Hypothesis A2.** The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater its ability to lobby potential supporters in their home states.

As an observable implication of this hypothesis, one would expect that, all things being equal, those insurgencies which are able to lobby, particularly in their potential supporters' home countries will have greater material resources than those which are not able to do so. Similarly, one would expect to see a direct correlation between the amount of an insurgency's resources and its frequency and duration of lobbying abroad. One would also expect that if an organization representing a "resource-poor" insurgency lobbies abroad, it will have benefited from the sponsorship of "patrons" who supply needed resources. For lobbying which occurs in the insurgency's home state, on the other hand, material resources would seem likely to be a less important consideration if only because the expenses of sending representatives abroad for extended and repeated lobbying trips can be avoided.

Similarly, for gaining sustained publicity from international journalists through on-the-spot coverage in the developing word, an insurgency's material resources would seem likely to play some role. At a minimum, the organization and promotion of "newsworthy" events or "spectacles" would seem to require substantial material resources. We may therefore hypothesize:

**Hypothesis A3.** The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater its ability to create spectacle and gain media attention.

*Access*

An insurgency's ability to lobby is also conditioned by its access to transnational actors. Access takes two forms: exit to the developed world by the insurgency's leaders; and entry to the insurgency's home state by transnational NGOs and journalists. In contrast to material resources which I define in economic terms, I define access largely in political terms, as the home state's

\[\text{---}\]

\[8\] See below for further definition of the term "spectacle."
policy concerning exit and entry by representatives of political insurgencies and transnational actors. This policy may range from indifference or acquiescence to prohibition.

For direct lobbying in potential supporters' home states, exit by representatives of the political insurgency is clearly critical.

**Hypothesis A4.** The fewer a state's restrictions on an insurgency's overseas lobbying, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby potential supporters in their home states.

If this hypothesis is correct, insurgent groups are more likely to lobby abroad if their home states do not have policies prohibiting such actions, do not enforce such policies, or are unaware of the insurgency's transnational activities. Governments in exile would also be more likely to lobby abroad than insurgents in situ. The hypothesis also suggests that as an insurgent group becomes more politically nettlesome to its home state—whether because of growing domestic or international activities—the home state will have incentives to restrict its ability to exit, and external lobbying may decline. If the home state blocks external lobbying, the insurgency will then be more likely to use other means to raise international awareness. One such means would be lobbying transnational NGOs in the insurgency's home state; another would be gaining the attention of international journalists based in the region. If the latter means are used, however, a political insurgency's ability to increase its international profile will depend largely on its state's policy toward entry by transnational actors:

**Hypothesis A5.** The fewer a state's restrictions on entry by transnational NGOs and foreign journalists, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby transnational actors in the insurgency's home state and to gain publicity from the international media.

This hypothesis leads to the prediction that, all else being equal, insurgencies from states having more restrictive entry policies are less likely to be able to raise attention by contacting

---

9 Non-political factors may also play a role in conditioning access. Chief among these is the physical accessibility of a political insurgency to transnational actors, i.e., the physical danger and difficulty of access. While these factors have other than purely political sources, politics and policy clearly play a key role; in today's world, "natural" isolation is an unlikely cause of major difficulties in exit and entry. For general discussion of these issues and a detailed comparison of strikingly different levels of media coverage for similar cases of famine in Somalia and Sudan, see Steven Livingston, "Suffering in Silence: Media Coverage of War and Famine in Sudan," in Robert I. Rotberg and Thomas G. Weiss, eds., *From Massacres to Genocide: The Media, Public Policy, and Humanitarian Crises* (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 1996).
NGOs or media in the insurgency's home states than insurgencies from states having less restrictive policies. Varying key factors in the hypothesis across time rather than space, it is also predictable that as a state increases or decreases the restrictiveness of its entry policies, there will be corresponding alterations in the insurgency's contacts with transnational NGOs or journalists in the insurgency's home state.

*Spectacle*

In addition to the foregoing factors, a third factor specific to attracting the interest of the media is also important: the existence or creation of "spectacle," a major, highly visible, often novel event or series of events. *"Spectacle"* closely resembles John Kingdon's concept of "focusing events." Kingdon, in explaining how "problems" gain the attention of policymakers in American government, defines a focusing event as a "crisis or disaster that comes along to call attention to [a] problem, a powerful symbol that catches on . . ."10 Scholars of social movements use similar concepts to explain how movements take advantage of political opportunities and "make their own opportunities" through protest and other attention-getting activities.11

**Hypothesis A6.** The greater the spectacle created by an insurgency, the more likely it is to generate media attention.

Political insurgencies often use violence and terror to create spectacle and generate media interest, but nonviolent methods are also available and some insurgent groups have used nonviolence to gain international attention.12 Without spectacle, whether violent or not, the likelihood of sustained and substantial media attention is small. While such sustained attention may not be

---


12 Notably, violent methods of gaining attention may frustrate the other important goal of many insurgent groups, gaining support to pressure a home state. Creating spectacle through nonviolent action is probably more difficult but also stands less chance of alienating potential supporters. Finally, if an insurgency is the victim of another's violence (e.g., state violence), attention and support may be more likely to go hand in hand. For further discussion of these issues, see hypotheses below concerning "tactical match."
essential to gaining transnational support, a political insurgency seems more likely to gain support
if it is the object of many media stories rather than a single, isolated story.

Knowledge

The economic and political factors encapsulated in the concepts of material resources and
access may act as near absolute bars to transnational lobbying or promotion. Similarly, if a
political insurgency does not take some (usually spectacular) action, its chances of gaining
widespread and sustained media attention are slim. One additional factor, knowledge, is less likely
to have such drastic effects; it nonetheless exercises an important impact on the potential
effectiveness of NGO lobbying and media promotion.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Hypothesis A7.} The greater an insurgency's knowledge of the identity and operation of
potentially supportive transnational actors, the greater the effectiveness of its lobbying and
promotion.

One may also hypothesize about some of the reasons that a particular political insurgency
will have such superior knowledge.

\textbf{Hypothesis A7a.} The greater the proportion of an insurgency's leadership educated in an
urban center or in the developed world, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby and
promote itself effectively.

\textbf{Hypothesis A7b.} The closer the linkage of an insurgency's leadership to educated diaspora
communities in the developed world, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby and
promote itself effectively.

The "Match": Substantive, Tactical, Organizational,
and Perceptual Factors

Whether a political insurgency raises awareness about itself through action attracting media
interest or through direct lobbying of transnational actors, these different "pitches" only establish
permissive conditions for substantial and sustained support. Many insurgencies gain some media
attention or engage in some lobbying, but these actions result in limited or fleeting international

\textsuperscript{13} The term "effectiveness," however, does not mean that lobbying will necessarily lead to support. In the
next section of the chapter, I propose hypotheses concerning the reasons transnational actors give support.
support in most cases. Only a few political insurgencies have obtained the substantial and sustained support won by the Ogoni and the Zapatistas.

To explain cases of substantial and sustained support, this dissertation focuses on key attributes of political insurgencies and transnational actors and postulates that the likelihood of support increases to the extent that there is a match between these attributes.  

**Prime Hypothesis B.** The greater the match between key characteristics of a political insurgency and those of a transnational actor, the greater the likelihood of substantial and sustained transnational support ("adoption").

If, as discussed above, one models political insurgencies and transnational actors as having three key characteristics--substantive goals, ethical principles governing the pursuit of those goals, and organizational maintenance and survival needs--one can formulate and test hypotheses related to each of these attributes.

**Factors Conditioning the "Match"**

**Substantive Factors**

**Hypothesis B1.** The greater the match between a transnational actor’s substantive goals and an insurgency’s demands, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

This hypothesis states an important if perhaps obvious point, a transnational actor is likely to devote significant time and resources to an insurgent group from the developing world only if its goals coincide or overlap with those of the political insurgency.  

To put this most starkly, an environmental advocacy NGO is unlikely to support an insurgency which seeks to develop its region by selling land to timber companies.

Adding a temporal dimension to Hypothesis B1, absent an initial match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, adoption becomes more

---

14 For purposes of this theory, the term "match" has its ordinary meaning, to correspond or harmonize with.

15 McAdam uses the term "substantive focus of insurgency" to make a limited empirical point: that the moderate reform approach of black organizations early in the civil rights movement attracted the support of powerful external support groups in the U.S. McAdam, *Political Process and Black Insurgency*, 167.
likely over time if either the goals of the transnational actor or the demands of the insurgency change creating a match. To focus on the first scenario:

**Hypothesis B1a.** If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the transnational actor's goals change creating a match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

Focusing on the second scenario, the insurgency's demands may change for two reasons: change in the conflict itself or change in the way the insurgency frames the original conflict and its associated demands. Thus,

**Hypothesis B1b.** If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the conflict and the insurgency's associated demands change creating a match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

**Hypothesis B1c.** If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the insurgency reframes the original conflict and its associated demands creating an apparent match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

Hypotheses B1a and B1b are simple extensions of Hypothesis B1: over time, adoption becomes more likely if the goals of transnational actors and political insurgencies come to match each other. Hypothesis B1c adds an important strategic dimension; an insurgency may reframe its demands to create an apparent match with the goals of transnational actors. Despite its greater need for adoption and therefore its seemingly weaker position in the interaction with transnational actors, an organization representing a political insurgency has privileged control over its framing of the conflict and superior knowledge about the substance of the conflict itself. In some cases, the insurgency may be able to use these advantages to reframe its conflict, creating an apparent match that will lead to transnational support. If Hypothesis B1c is valid, we would expect to observe change over time in the way in which a political insurgency frames its conflict even without change in the conflict itself. This observable behavioral implication may be paralleled by observable testimonial implications: a political insurgency's stated rationale for certain actions may indicate the strategic purposes of the actions.16

16 In the remainder of this section, I discuss primarily behavioral implications of hypotheses and corollaries. For each hypothesis in the theory, however, there are also parallel testimonial implications.
**Tactical Factors**

**Hypothesis B2.** The greater the match between a transnational actor's ethical principles and the tactics used by an insurgency to achieve its goals, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

Hypothesis B2 states the simple point that transnational actors are unlikely to provide support to political insurgencies which follow tactics substantially different from their own. One important observable implication of this hypothesis is that transnational actors imbued with a nonviolent ethos will be unlikely to support insurgent groups espousing and using violent tactics. Even if an organization representing a political insurgency does not espouse violence, support from transnational actors imbued with a nonviolent ethos is likely to be reduced if the insurgency's mass base uses violence. As an observable implication of this hypothesis, we should therefore observe greater transnational support for organizations that exert strong control over their constituencies than for organizations that do not (and whose constituencies may therefore be more likely to engage in violent acts). We may also observe the political insurgency's strategic efforts to portray itself as non-violent and as the victim of others' violence. Similarly observable: opponents' efforts to tar the political insurgency as violent thereby impeding transnationalization.

**Hypothesis B2a.** The more violence used by an insurgency, the less likely that the insurgency will be adopted by transnational actors imbued with an ethos of nonviolent conflict.

**Hypothesis B2b.** The more violence used by a state to victimize an insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption by transnational actors.

Adding a time dimension to the foregoing Hypotheses generates a set of hypotheses parallel to those outlined for Hypothesis B1; to avoid repetition, I do not list them.

**Organizational Factors**

**Hypothesis B3.** The more likely that adoption of an insurgent group will meet the organizational needs of a transnational actor, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

A transnational actor's most critical need is continued organizational survival. This fundamental need implies that a transnational actor will carefully weigh the costs and benefits of

---

17 On the other hand, transnational actors with no compunctions about the use of violence in pursuit of goals will not be deterred from supporting a violent insurgency.
adopting a political insurgency seeking support. Once a transnational actor has adopted a political insurgency, it will incur high costs if adoption is found to be baseless. These costs, primarily loss of reputation and prestige, are intangible but nonetheless severe; among these costs are reduction in the transnational actor's credibility and, in the case of membership organizations, a drop in contributions. Hence,

**Hypothesis B3a.** The higher the benefits and lower the costs of adoption, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

This general proposition conceals two important issues concerning information relevant to a decision on adoption. First, information about the following issues is critical to such a decision: information concerning the merit of the demands made by the political insurgency; and information concerning the legitimacy of the organization claiming to represent the political insurgency. This information, initially under the primary control of the political insurgency, is peculiarly susceptible to error and distortion; accurate information on these issues is therefore a critical factor in a transnational actor's decision on whether to adopt a particular insurgency. Accordingly,

**Hypothesis B3b.** The better the proof that an insurgency's demands are valid, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B3c.** The better the proof that an organization claiming to represent an insurgency is in fact a legitimate representative of the insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

These hypotheses have several observable implications: if the hypotheses are valid, one would expect that transnational actors will demand reliable information from or about an insurgency before allying. Moreover, if hypotheses B3b and B3c are valid, one would expect that organizations representing insurgencies will devote significant resources to proving both the validity of their demands and the legitimacy of their organization as the insurgency's representative.

A second important issue concerning information relates to the transaction costs incurred by the transnational actor in gathering data concerning the political insurgency:

**Hypothesis B3d.** The lower the transaction costs incurred in deciding whether to adopt an insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption.
A transnational actor incurs relatively low transaction costs if it receives information directly from the insurgency. The reliability of this information may be questionable, however. Yet in many cases it is difficult and costly for a transnational actor to carry out its own on-site research about a potential ally. Thus, if Hypothesis B3d is correct, one might observe the following: transnational actors making inquiries among reliable and knowledgeable sources (e.g., academics, foreign correspondents, foreign ministry officials) in an effort to verify the insurgent organization's claims; and such sources "vouching for" political insurgencies that successfully transnationalize. Also observable: the tacit or express designation of certain transnational actors as reputable and reliable sources of information about conflicts in the developing world, sources whose conclusions about an insurgency and its conflict are relied upon without independent examination.

In many cases, insurgent organizations searching for transnational attention and support will contact multiple transnational actors. In this situation, the first transnational actor to adopt the insurgency takes the highest risks; assuming that this initial actor has a reputation for reliability, other actors adopting subsequently may do so at lower risk. Hence,

**Hypothesis B3e.** The more support an insurgency wins from transnational actors, the greater the likelihood of adoption by other transnational actors.

If Hypothesis B3e is valid, one might observe bandwagons onto which transnational actors jump as increasing numbers of supporters lend seemingly greater weight to the original actor's support of the insurgency.

The foregoing implication assumes "sharing" of information between transnational actors. In cases of competition between transnational actors in the same substantive issue area, sharing is unlikely. A transnational bandwagon may nonetheless develop precisely because of this competition. If an insurgency wins substantial international attention, transnational actors in relevant sectors derive benefits from supporting it and incur costs for not doing so. Benefits include low-cost publicity deriving from the fame of the insurgency; costs include potential losses

---

18 To distinguish this competitive bandwagon effect from the cooperative effect, actor testimony concerning motives is the most reliable evidence.
of constituent support if the transnational actor does not "take a stand" concerning an international cause célèbre in a relevant issue area. If Hypothesis B3e is correct, we may therefore observe competition between transnational actors over certain aspects of their support for insurgencies. In certain cases, we may also observe transnational actors retracting earlier decisions not to adopt an insurgency in cases where the insurgency gains significant international attention.

Perceptual Factors

Even if the costs of adopting a particular political insurgency appear low, adoption is unlikely unless the benefits of adoption are high. Given transnational actors' limited resources, focusing on a new issue or adopting a new cause entails substantial opportunity costs; transnational actors will therefore adopt an insurgency only if the benefits of doing so are substantial and clear-cut. The chief benefit is the extent to which adopting a particular insurgency will conduce to a transnational actors' organizational maintenance and growth. For membership organizations, the issue is whether adopting and promoting a particular cause will appeal to the organization's constituency or potential constituency. Thus,

Hypothesis B4. The more an insurgency conveys its identity, demands, and conflict in a form appealing to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

A key factor in creating such appeal is the extent to which the insurgency and its conflict appear relevant, important and understandable to the constituency of the transnational actor. Accordingly,

Hypothesis B4a. The more an insurgency portrays its conflict as complex or obscure, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays its conflict as simple and familiar to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

Hypothesis B4b. The more an insurgency portrays its conflict as narrow or particularistic, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays its conflict as universal or symbolic of broader issues important to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

Hypothesis B4c. The more an insurgency portrays itself as confronting a local opponent unknown to foreign audiences, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays itself as confronting an opponent familiar to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

The foregoing propositions underline the fact that transnational actors and audiences will have different knowledge and concerns than those of political insurgencies from the developing world.
This presents a problem but also an opportunity. Transnationalization is unlikely if an insurgency presents its conflict to transnational actors and audiences in the same terms as it uses at the local or national level. Transnationalization becomes more likely if the insurgency reframes its conflict in broader terms resonating with the knowledge and concerns of transnational audiences. To be specific though far from comprehensive about these points, transnationalization is more likely if an insurgency portrays its conflict as involving broad, familiar issues such as environmental destruction, poverty, or fundamental human rights violations rather than narrower, more parochial issues such as communal land rights or inter-regional allocations of government funds. Notably as well, most issues can be portrayed at different levels of generality and complexity, providing wide scope for reframing to attract transnational support.

Hypotheses B4a-c generate a wide variety of observable implications. Within a particular case, we should observe that the political insurgency's portrayal of its conflict and demands at the local or national level differs from its portrayal at the international level; as a result, transnational supporters may be unaware of certain critical though localized aspects of the conflict. We should also observe successful transnationalization primarily in cases in which an insurgency portrays its conflict as involving familiar, understandable, and universal issues, rather than in cases in which an insurgency portrays its conflict in contrary terms. With regard to the identity of an insurgency's opponent, we should observe successful transnationalization when the insurgency portrays its primary opponent as a prominent international actor such as its home state or a well-known multinational corporation; we should not observe transnationalization when the insurgency portrays its primary opponent as a local business or rival insurgency. Among transnational actors, we should also observe that efforts to support an adopted insurgency stress broader issues and well-known opponents while de-emphasizing parochial issues and unfamiliar opponents involved in the conflict.

The foregoing hypotheses involve reframing the conflict to make it understandable and relevant to external audiences. Relevance can also be increased by portraying the conflict as implicating the interests of transnational actors and audiences.
**Hypothesis B4d.** The more an insurgency portrays its demands as implicating the direct material interests of foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood that transnational NGOs will adopt the insurgency.

**Hypothesis B4e.** The more an insurgency portrays its demands as enhancing important international public goods, the greater the likelihood that transnational NGOs will adopt the insurgency.

Given the physical distance between political insurrections in the developing world and potential supporters in the developed world, implicating the latter's direct material interests is difficult. One solution is attaching a political insurgency and its conflict to an issue that is portrayed as an international public good such as global environmental quality or biodiversity. Arguably, in such an issue everyone has a stake, albeit small and easily avoided through free ridership, but nonetheless a stake that can serve as strategic leverage for attracting transnational actors and audiences. Thus, if Hypothesis B4e is valid, we may observe insurrections portraying themselves as "stewards of nature" and "guardians of the land." We may also observe the creation of novel international public goods such as cultural diversity, and the portrayal of insurgent groups as exemplars of these goods. Reciprocally, we may observe insurgent groups and their supporters seeking to construct new international public "bads." One example may be recent transmogrification of "cultural change" processes into "ethnocide," defined as "killing" a culture without physically harming its individual members.

The upshot of the foregoing hypotheses is that certain conflicts involving populations in the developing world resonate with the concerns and interests of audiences and political actors in the developed world, while others do not. Knowledge of these issues provides incentives for insurgent groups to reframe their conflicts, goals, and identities to take advantage of transnational resonance.

**Underlying Factors**

Many of the foregoing propositions hinge on the ability of a political insurgency to frame its demands, conflict, and even its identity, to conform to the substantive goals, practical tactics,
and organizational needs of transnational actors. Explaining variation in this ability is therefore
critical to explaining successful transnationalization.

**Hypothesis B5.** The greater the ability of an insurgency to present its conflict in a manner
conforming to the substantive interests, ethical principles, and organizational needs of
transnational NGOs, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

An insurgency's ability to reframe its conflict is, of course, limited by the realities of the
underlying conflict and the insurgency itself. Within these constraints, however, there is
substantial room for an organization representing a political insurgency to construct an appealing
"spin" aimed at garnering transnational support. A number of factors condition an insurgent
group's ability to present its conflict in a manner conforming to the substantive interests, ethical
principles, and organizational needs of potential transnational supporters. Knowledge of
transnational actors and of internationally appealing ways to portray the conflict is clearly
important.

**Hypothesis B5a.** The greater an insurgent leadership's knowledge of transnational actors'
substantive goals, ethical principles, and organizational needs, the greater the leadership's
ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5b.** The greater an insurgent leadership's knowledge of public relations and
marketing techniques, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively
and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

More general knowledge and expertise also increase the likelihood of an insurgent group
presenting its case effectively.

**Hypothesis B5c.** The more articulate the insurgency's leadership in a world language such
as English, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the
greater the likelihood of adoption.

Beyond knowledge, other factors similar to those conditioning an insurgency's initial
ability to lobby also have an impact.

**Hypothesis B5d.** The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater the
leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of
adoption.

**Hypothesis B5e.** The closer the linkage of the insurgency's leadership to educated
diaspora communities in the developed world, the greater the leadership's ability to present
its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.
The central point of these hypotheses is that political insurgencies that successfully transnationalize their conflicts will often have special attributes and resources enhancing their ability to attract transnational attention and support: substantial material resources, a well-educated leadership, and a strong diaspora community. In addition, issues of access play an important if less obvious role in an insurgency's ability to present its conflict in a manner conforming to the substantive interests, practical tactics, and organizational needs of potential transnational supporters.

**Hypothesis B5f.** The easier an insurgent leadership's exit from and re-entry to its home state, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

The insurgent leadership's ability to maintain contacts with its base even while engaged in lobbying and promotion activities is important to maintaining both its legitimacy as leader of the group and its direct knowledge of the conflict, factors which are in turn critical to meeting the organizational imperatives of potential transnational supporters (Hypotheses B3b and B3c). For insurgent groups lobbying abroad, these issues of access can be particularly important. If insurgent leaders move easily between the developed world and their home region, the leadership's likelihood of maintaining legitimacy will improve and its ability to project itself transnationally as the insurgency's legitimate leader will also increase. If on the other hand, insurgent leaders lobbying abroad are prevented from re-entering their region, the leadership's legitimacy and direct knowledge of the conflict may well suffer, with negative implications for meeting potential transnational supporters' organizational needs. The leadership's legitimacy and knowledge may further erode if communication linkages with its constituency are prevented or made difficult by the home state. In essence, this is the familiar plight of the exile group--severed from its base and only distantly involved in developments at home.

In cases in which access is relatively free but in which insurgencies do not have the knowledge or resources to present their case effectively, transnationalization may nonetheless occur through the intervention of "patrons," i.e., individuals or organizations who supply missing
factors. In some cases as well, such patrons may awaken insurgent groups to unseen possibilities for transnational support.

**Hypothesis B5g.** The greater the assistance from a "patron" supplying needed knowledge and resources, the greater the insurgency's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

While in some cases the assistance of a patron may be an isolated act, the foregoing hypothesis also suggests the existence of transnational organizations specialized in drawing international support and attention to "needy" groups from the developing world, specialized in the techniques of reframing political identities and local conflicts with the goal of promoting transnational attention and support.

**Conclusion**

The foregoing discussion indicates the complexities of the transnationalization process. The theory proposed in this dissertation offers an abstract but clear means of grappling with this complexity. Table 1 sets out the hypotheses, Table 2 summarizes the factors hypothesized to condition the transnationalization process, and Figure 2 illustrates the linkages between these factors.

Starting with a few simple assumptions, I have generated a set of inter-related propositions, each rich with predictions about real world behavior and testimony. The theory is now ripe for testing and refinement through confrontation with empirical cases.
Table 1. Hypotheses on Transnationalization

**The "Pitch": Promoting Transnational Awareness**

Prime Hypothesis A. The greater the awareness of a political insurgency among transnational actors, the greater the likelihood that the insurgency will gain support from those actors.

Factors Conditioning the "Pitch"

Hypothesis A1. The greater an insurgency's ability to lobby and promote its cause, the greater the likelihood of gaining transnational attention and support.

Material Resources:

Hypothesis A2. The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater its ability to lobby potential supporters in their home states.

Hypothesis A3. The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater its ability to create spectacle and gain media attention.

Access:

Hypothesis A4. The fewer a state's restrictions on an insurgency's overseas lobbying, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby potential supporters in their home states.

Hypothesis A5. The fewer a state's restrictions on entry by transnational NGOs and foreign journalists, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby transnational actors in the insurgency's home state and to gain publicity from the international media.

Spectacle:

Hypothesis A6. The greater the spectacle created by an insurgency, the more likely it is to generate media attention.

Knowledge:

Hypothesis A7. The greater an insurgency's knowledge of the identity and operation of potentially supportive transnational actors, the greater the effectiveness of its lobbying and promotion.

Hypothesis A7a. The greater the proportion of an insurgency's leadership educated in an urban center or in the developed world, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby and promote itself effectively.

Hypothesis A7b. The closer the linkage of an insurgency's leadership to educated diaspora communities in the developed world, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby and promote itself effectively.
Table 1--Continued

The "Match": Gaining Transnational Support

*Prime Hypothesis B.* The greater the match between key characteristics of a political insurgency and those of a transnational actor, the greater the likelihood of gaining transnational support ("adoption").

Factors Conditioning the "Match"

Substantive Factors:

*Hypothesis B1.* The greater the match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

*Hypothesis B1a.* If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the transnational actor's goals change creating a match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

*Hypothesis B1b.* If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the conflict and the insurgency's associated demands change creating a match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

*Hypothesis B1c.* If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the insurgency reframes the original conflict and its associated demands creating an apparent match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

Tactical Factors:

*Hypothesis B2.* The greater the match between a transnational actor's ethical principles and the tactics used by an insurgency to achieve its goals, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

*Hypothesis B2a.* The more violence used by an insurgency, the less likely that the insurgency will be adopted by transnational actors imbued with an ethos of nonviolent conflict.

*Hypothesis B2b.* The more violence used by a state to victimize an insurgency, the more likely adoption by transnational actors.

Organizational Factors:

*Hypothesis B3.* The more likely that adoption of an insurgent group will meet the organizational needs of a transnational actor, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

*Hypothesis B3a.* The higher the benefits and lower the costs of adoption, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

*Hypothesis B3b.* The better the proof that an insurgency's demands are valid, the greater the likelihood of adoption.
Table 1—Continued

**Hypothesis B3c.** The better the proof that an organization claiming to represent an insurgency is in fact a legitimate representative of the insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B3d.** The lower the transaction costs incurred in deciding whether to adopt an insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B3e.** The more support an insurgency wins from transnational actors, the greater the likelihood of adoption by other transnational actors.

Perceptual Factors:

**Hypothesis B4.** The more an insurgency conveys its identity, demands, and conflict in a form appealing to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4a.** The more an insurgency portrays its conflict as complex or obscure, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays its conflict as simple and familiar to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4b.** The more an insurgency portrays its conflict as narrow or particularistic, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays its conflict as universal or symbolic of broader issues important to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4c.** The more an insurgency portrays itself as confronting a local opponent unknown to foreign audiences, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays itself as confronting an opponent familiar to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4d.** The more an insurgency portrays its demands as implicating the direct material interests of foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood that transnational NGOs will adopt the insurgency.

**Hypothesis B4e.** The more an insurgency portrays its demands as enhancing important international public goods, the greater the likelihood that transnational NGOs will adopt the insurgency.

Underlying Factors:

**Hypothesis B5.** The greater the ability of an insurgency to present its conflict in a manner conforming to the substantive interests, ethical principles, and organizational needs of transnational NGOs, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5a.** The greater an insurgent leadership's knowledge of transnational actors' substantive goals, ethical principles, and organizational needs, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.
Table 1—Continued

**Hypothesis B5b.** The greater an insurgent leadership's knowledge of public relations and marketing techniques, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5c.** The more articulate the insurgency's leadership in a world language such as English, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5d.** The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5e.** The closer the linkage of the insurgency's leadership to educated diaspora communities in the developed world, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5f** The easier an insurgent leadership's exit from and re-entry to its home state, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B5g.** The greater the assistance from a "patron" supplying needed knowledge and resources, the greater the insurgency's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.
Table 2. Factors Hypothesized to Condition Transnationalization Process

**Factors Conditioning NGO Lobbying and Media Promotion (The "Pitch")**

1) Material resources permitting travel/communications (A2; A3).
   *Conditioned by:*
   - Resources of political insurgency (A2).
   - Assistance of "patron" (B5g).

2) Access: Exit by insurgency/entry by NGOs and media (A4; A5).
   *Conditioned by:*
   - State policies toward exit and entry.

3) Spectacle (A6).

4) Familiarity with characteristics of potentially supportive NGOs (A7).
   *Conditioned by:*
   - Leadership's knowledge of/education in developed world (A7a).
   - Leadership's linkages to educated diaspora population (A7b).

**Factors Conditioning Likelihood of NGO Adoption (The "Match")**

1) Correspondence between substantive goals of political insurgency and NGO (B1).
   *Conditioned by:*
   - Goals of NGO (B1a).
   - Goals of political insurgency.
     *Conditioned by:*
     - Character of domestic conflict (B1b).
     - Framing/reframing of insurgency's goals (B1c).

2) Correspondence between insurgency's tactics and NGO ethical ethos (B2).
   *Conditioned by:*
   - Ethos of NGO (B2a).
   - Tactics of political insurgency.
     *Conditioned by:*
     - Character of domestic conflict (B2b).
     - Control over insurgency's cadres.
     - Framing of tactics.

3) Correspondence between organizational needs of NGO and likelihood that adoption of insurgency will meet those needs (B3).
   *Conditioned by:*
   - Potential costs of adoption (B3a), i.e.,
     - Loss of NGO credibility, reputation, and support if adoption is found meritless.
     *Conditioned by:*
     - Proof of insurgency's claims (B3b).
     - Proof of legitimacy/representativity of insurgent organization (B3c).
   - Transaction costs of adoption (B3d).
     *Conditioned by:*
     - Vouching by "experts,"
     - Bandwagon Effect (B3e).
Potential benefits of adoption (B3a), i.e.,
Appeal of political insurgency to NGO constituency (B4).

*Conditioned by:*
Familiarity of conflict to constituency (B4a).
Universality/symbolic value of conflict (B4b).
Familiarity of insurgency's opponent to constituency (B4c).
Conflict's impact on constituency's interests (B4d, B4e).

4) Insurgency's ability to create a "match" (B5)

*Conditioned by:*
Leadership's knowledge of transnational actors (B5a).
Leadership's knowledge of public relations, marketing (B5b).
Leadership's world language skills (B5c).
Insurgency's material resources (B5d).
Leadership's linkages to educated diaspora population (B5e).
Ease of leadership's exit from and re-entry to home state (B5f).
Assistance of "patron" (B5g).

*Notes:* For this table, feedback loops have been omitted and the substantive goals, ethical principles, and organizational interests of transnational actors have been held constant. Parenthetical items refer to numbered hypotheses in Table 1. Some hypotheses included in Table 1 have been omitted, while some predictions discussed in the chapter but not formulated as hypotheses have been included.
Figure 2. Linkages between Key Hypotheses

Notes: Feedback loops omitted. Parenthetical items refer to numbered hypotheses in Table 1.
CHAPTER THREE

THE OGONI CONFLICT AND THE NGO-CENTERED PATHWAY TO TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT

Introduction

The Ogoni are an ethnic group of approximately 300,000-500,000 people most of whom live in an area of approximately 400 square miles in Southeastern Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta. Like dozens of other Delta minorities, the Ogoni have long sought a greater voice in Nigerian politics and a larger share of Nigeria's oil revenues. As a small minority among Nigeria's 88 million people, however, the Ogoni have had little success in achieving these goals, remaining for most of the century an obscure and politically insignificant group within Nigeria.

In 1991, a recently-formed political organization, the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), introduced a new strategy for achieving Ogoni goals--arousing international pressure against the Nigerian state. After approximately one year of failure in this effort, the Ogoni began to win powerful international allies. By summer 1993, transnational NGOs mounted coordinated international actions in support of Ogoni demands, the global media carried numerous accounts of the Ogoni "struggle," foreign governments conducted investigations and threatened sanctions, and international organizations focused unprecedented attention on southeastern Nigeria.¹ In November 1995, the trial and threatened execution of Ogoni leader Ken Saro-Wiwa made headlines around the world, prompted an outpouring of international protest from environmental and human rights NGOs, and spurred governments, international

¹ For an overview of MOSOP's transnational activities and the principal forms of support provided by key NGOs, see Appendix One.
organizations, and multinational corporations into lobbying efforts on Saro-Wiwa's behalf. Nor was this support limited to Saro-Wiwa's individual case; NGOs, media, governments, and international organizations gave support not only for imprisoned Ogoni leaders but also for the Ogoni as a threatened group. When these measures failed to prevent Saro-Wiwa's execution, governments from many developed states immediately condemned the killings and imposed a variety of diplomatic sanctions on Nigeria.

The Argument

How did this demographically-insignificant group succeed in gaining substantial amounts of international support for its conflict with the Nigerian state? Why did it succeed where similarly-situated groups in the Niger Delta and elsewhere have not? In broadest terms, I argue that Ogoni leaders won widespread international support beginning in 1993 for four reasons: First, the Ogoni had a number of unusual advantages permitting them to contact and lobby European-based transnational NGOs which, while initially unwilling to help the Ogoni, eventually played a major role in establishing the transnational Ogoni support network. Unlike many other small political movements seeking international support, the Ogoni were led by persons having substantial pre-existing knowledge of and connections with Great Britain, the U.S., and other countries of the developed world: these leaders had sufficient economic resources to permit repeated and extended lobbying trips; and, at least initially, these lobbying efforts were not impeded by the Nigerian state. Notably, however, while these advantages gave MOSOP initial access to transnational actors, they did not by themselves lead to support; indeed, Ogoni lobbying of transnational NGOs in 1991 and 1992 ended in most NGOs' rejecting Ogoni appeals.

Second, by 1993 actual or apparent changes in the underlying Ogoni-state conflict helped transform MOSOP's initial failures at transnational lobbying into successes. The Nigerian state's growing repression against the Ogoni led to increasing interest among transnational human rights NGOs which had earlier rejected MOSOP's claim that the state's failure to grant Ogoni political autonomy constituted a human rights violation. In addition to these actual changes in the conflict, the Ogoni strategically reframed the conflict, making it appear more relevant and important to
international audiences. In particular, MOSOP de-emphasized complex, parochial, and seemingly intractable issues related to Ogoni political representation in the Nigerian federation--issues that historically had stood at the center of Ogoni demands--and stressed important but previously secondary issues concerning pollution of the Ogoni environment by Royal Dutch/Shell oil company. For NGOs and journalists outside Nigeria, issues involving the environment and human rights, with their familiar problems and "villains," appeared understandable, relevant, and symbolic of larger issues, increasing the likelihood of their giving support to the Ogoni. These environmental issues, rather than the issues of minority rights also stressed by MOSOP, were the ones given primary attention and promotion by transnational NGOs, particularly transnational environmental NGOs, and the world media.

Third, MOSOP satisfied transnational actors' demands for evidence of Shell's environmental impacts and of MOSOP's representativeness of the Ogoni population. Transnational NGOs demanded such evidence because providing support to an unknown political insurgency claiming to represent an obscure ethnic group from a faraway country put NGO reputations at risk. Of particular importance, MOSOP successfully mobilized a large proportion of the Ogoni public--and had videotapes to prove it--demonstrating strong grassroots support to potential international gatekeepers initially reluctant to support the organization. The Ogoni also avoided substantial, overt factionalism during the period MOSOP established its core transnational support network, giving transnational NGOs comfort that they were supporting the "legitimate" representative of the Ogoni people.

Fourth, MOSOP and its initial international allies successfully generated a global bandwagon, providing incentives for latecomer NGOs, journalists, and politicians to join the informal support network at relatively low cost. The NGOs and media which first took up the Ogoni cause magnified MOSOP's stress on issues appealing to global audiences. Shell's "devastation" of the Ogoni environment and the Nigerian state's violation of individual human rights came to appear the central issues. Framed in this way, and with continuing media attention on the Ogoni because of the state's detention and then threatened execution of their leader, a highly
educated and internationally-connected English-speaking author, television producer, and human rights advocate, the Ogoni case became a magnet for the support of environmental, indigenous rights, and human rights NGOs in the developed world.

Design of the Chapter

To make this argument, I provide two complementary comparative analyses. In Part I, I make historical comparisons within the Ogoni case aimed at explaining the reasons for Ogoni success in 1993 but not earlier. Through this comparison, I isolate several factors contributing to successful Ogoni transnationalization. In Part II, I make comparisons across "space" between the Ogoni and a similarly-situated ethnic group whose efforts at transnationalization have been far less successful, the Bougainvilleans of Papua-New Guinea. In this inter-case comparison, I pay particular attention to the role played by factors identified in Part I. Through this double comparison, I isolate the primary causes of transnational success by the Ogoni (and failure by the Bougainvilleans). In both Parts of the Chapter, I support my analysis with behavioral and testimonial evidence, the latter gathered from documentary sources and post-hoc interviews with key actors.2

Each of these Parts serves an important function in the overall argument. Part I, in addition to providing essential historical context for the Chapter, sharply etches changes in Ogoni demands, strategies, and tactics over time and in relation to shifting political opportunities domestically and internationally. Part II, by counterposing the Ogoni to another contemporary ethnic insurgency, holds a number of key variables largely constant, permitting close scrutiny of key differences between the movements. Overall, therefore, the Chapter seeks both to explain the Ogoni case and to develop the theory proposed in Chapter I. In the process, I illuminate more typical failure cases represented by Bougainville.

---

2 Because of the sensitive nature of the two conflicts, I have assigned "Informant Numbers" to the individuals with whom I conducted personal or telephone interviews, and I refer to all interviewees by these numbers. Appendix Two provides brief, general descriptions of the identity and affiliation of each informant.
Several matters require brief discussion before proceeding to the argument. For analytic purposes, I treat the Ogoni as a coherent ethnic group, but the Ogoni, like all ethnic groups in Nigeria and elsewhere, have been constantly in the making.\(^3\) Since 1914, Ogoni conflicts with outside authorities have occurred simultaneously with "internal" Ogoni conflicts over ethnic identity, ethnic boundaries, and political authority. Who is an Ogoni, and who is not, remain matters of controversy within the Niger Delta and in the Nigerian diaspora to this day. Ogoni leader Ken Saro-Wiwa acknowledged as much throughout his life; thus, in a political tract originally published in 1968 and reprinted in 1993 he extended "apologies . . . to the large number of Khana, Gokana and Eleme people who will object to the name 'Ogoni' on the grounds that it is alien."\(^4\) Saro-Wiwa's critical role in the Ogoni movement is finally worthy of note. Appointed spokesman of MOSOP at its formation, Saro-Wiwa became MOSOP's president after factional fighting in Summer 1993. Throughout, he was MOSOP's primary contact with transnational actors, and he left substantial written materials concerning these activities. His activities and statements are therefore prominent in this chapter.

Much of the chapter discusses relationships between MOSOP and various nongovernmental organizations ("NGOs") in the developed world. In these discussions, I sometimes use the term NGO in general terms. This is largely a matter of grammatical convenience; while it is possible to speak of NGOs in the abstract when developing theory, use of the term is misleading in explaining the dynamics of a particular case. Each relationship between MOSOP and a particular NGO developed in a different, though broadly similar way. To take

\(^3\) I follow Max Weber's definition of ethnic group, a group united by a "subjective belief" in common descent based on such characteristics as common race, language, custom or national origin "whether or not an objective blood relationship exists." As Weber stresses, "it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity." Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Gunther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 389. For recent endorsement of this definition, see Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 53.

cognizance of this fact, I provide substantial analyses concerning MOSOP's relationship with several key NGOs, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Amnesty International, Survival International, and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. While I can make no claim that these organizations are "representative" of MOSOP's relationship with other groups, I focus on them because they were the earliest and in most cases the most important NGOs in the Ogonis' transnational support network.

In the chapter, I use the term "state" or "Nigerian state" to refer both to the government of Nigeria and to Rivers State, the Nigerian state encompassing the Ogoni homeland. This homeland, often called Ogoniland by Ogoni leaders, is divided into three local government areas in which most Ogoni live. Nigeria is a "federal republic," and since gaining independence in 1960, the number of states and local government units within the federation has steadily grown in response to ethnic demands. While there are policy differences between governmental levels, these are largely irrelevant for purposes of my argument; in any event federal control over state governments is strong.

Estimates of Nigeria's population vary between approximately 80 and 100 million, with the 1991 census finding a population of approximately 88.5 million. Nigerian politics has long been dominated by elites from the three largest ethnic groups, the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the West, and the Ibo in the East. These three groups comprise about 2/3 of the population with several hundred minority groups making up the remainder. The Ogoni population is unclear, but the group is a tiny minority in the country as whole and in the Ibo-dominated eastern region; the Ogoni are also a minority in Ijaw-dominated Rivers State whose estimated 1991 population was approximately 3.9 million. The last census to list ethnic figures (1963) found 231,513 Ogoni

---

5 Osaghae, "Oil Politics," 327.


7 Ibid.
divided into three subgroups; MOSOP claims the Ogoni population is now approximately 500,000.8

Royal Dutch/Shell ("Shell") is the final player in the conflict. A Shell subsidiary, Shell Petroleum Development Corporation ("SPDC"), produces the bulk of oil from Ogoniland in a joint venture with Chevron, Elf and the Nigerian state oil company, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).9 Prior to their shutdown in 1993, SPDC's Ogoni operations included 5 major oil fields which produced about 30,000 barrels of oil per day, accounting for about 1.5% of Nigeria's oil production. In Nigeria as a whole, SPDC produces about 40% of total crude oil output (800,000 barrels per day). Oil is critical to the Nigerian economy, contributing about 90% of Nigeria's annual foreign exchange earning and 80% of its revenue. For Shell, Nigerian oil accounts for about 14% of global production.10

---


9 Shares in the joint venture were divided as follows as of late 1995: NNPC 55%; Shell 30%; Elf 10%; and Agip 5%. Shell International Petroleum Company, Group Public Affairs, "Shell in Nigeria," Information sheet, Dec. 1995, 1, in author's files.

and success in Ogoni transnationalization efforts. Nonetheless, there are clear differences in Ogoni strategy and success rate over time, with changes apparent by the summer of 1992 and with these changes beginning to have major impacts on transnational support levels by the beginning of 1993. Before making this historical comparison, I will place these relatively brief periods in historical context by giving an overview of key events and persistent issues in the Ogonis' long standing conflict with the central authorities in Nigeria.

One caveat before proceeding: This Part of the Chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive account of Ogoni-state conflict. Like the dissertation's other empirical sections, this Part follows a guiding theoretical purpose, explaining the transnationalization process in a particular case. In pursuit of this theoretical goal, my account necessarily privileges MOSOP's transnational activities and slights domestic events. To help remedy this imbalance, I introduce the sections covering MOSOP's attempted transnationalization with brief overviews of relevant events in domestic Nigerian politics; throughout, I stress the dialectic of MOSOP's domestic and transnational activities in the conflict's development.

1920-1989: The Roots of Conflict

The Ogoni, like many of Nigeria's other minorities, have sought improvement in their political status since formation of British Nigeria in 1914. A complete chronicle of these disputes is unnecessary for my argument, but brief discussion of Ogoni demands prior to 1989 provides relevant historical context. Since 1914, the primary Ogoni goal has been increased control over political and economic affairs in Ogoniland and increased input into and benefits from regional and national governments. Ogoni leaders have sought to achieve these goals through a variety of means, but one recurrent theme has been the attempt to group all Ogoni under a political authority which would maximize the group's weight in Nigerian affairs. Thus, over the years, the group's leaders have demanded consolidation of all Ogoni within a single local administrative district (1946); creation of a state for the non-Ibo groups in independent Nigeria's Ibo-dominated Eastern Region (1958, 1966); creation of a Port Harcourt state for the non-Ijaw minority groups consolidated into a new Rivers State after the Biafran war (1974); and creation of an autonomous
Ogoni state to be carved out of Rivers State (1990). Moreover, the Ogoni have sought (and frequently won) high state and federal appointments for members of their group and each of its main subgroups. Whatever its specific form, however, the content of the Ogonis' paramount goal has remained largely constant: enhanced Ogoni control over Ogoni affairs and increased Ogoni input into overall Nigerian politics.

Ogoni leaders have seen achievement of this paramount goal as a means to several secondary objectives: increased provision of scholarships and civil service positions for Ogonis; increased levels of central government spending for development projects in Ogoniland; and, since the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in 1958, increased allocation of oil revenues. A major source of discontent in many Niger Delta communities has been a lack of revenues to compensate for the impacts of oil production. Section 40(3) of Nigeria's 1979 Constitution gives the federal government control over mineral resources, and through 1992 Nigerian law allocated 55% of oil revenues to the federal authorities, 32.5% to state governments, 10% to local governmental authorities, 1% to an environmental amelioration fund, and 1.5% to a fund for development assistance directly to local communities. The Ogoni and other Niger Delta minorities have complained that the federal government (and the Ijaw-dominated Rivers State government) have returned few benefits to non-Ijaw communities affected by oil production—despite the fact that oil from the region is the critical basis for the Nigerian economy. Instead, minorities claim, the money deriving from "their" oil has gone to benefit ethnic groups and politicians from the North or from the state capital. There have also been complaints that local authorities who have received oil


13 Ibid., 329-32; Saro-Wiwa, Ogoni Nation Today and Tomorrow; Saro-Wiwa, First Letter to Ogoni Youth.

revenues have failed to use them to benefit the local populace.\textsuperscript{15} In 1992, the federal government responded by increasing the community share of oil revenues to 3\% and forming the Oil Minerals Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), accountable directly to the President, to administer local development projects funded from these revenues.\textsuperscript{16} Thus far, however, OMPADEC has done little to help local communities.\textsuperscript{17} Moreover, oil company initiatives to directly aid localities affected by oil production, including Shell's $25 million program in the Niger Delta, have had "minimal" impact.\textsuperscript{18} The Ogoni and other minorities have continued to demand greater compensation, arguing that their "oil producing status has not improved their political and material situation."\textsuperscript{19}

Oil is also at the center of another Ogoni demand: clean-up of environmental problems in the Niger Delta. Oil production in the region has led to chronic impacts including destruction of farmland and wildlife from drilling and exploration, water and air pollution from production facilities, and light and noise pollution from constant flaring of natural gas.\textsuperscript{20} In addition, oil well blowouts and fires have had acute local impacts. Since oil production began in the Delta, local communities from many ethnic groups have sought compensation for damage done at specific sites; these communities have also petitioned state and national leaders, demanding higher compensation rates for land takings and pollution, quicker repair of infrastructure damaged by

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 1:82, 2:53-4.
\item Osaghae, "Oil Politics," 333.
\item Moffat and Lindén, "Perception and Reality," 534-5.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
heavy equipment, and greater employment of indigenes in the industry. Oil production is not the only source of environmental problems in the Delta; in fact, according to the authors of the World Bank study, oil pollution's impact on human health is "not significant" and is only a "moderate priority when compared with the full spectrum of environmental problems in the Niger Delta." Many of these environmental problems are caused by factors such as rapid population growth and urbanization, deforestation, and upstream dams. But given the great value of the oil produced from Ogoniland, the extent and visibility of oil production's impacts, the small proportion of total revenues returned to local communities, and the lack of oil company accountability, oil is perceived as the primary source of environmental problems by most communities in the Delta.

While oil production and its impacts have caused, contributed to, or become entwined with many pressing problems for the Ogoni, decades-old demands for increased political power have remained the fundamental Ogoni goal since 1958 and even since MOSOP's formation in 1990. Throughout the twentieth century, Ogoni leaders have seen political power as the sine qua non for all other goals. As Saro-Wiwa stated in December 1990, "The only thing that will save the Ogoni people is the achievement of political autonomy accompanied by, among others, the right to use a fair proportion of Ogoni resources for the development of Ogoni--its education, health, agriculture and culture." Or, as Saro-Wiwa put it in 1993, "you cannot safeguard the environment if you do not have political power."

Prior to 1990, Ogoni leaders had for the most part used institutionalized channels to achieve both their overriding political ends and their subsidiary social goals. Within Ogoniland, politicians

---


23 Ibid., 536-7.


and other elites formed political organizations for formulation of Ogoni demands and strategies; outside Ogoniland, these elites worked through regional or national parties dominated by other ethnic groups and through state, regional, or national government bureaucracies. At the local level, there had been periodic demands against the oil companies, but these demands, while sometimes violent, had been isolated and limited. Prior to 1990, no Ogoni organization had sought its political goals through sustained, mass mobilization outside conventional political institutions; nor, prior to 1990, had any organization sought Ogoni political goals by marshaling support outside Nigeria.26


Introduction

Beginning in August 1990, Ogoni political activity entered a new stage with issuance of the Ogoni Bill of Rights and formation of MOSOP. These developments occurred in the midst of a broader opening in Nigerian politics preceding General Ibrahim Babangida's promised "democratic transition" in 1992. This opening, marked by a slow, often faltering democratization process and by the severe impacts of Nigeria's Structural Adjustment Program, led to "unprecedented militancy" in Nigerian civil society -- student unrest, labor actions, human rights and democracy protests, and inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict.27 With this unsettled national situation as backdrop, minority groups throughout Nigeria began to mobilize for the possibility of fundamental shifts in their relationship with the center. This mobilization occurred among minority groups which already had "their own" states and among intra-state minority groups seeking creation of

26 In 1957, however, Ogoni leaders along with leaders of other Delta minorities, made extensive presentations to the Willink Commission seeking a new state free of Ibo control. The Commission, appointed by the British to investigate and address the grievances of Nigeria's minority groups prior to independence, rejected all demands for new states. Colonial Office, Willink Commission Report.

new states. The Ogoni mobilization was thus one of many broadly similar ethnic movements sparked by the opportunities and dangers presented by Babangida's promised transition to a new political system. Ogoni leaders believed that the transition period presented the opportunity to reconfigure Nigeria as a "multi-ethnic state [in which] the federating ethnic groups . . . decide what the centre should look like, and not vice versa." Conversely, if the transition resulted in democratic reform, without "national" reform, existing ethnic inequalities would be solidified and the possibility of creating a "true federation" in which "all ethnic groups, irrespective of size, are treated equally," would be lost.

This section of the Chapter describes major aspects of the Ogoni movement from August 1990 to August 1991, highlighting both differences from and continuities with the past. While MOSOP did not pursue a transnational strategy until one year after issuance of the Ogoni Bill of Rights, examining the immediately preceding period provides essential context for the dissertation's overall argument because Ogoni leaders established MOSOP's fundamental organizational and ideological bases then. In addition, in demonstrating that MOSOP's initial demands remained broadly similar to those of the past, this section places in context subsequent strategic moves prompted by the Ogoni search for transnational attention and support.

The Ogoni Bill of Rights

Ogoni leaders proclaimed the Ogoni Bill of Rights on August 26, 1990. Addressed to the "Governments and people of Nigeria," the Bill of Rights demands "political autonomy' within Nigeria. Four arguments support this demand: a historical argument that the Ogoni had never been "conquered or colonized" and had continuously protested their inclusion in non-ethnic administrative units within colonial and independent Nigeria; a redistributive argument that the


30 Ibid.
Ogoni had failed to obtain "full returns" for their large, oil-based contribution to Nigerian revenues; a self-defense argument that the Nigerian state had failed to protect the Ogoni from the "devastat[ing]" impacts of the oil industry; and a cultural argument that Nigerian policies threatened the disappearance of Ogoni language and culture and the "possible extinction" of the Ogoni people.\(^{31}\)

Based on these claims, the *Bill of Rights* makes its primary demand, political autonomy to "participate in the affairs of the republic as a distinct and separate unit." This autonomy would include:

(a) political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people;
(b) the right to the control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development;
(c) adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions;
(d) the use and development of Ogoni languages in Ogoni territory;
(e) the full development of Ogoni culture;
(f) the right to religious freedom;
(g) the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.\(^{32}\)

While linked to historical Ogoni demands, the *Bill of Rights* had potentially explosive implications for Nigerian federalism—and Ogoni leaders recognized these. Ethnic self determination even within Nigeria would require redrawing of political boundaries and consequent retrenchment of some political elites. Similarly, increased local control over resources would alter existing power dynamics—to favor the Ogoni and other Niger Delta minorities who sit atop most of Nigeria's oil fields.

---


\(^{32}\) Ibid. The *Bill of Rights* states that it is "adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people"; it is signed by representatives of five of the six Ogoni "kingdoms." Representatives of the sixth kingdom, Eleme, refused to sign and were omitted pending identification of a leadership "truly committed to the progress of the area." Saro-Wiwa, *Month and a Day*, 66.
Formation of MOSOP

In fall 1990, the Bill's signatories took another key action, forming MOSOP. MOSOP began not as an individual membership organization but as an organization representing the Ogoni kingdoms. Acting as an organization of organizations, the MOSOP umbrella also encompassed a variety of important local and regional Ogoni organizations, from political to cultural groups. In addition to its unique structure, MOSOP differed in a number of ways from the series of political organizations founded by the Ogoni since the early 1920s. First, unlike the earlier organizations, MOSOP was not a political party; it sought its goals by exerting pressure on the state primarily through activity outside institutional political channels. Throughout, however, MOSOP made substantial efforts to insure that its mass mobilization would be non-violent. Second, MOSOP's leadership comprised both long-time Ogoni politicians and an emergent group of leaders many of whom were professionals but not politicians. Saro-Wiwa, leader of the emergent group and an outspoken social and political critic known throughout Nigeria, spanned the two Ogoni camps. He had run for office in the past and held high appointive posts as early as the Biafran War, when he served on the federal side as administrator of the important Niger Delta oil port of Bonny, and as late as 1987-88, when he served as Executive Director of the federal government's Directorate of Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice, and Economic Recovery (MAMSER). As institutional politics reopened in 1992-93 and as MOSOP faced increasing state repression, the "traditional" leaders grew to oppose Saro-Wiwa's preferred tactic of mass mobilization, with conflicts between the "traditional" and emergent leaders becoming acute in June 1993.

33 Ibid., 78.


35 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 50, 59.
MOSOP Activities Through August 1991

In the year following proclamation of the Bill of Rights and formation of MOSOP, further Ogoni political activities were quite limited. The Bill of Rights, written in English, required explanation to the Ogoni public in vernacular tongues, and some of the Bill's signatories mounted a short-lived public education campaign to do this. Ogoni leaders such as Ken Saro-Wiwa also sought to keep the issues in the forefront of local and national concern through speeches and newspaper articles. To alert the state directly, the Ogoni sent a copy of the Bill of Rights to President Babangida's Armed Forces Ruling Council and published it as an "advertorial" in a national newspaper.36

Despite these actions, MOSOP leaders took few steps to build upon their potential mass base in 1990 and 1991. In the view of Saro-Wiwa and other key activists, much of the MOSOP leadership had "gone to sleep."37 Saro-Wiwa himself, while continuing to write about the Ogoni and other Nigerian minorities in Nigerian newspapers, spent much of 1991 publishing his novels or earlier political essays largely unrelated to the Ogoni cause.38

Two events involving Saro-Wiwa alone also had implications for the Ogoni movement. In 1990, he traveled to the Soviet Union under the auspices of the U.S.S.R.'s African Institute, enabling him to see "the beginnings of the death of a multi-ethnic state where the ethnic groups had been held together by force and violence."39 He pointedly wrote about this visit in his weekly column "Similia" in the Nigerian national newspaper The Sunday Times, and the ethnic break-up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia influenced his thinking significantly in 1991.40 From


37 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 99; Informant 12.


39 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 79.

November 11-December 9, 1990, he also traveled to the United States under the U.S. Information Agency's Visiting Fellows program. Saro-Wiwa used this trip to renew contacts with various American friends and with the small Ogoni diaspora in North America; he also met with American academics, publishers, and staff at environmental and human rights NGOs. Additionally, in Houston, he sought to meet with representatives of Exxon, Shell and Texaco to inquire about "compliance by the oil industry with environmental regulations." During this visit, Saro-Wiwa was particularly impressed by the apparent political effectiveness of American environmental organizations. One visit to a group in Colorado demonstrated to him "what could be done by an environment group to press demands on government and companies." Saro-Wiwa returned to Nigeria "convince[d] ... that the environment would have to be a strong plank on which to base the burgeoning" Ogoni movement. The context of this statement, in the early days of MOSOP's formation, indicates that Saro-Wiwa viewed the mobilizational potential of environmental issues primarily in domestic terms; thus, he reproaches himself for having "neglected ... to organize the people to protect their environment." By the summer of 1992, however, the usefulness of environmental issues to generate international support had become clear to Saro-Wiwa as well.

Conclusion

For purposes of the argument in this dissertation, two features of MOSOP's early demands and activities bear particular emphasis: First, in keeping with Ogoni political history in Nigeria, the centerpiece of the Bill of Rights is a political demand, for self-determination within Nigeria; issues

---

October 1990 with an Appeal to the International Community, by MOSOP (Port Harcourt: Saros International, 1992), 2-5. A copy of the foreword is included in Appendix Three.


42 Ibid., 16. I have been unable to locate information about whether such meetings actually occurred.

43 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 79. The USIA's itinerary states that Saro-Wiwa is "apt to" meet with the Environmental Defense Fund in Denver, but I have been unable to confirm this meeting. "National Itinerary," 13.

44 Ibid., Month and a Day, 80.

45 Ibid.
such as oil revenue allocations and environmental problems take an important though secondary position, one in which the Nigerian government's responsibility for these problems is emphasized. Thus, paragraph 16 of the Bill of Rights states, "Neglectful environmental pollution laws and substandard inspection techniques of the Federal authorities have led to the complete degradation of the Ogoni environment, turning our homeland into an ecological disaster."\(^{46}\) Second, through summer 1991, the Bill of Rights and MOSOP's early activities were directed primarily to a domestic, not an international audience. While Ogoni leaders were keenly aware of developments internationally and were influenced by major political events elsewhere, they had yet to formulate and implement a transnational strategy. Accordingly, the single international news story which discusses Ogoni demands in this period presents the group as one of many Niger Delta minorities unhappy over the impacts of oil production and failure to benefit from Nigeria's oil wealth. The story focuses on the Omadino and Itsekiri ethnic groups and mentions but gives no special prominence to the Ogoni autonomy demand. Nothing in the story provides a clue that the Ogoni, rather than the other groups, would become an international cause célèbre within two years.\(^{47}\)


Introduction

One year after proclamation of the Bill of Rights, MOSOP announced it would seek international support for its demands. Throughout 1991 and until approximately July 1992, this new strategy enjoyed little success: Major transnational NGOs rejected MOSOP appeals for support, the international media carried no stories about the Ogoni, and, as a consequence, the group remained virtually unknown outside Nigeria. Analyzing this period is nonetheless important to the dissertation's argument because its failures contrast sharply with the later period's successes.

In this section of the Chapter, I examine the transnational strategy: its rationale, goals,

\(^{46}\) Ogoni Bill of Rights, para. 16.

implementation, and failure. Methodologically, documenting this period presents difficulties; failure leaves few traces—no media reports and little documentation in the files of NGOs or government bureaucrats. Failure's primary residues are the memories of those who made and those who refused Ogoni appeals—influenced, perhaps rationalized, by subsequent historical developments. With this caveat in mind, however, the importance of the period to the dissertation's argument mandates its thorough analysis.

**The Addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights**

MOSOP formally adopted its new transnational strategy on August 26, 1991, with proclamation of the *Addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights*. Published under the banner "Ogoni Appeal to the International Community," the *Addendum* provides formal authorization for MOSOP to "make representation" to "all international bodies which have a role to play in the preservation of our nationality." Specifically listed among these bodies are the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the European Economic Community. The fact that the *Addendum* was published in a Nigerian, rather than an international or English newspaper, indicates that MOSOP may still have hoped that threats of transnational action would push the state into concessions. By summer 1992, however, MOSOP's attempts to gain international support had became a central part of its overall strategy.

Aside from its direct appeal to international political actors, the *Addendum* makes few arguments or demands different from those in the *Bill of Rights*. The *Addendum's* most important

---


50 MOSOP Constitution, Art. 3(6) states that a primary MOSOP aim is "to project the Ogoni people and their cause to the national and international communities and to this end to encourage co-operation with local, national and international groups and organizations, with similar aims, principles and objectives."
substantive change: specifying that the Ogoni should have the "full right to . . . use at least 50 per cent of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development," rather than the unspecified "fair proportion" of resources sought in the Bill of Rights.\(^{51}\) As in the past, however, MOSOP's emphasis in the Addendum remains state infringement on minority political rights; environmental problems and Shell's role remain important but secondary issues.

Reasons for Adopting a Transnational Strategy

MOSOP's expansion in strategy stemmed from several causes, most importantly the failure of the previous, purely domestic strategy. One year after the Bill of Rights's proclamation, the federal authorities had responded only by acknowledging receipt of the Bill. This non-response, in part a result of MOSOP's lack of sustained pressure, convinced Ogoni leaders that the Nigerian state believed Ogoni interests could be ignored because the group was too small to present a threat to the dominant ethnic groups. In support of this view, Saro-Wiwa frequently cited the "colonialist" words of Philip Asiodu, who he identifies as former Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Mines and Power and as a contemporary Chevron Director and President of the World Wildlife Fund in Nigeria: "Given . . . the small size and population of the oil-producing areas, it is not cynical to observe that even if the resentments of oil producing states continue, they cannot threaten the stability of the country nor affect its continued economic development."\(^{52}\) In addition to state neglect of minority interests, MOSOP leaders believed that the indifference of potentially powerful domestic allies and the weakness of counter-majoritarian political institutions such as the courts and the Constitution made achievement of Ogoni goals impossible without a change in strategy. According to Saro-Wiwa, "The Nigerian elite (bureaucratic, military, industrial and academic) have turned a blind eye and a deaf ear" to the Ogoni plight.\(^{53}\) Even "liberal" opponents of the military regime ignored these issues because "Ethnocentrism blinds even the best

---

51 Addendum to Ogoni Bill of Rights, para. 7.
52 Saro-Wiwa, Genocide in Nigeria, 87.
53 Addendum to Ogoni Bill of Rights, para. 5.
men to injustice, discrimination, even genocide perpetrated against those who are not of their own ethnic group."\(^{54}\) Finally, MOSOP expected no assistance from Nigeria's courts because the 1979 and 1989 Constitutions "do not, in any way, protect minority rights."\(^{55}\)

Another reason for MOSOP's change in strategy in 1991 were new Federal threats to Ogoni interests. In September 1991, the Babangida administration created 9 new states, mostly in regions of the country dominated by the three largest ethnic groups. According to Saro-Wiwa, the creation of these new states meant that Ogoni resources would be further siphoned off and divided among even more states dominated by Nigeria's major ethnic groups. This large-scale, pan-Nigerian restructuring showed the Babangida regime at it "most insensitive and most bandit-like"; Saro-Wiwa described it as the "nail in the Ogoni coffin," and he writes that it spurred him to renewed activity focused for the first time on the international as well as the domestic arena.\(^{56}\)

While MOSOP leaders signed the Addendum shortly before Babangida's state-creation exercise, this affront to the Ogoni cause clearly impelled the Ogoni to devote significant resources to the new strategy.

While the foregoing factors explain a change in MOSOP strategy, they do not explain the reasons MOSOP chose a transnational strategy, rather than a change in domestic strategy. There were at least two new domestic strategies MOSOP might have pursued: violent confrontation with the state; and alliance with other minority groups having similar interests. For a tiny, land-locked minority like the Ogoni, anti-state-violence is an extreme and risky strategy, one which the MOSOP leadership sought to avoid throughout. Saro-Wiwa's vehement opposition to Ibo secessionism in the Biafran war undoubtedly colored this choice as well.\(^{57}\)

---

\(^{54}\) Saro-Wiwa, Genocide in Nigeria, 101.

\(^{55}\) Addendum to Ogoni Bill of Rights, para. 6.

\(^{56}\) Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 99; Saro-Wiwa, Genocide in Nigeria, 84.

As for the minority-coalition strategy, beginning in early 1992, the Ogoni made some approaches to similarly-situated minorities in the Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria. Saro-Wiwa founded the Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Nigeria (EMIRON) in March 1992, and appointed a journalist from another Nigerian minority group as the organization's secretary. In addition, Saro-Wiwa sought to broaden his domestic support further by simultaneously forming an environmental organization, the Nigerian Society for the Protection of the Environment (NISOPEN). As state pressure on the Ogoni grew, however, EMIRON, NISOPEN and their successor the Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa (EMIROAF) became little more than additional vehicles for the Ogoni cause. MOSOP itself never made a sustained effort to form a coalition of minorities, even Niger Delta minorities, nor did it choose to ally with pre-existing coalitions of Delta minorities.

Minority coalitions had operated in southern Nigeria for decades and such groups had become increasingly active as Nigeria's democratic "transition" apparently neared. In addition, some of these minority groups also began to seek international attention and support for their goals independently of the Ogoni. Thus, the Rivers Chiefs and Peoples Conference, based in Port Harcourt sent a delegation to the Earth Summit in 1992, and the large Ijaw community in southern Nigerian has also sought to attract international support. After formation of MOSOP, Ogoni leaders distanced themselves from these organizations because the latter's primary goals, formation of new multi-ethnic minority states, would not meet MOSOP's demand for Ogoni autonomy; as Saro-Wiwa wrote in response to the Rivers Forum's proposal for new states in Rivers State, "The Ogoni nation has . . . opted for autonomy. The Ogoni people do not want to be grouped with any

---

58 Ihejieto, "Minority Group Doubts Transition Programme."


other ethnic group for administrative purposes." After it began to win international allies, MOSOP may also have grown unwilling to share, and thereby dilute, the advantages it had won for its own cause.

With both existing and alternative domestic strategies having serious disadvantages, the transnational strategy looked increasingly advantageous, especially given the context of international events in the early 1990s. In contemporaneous writings, Saro-Wiwa cited several reasons he believed Ogoni demands would begin to receive increased international support: the end of the Cold War, increasing international concern for the global environment, and "the historical forces at work in the world [which] dictate that all multi-ethnic states become confederations of independent ethnic groups [like the] Soviet Union and Yugoslavia." MOSOP saw these international developments both as evidence of the correctness of its domestic demands and as opportunities for garnering transnational support. Thus, in his foreword to the *Ogoni Bill of Rights*, Saro-Wiwa attacked Nigeria's "indigenous colonialism" and called for a "new order . . . in which each ethnic group will have full responsibility for its own affairs . . . ." In striking language, he continued:

This is the path which has been chosen by the European tribes in the European community, and by the Russians and their neighbors in the new Commonwealth which they are now fashioning. The Yugoslav tribes are being forced into similar ways. The lesson is that high fences make good neighbors. The Ogoni are therefore in the mainstream of international thought.63

**Goals of the Transnational Strategy**

MOSOP's dominant goal in the early stages of its transnational strategy was to prompt international actors to exert pressure on the Nigerian state, forcing it to grant increased Ogoni

---

61 Ken Saro-Wiwa, "The Ogoni Nation's Case."


autonomy. MOSOP leaders were not explicit about the expected mechanism through which international pressure might lead to positive responses from the Nigerian state, instead modeling their strategy on general knowledge of the apparent causes and consequences of analogous international actions, e.g., sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Clearly, however, the mechanism involves two steps: cajoling transnational actors and the international community into action; and forcing the Nigerian state to capitulate to international demands. With regard to the first step, Saro-Wiwa believed the international community would only act if it were "sufficiently shocked" by knowledge of the Ogoni situation. As an historical example of such a shock, Saro-Wiwa cited André Gide’s description of the "gross abuse of human rights being perpetrated" in the Belgian Congo, prompting international action to end the abuse. With regard to the second step, Saro-Wiwa clearly believed that strong, united, and sustained international action, in particular an embargo of Nigerian oil, would force the state to take account of Ogoni interests. By late 1992, he also came to believe in an alternative mechanism, placing international pressure on Shell, thereby forcing it to use its presumably close ties to the Nigerian state to force change.

**Initial Rejections By Transnational NGOs**

MOSOP’s attempts to gain transnational support began shortly before the Addendum’s proclamation, but until approximately July 1992, MOSOP’s strategy of contacting well-known, European NGOs in the environmental, human rights, and indigenous rights sectors enjoyed little success: Major transnational NGOs rejected MOSOP’s appeals for support, and the international media ignored the Ogoni. In 1991, for instance, Saro-Wiwa, on the advice of his friend the

---

64 *Addendum to Ogoni Bill of Rights*, para. 7. Later, MOSOP supplemented this central goal with others: e.g., pressuring Shell to change its operations; and sending experts to clean up the Ogoni environment. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 8.

65 See Saro-Wiwa, foreword to *Ogoni Bill of Rights*, stating that "Nigeria in 1992 is no different from Apartheid South Africa."


67 Ibid.
novelist William Boyd contacted the London offices of Amnesty International and Greenpeace. 

Saro-Wiwa describes these contacts as follows:

"I telephoned Greenpeace. 'We don't work in Africa,' was the chilling reply I got. And when I called up Amnesty, I was asked, 'Is anyone dead? Is anyone in gaol?' And when I replied in the negative, I was told nothing could be done."

When Saro-Wiwa visited Europe in early 1992, he met similar rebuffs from Friends of the Earth (FOE), Survival International, and other NGOs. For a variety of reasons, the NGOs contacted by Saro-Wiwa refused to direct significant resources to the Ogoni cause; at most, they suggested other potentially-interested NGOs to contact or ways for the Ogoni to strengthen their appeals for support.

Reasons for Failure

Saro-Wiwa's interpretation of the reason for these rebuffs--the "unconventional" nature of the Ogoni problem--partially explains his failures at this time. For Saro-Wiwa, unconventionality meant that the Ogoni problem, with its combination of political, economic, cultural, and environmental issues, did not fit within the conflict issues and forms familiar to transnational NGOs and world audiences. Interviews with NGO staff members contacted by Saro-Wiwa at this time generally confirm this explanation as one reason for their early rejections of MOSOP's appeals for support. According to Informant 14, a consultant on Greenpeace's 1994 report on the Ogoni conflict: "Greenpeace said this seems like a human rights issue; Human Rights Watch said this seems like an environmental issue."

Neither environmental nor human rights groups saw the Ogoni issue as falling within their areas of interest or expertise.

---


69 Saro-Wiwa, *Month and a Day*, 93.


72 Informant 14, telephone interview by author, June 26, 1996. Note that I have confirmed that MOSOP leaders contacted Amnesty International in 1991; I have not confirmed such contacts with Human Rights Watch/Africa in 1991.
In the case of Greenpeace International (Greenpeace), this was a close decision, one which sparked disagreement at the time and which resulted in long-term conflict between Greenpeace managers and staff. At the Greenpeace staff level, rejection of the Ogoni caused dissent because, in some ways, the Ogoni case closely matched some of Greenpeace's major interests and concerns in 1991. At the time, one of Greenpeace's four main campaigns focused on the environmental impact of oil exploration and consumption, with a particular focus on the "Seven Sisters." Those in the "Oil Campaign" saw the Ogoni case as important both in its own right and because of its potential as a symbol of petroleum's pernicious impacts, oil companies' environmental insensitivity and double standards in the developing world, and the companies' "greenwashing" of the developed world.\(^{73}\)

Despite staff-level support for the Ogoni cause, however, Saro-Wiwa's initial appeals to Greenpeace were formally turned down. The reason stated to Saro-Wiwa was Greenpeace's reluctance to become enmeshed in a region about which Greenpeace had little knowledge; West Africa had never previously been a major focus of Greenpeace activities, and at the time, Greenpeace had little knowledge about environmental conditions in the Niger Delta. In addition, however, the unfamiliar and controversial "political" aspects of the Ogoni autonomy claim worried Greenpeace management, as did their fear of opening Greenpeace to charges of "play[ing] the colonial role" in a developing nation without a local Greenpeace affiliate. Finally, Greenpeace managers feared that involvement with the Ogoni would take scarce resources away from more familiar and less complex issues on Greenpeace's "home turf," the developed world. In this view, support for the Ogoni would require a major Greenpeace commitment, since the possibility for rapid change, even on issues involving oil pollution, appeared slim. Such a commitment, in addition to being a resource drain, would require broad and long term public education campaigns quite unlike Greenpeace's more typical tactics, brief, visual "events" designed to focus public

\(^{73}\) Informant 14, June 26, 1996; Informant 6, telephone interview by author, The Hague, July 16, 1996.
attention on a discrete problem. For these reasons, Greenpeace rejected Saro-Wiwa in 1991. Nonetheless, some Greenpeace staff persons and consultants involved with the Oil Campaign continued to work on the Ogoni issue "on their own time" and to lobby management to commit more resources.

While Amnesty International (Amnesty) experienced no comparable internal dissent, its reasons for rejection paralleled those of Greenpeace. Amnesty's mandate is the prevention of a limited set of well-defined human rights abuses. As of MOSOP's initial contacts with Amnesty in 1991, such abuses were not occurring in Ogoniland, though they had occurred elsewhere in the Delta. MOSOP leaders sought to convince Amnesty that the Ogoni were victims of abuse and genocide, but their definitions of the terms were shifting and loose, focusing primarily on cultural "extinction" of the Ogoni people resulting from lack of political power and on the human health impacts of chronic environmental problems. These broad interpretations of the terms "genocide" and "human rights abuse" fell outside Amnesty's far stricter definitions.

Lack of fit between Ogoni and NGO goals also helps explain Survival International's initial rejection of Saro-Wiwa's appeals. Informant 10, an employee of Survival, stated that the organization's lack of "background or expertise" in West Africa played a role in her decision not to provide support for the Ogoni in 1992. In addition, in the case of Survival, the apparent Ogoni advantage of having an urbane and knowledgeable leader backfired. Ken Saro-Wiwa's v. to Survival's London office convinced Informant 10 that the Ogoni did not fit the profile of


75 Informant 14, June 26, 1996; Informant 1.


77 See also U.S. Department of State, Nigeria Human Rights Practices, 1993, Sect. 5 (Dec. 27, 1993); available from NEXIS, News library, Allnews file: MOSOP's "accusations that the Government is engaged in a genocidal campaign against the Ogoni are unfounded."

78 Informant 10, telephone interview by author, June 18, 1996; Informant 10, July 22, 1996.
indigenous groups for which Survival normally provides support, i.e., "smaller, more remote groups" with "minimal savoir faire." Saro-Wiwa's sophistication made the Ogoni appear too advanced and insufficiently needy for Survival's support.

In addition to a lack of substantive fit between MOSOP's demands and NGO concerns, a different set of factors also discouraged NGO commitment to the Ogoni cause. These factors, deriving from the NGOs' organizational needs, centered on MOSOP's failure to prove its case, both its environmental and political claims and its representativeness of the Ogoni public. Every year, transnational advocacy and support NGOs such as Greenpeace, FOE, and Survival International receive many requests for assistance similar to that made by the Ogoni. While the NGOs' standards of proof are not rigid or uniform, they are fairly high. As membership organizations with public profiles, these NGOs must protect their reputations and maintain their base of public support. NGO principals must therefore be cautious about associating their organizations with unknown allies or "clients" absent thorough investigation or assurances from reputable and objective sources. Moreover, to the extent that environmental issues are entwined with potentially incendiary political and ethnic issues in distant and poorly known countries, the risks of "adopting" a group from the country increase.

Critical to an NGO's decision about whether to take action on behalf of a group seeking aid is independent verification of the group's representativeness and claims. Yet when MOSOP contacted the NGOs in 1991-92, it presented little evidence to allay these concerns. Since the Ogoni were almost totally unknown outside Nigeria, no reliable and unbiased authorities could vouch for MOSOP. Several NGOs sought such

79 Informant 10, June 18, 1996.


81 Informant 2; Informant 9, personal interview by author, Amsterdam, tape recording, July 14, 1996.

82 Informant 2; Informant 13.

83 Informant 2.
vouching; Friends of the Earth-Netherlands went so far as to contact its Ghana affiliate which knew nothing of the Ogoni.84

Several interviewees at the NGOs characterized MOSOP and Saro-Wiwa as naïve about the proof an NGO would demand before committing substantial resources to an unknown organization claiming to represent an obscure ethnic insurgency in a faraway country. While MOSOP and Saro-Wiwa were clearly sophisticated about identifying powerful and potentially-interested NGOs and while MOSOP's highly educated leadership eventually recognized and corrected their initial missteps, the MOSOP leadership initially demonstrated its unfamiliarity with NGOs' organizational needs in several ways. According to Informant 2, a staff person at Friends of the Earth-Netherlands and a central figure in MOSOP's eventual international support network, Saro-Wiwa initially believed that merely "telling stories" about the Ogoni through his own eyes would be sufficient to win transnational allies; on their first meeting in Fall 1992, he presented no concrete evidence in the form of newspaper articles, statistical surveys, academic analyses, photographs, or videotapes to substantiate his claims.85 Without such evidence or a well-known and reliable source vouching for the Ogoni, Saro-Wiwa's entreaties failed to persuade Informant 2 to lend FOE's name, reputation, and support to the Ogoni cause. Instead, FOE like the other NGOs contacted by MOSOP at this time did little more than suggest other organizations to approach or, in Informant 2's case, suggest specific forms of documentation needed to provide real support for Ogoni claims.86

Saro-Wiwa's initial NGO contacts interpreted this naivete as the result of a "cultural" difference concerning adequacy of proof. When NGO staff directly questioned Saro-Wiwa about apparent exaggerations in his stories of the Ogoni plight, his replies broadly confirmed this

84 Informant 2.

85 Informant 2; other interviewees described similar experiences on their first meetings with Ogoni leaders in 1991 and 1992. Informant 10.

86 Informant 2. According to Informant 2, MOSOP never provided such documentation in complete form. FOE nonetheless became an important ally when the situation in Ogoniland worsened in 1993, basing its decision to provide support in part on the assurances of secondary sources and other NGOs.
"cultural" interpretation. To gain attention in Nigeria, he stated, required exaggeration.\textsuperscript{87} For the transnational NGOs on the other hand, accurate information is critical to maintaining public credibility. Whatever its provenance, the apparent exaggeration and histrionics of MOSOP's initial contacts with transnational NGOs raised red flags among staff-persons in many European NGOs.\textsuperscript{88}

Underlying the NGOs' rejections at this time were the realities of power and powerlessness in the relationship between transnational NGOs and insurgent groups from the developing world. The NGOs are potential patrons with superior resources and knowledge of the international scene; for the most part, the many insurgent groups seeking international support have little to offer the NGOs. Given this power dynamic, the NGOs can dictate the "terms of trade" to insurgent groups. Absent special circumstances, insurgents have little leverage over NGOs, are therefore forced to accept NGO terms, and even then are not guaranteed transnational support.

\textbf{Filming of The Heat of the Moment}

Further evidence for the foregoing argument comes from two instances in this period when MOSOP succeeded in attracting international support albeit from groups without the constituency or reputation of the organizations which had previously rejected MOSOP. One such instance involved, an independent, husband/wife film-making team, who had been commissioned by U.K. television's Channel Four network (a national network) to film a one-hour documentary concerning multi-national oil company operations in developing countries. The film-makers, Glenn Ellis and Kay Bishop, planned that a segment of the film would document the killing of approximately 80 villagers of the Etche ethnic group (another Rivers State minority group concentrated near Ogoniland) who had peacefully protested Shell's operations on October 30-November 1, 1991 in the town of Umuechem. The villagers were killed by the notoriously violent Nigerian mobile police after Shell personnel in the area allegedly called on the force to quell the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{87} Informant 2; Informant 6, telephone interview by author, The Hague, July 16, 1996.

\textsuperscript{88} Informant 9.
\end{flushright}
protests. Approximately one year after the killings, Ellis and Bishop traveled to Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State, to do background work in preparation for filming. Prior to their visit to Port Harcourt, the film-makers had not known of the Ogoni; in traveling to Nigeria, they intended to focus their work on the Etche and Shell's possible complicity in the killings. Once Ellis and Bishop began background work in Port Harcourt, however, they quickly learned of MOSOP and found Saro-Wiwa "the most articulate spokesperson for any of the ethnic groups on the Delta at odds with Shell." This made Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni ideal for the documentary. As

discussed below, the finished film includes substantial attention to and interviews with Ogoni leaders even while it also includes documentation of the Etche massacre.

While the film was not broadcast until October 1992, Saro-Wiwa's work with Ellis and Bishop in 1991 represents "success" in the midst of the general failure with NGOs in Europe. Part of the reason for this anomaly is the unusual substantive fit between the Ogoni cause and the film-makers' interest in multi-national oil companies' performance among local communities in the developing world. Part of the reason is also the unusual setting for the establishment of this linkage, on the home terrain of the insurgent group rather than that of a potential NGO patron. As a result, Ellis and Bishop could determine the representativeness of MOSOP and the legitimacy of its claims immediately and at first hand. Moreover, as a husband-wife team, Ellis and Bishop, unlike environmental NGOs such as FOE and Greenpeace, had few formal rules about forming linkages with MOSOP and were beholden to no constituency or published goals' statement. Thus, Ellis and Bishop were free of some of the constraints which prevented larger organizations such as FOE and Greenpeace from rapidly and easily forming linkages with MOSOP.

Finally, Ellis and Bishop had an unusual "need" for MOSOP. The film-makers had limited time and resources to film an effective segment on Shell operations in Nigeria. In these

---


90 Informant 5, telephone interview by author, June 25, 1996.

91 Ibid.
circumstances, the presence of Saro-Wiwa and other articulate MOSOP leaders gave Ellis and Bishop an opportunity to improve the documentary at low cost. In effect, the film-makers' particular needs helped equalize the power imbalances that characterized MOSOP's one-sided appeals to European NGOs in late 1991 and early 1992. Reciprocally, of course, eventual Ogoni publicity in a nationally broadcast U.K. documentary represented a "silver lining in the clouds" for MOSOP.92 Even before that, MOSOP received benefits from Ellis as he helped Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders make contact with various NGOs in the U.K. during Saro-Wiwa's subsequent visits to Britain.93

MOSOP and UNPO

In mid-1992, MOSOP won another important international ally, the recently-founded Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) in The Hague.94 UNPO members are "nations and peoples" who believe themselves unrepresented in international affairs, and its primary mission is to help its members gain a "voice" in the international sphere.95 Depending on the member, this vague goal might be realized through participation in United Nations bodies and international conferences, gaining recognition of ethnic or indigenous rights within states, or winning outright independence.96 While one of the conditions for membership in UNPO is an

92 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 92. For discussion of the U.K. broadcast of The Heat of the Moment in October 1992, see below.


94 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 93-94; Informant 13.


96 To help its members reach these goals, UNPO provides assistance and training on such issues as international law, international organizations, diplomacy, and media relations. Informant 13; Informant 15.
organization's nonviolence, many UNPO members have become involved in violent conflict. Unlike the NGOs which earlier rejected MOSOP's appeal, UNPO is funded not by contributions from the general public but by the contributions of its member organizations and by grants from various corporations, foundations, and governmental entities.\(^{97}\) Its small staff is entirely volunteer.

The exact date and circumstances under which MOSOP first contacted UNPO are unclear, but Ogoni leaders knew about the organization at least as early as April 20, 1992.\(^{98}\) As in the case of MOSOP's contacts with Ellis and Bishop, its successful linkage with UNPO in mid-1992 resulted from unusual circumstances. First, there was substantial overlap between the goals and interests of UNPO and MOSOP. MOSOP's quest for political autonomy precisely matched UNPO's primary goal. Moreover, for UNPO, unlike the other European NGOs that rejected MOSOP's appeals in 1991 and 1992, the existence of multiple issues (in this case environmental and human rights problems in Ogoniland) raised no red flags. Second, MOSOP's strategy of gaining transnational attention and support for the Ogoni cause through nonviolent action also corresponded with UNPO's preferred strategy.

In addition, UNPO and MOSOP, as young and largely unknown organizations, shared similar organizational "needs": gaining international name-recognition and support. Thus, as in MOSOP's linkages with Ellis and Bishop, its relationship with UNPO was marked by an approximate balance of power; complementary organizational needs created substantial incentives for cooperation and alliance. Consequently, when the Ogoni applied for membership to UNPO, the UNPO Steering Committee accepted them in "record time"; in addition, upon Ogoni admission to UNPO in January 1993, Saro-Wiwa was elected Vice Chairman of UNPO's General


\(^{98}\) Idamkue, "Support Ethnic Minority Rights."
Assembly.\textsuperscript{99} And even in the summer of 1992, well before UNPO could undertake a thorough check of MOSOP's representativeness and claims, UNPO assisted MOSOP in gaining credentials for attendance at the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP), where for the first time MOSOP could "present the Ogoni case before a world audience."\textsuperscript{100} UNPO also held workshops to teach MOSOP how to work within the United Nations system and, in 1993, played a critical role in successful transnationalization of the Ogoni cause.\textsuperscript{101}


Introduction

July 1992 marks the beginning of growing international attention to and support for the Ogoni cause. Having learned some of the lessons of earlier NGO rebuffs, MOSOP reframed its demands and repackaged its presentation, complete with videotapes and publications concerning the Ogoni "genocide" in Nigeria. Using these and other tactics, MOSOP presented its case before a United Nations working group, appeared in a number of international media venues, and attracted the support of several small NGOs in Western Europe. This growing international attention may have helped motivate reluctant Ogoni elites, setting the stage for a sharp rise in Ogoni organizing in November and December 1992 in preparation for a major protest march in Ogoniland in January 1993. At the same time, the international attention as well as MOSOP leaders' repeated and highly publicized calls for changes in the structure of Nigerian federalism led to growing state attempts to curtail Ogoni activism.

\textsuperscript{99} Informant 13.

\textsuperscript{100} Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 93-94.

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 93.
The 1992 UNWGIP Session

At the start of the UNWGIP Session, there was little to distinguish the Ogoni from dozens of other minority groups seeking international recognition and support. Notwithstanding MOSOP's success in interesting UNPO and Ellis and Bishop, the Ogoni and their cause were almost unknown outside Nigeria at this time. While Saro-Wiwa's attendance and speech in Geneva did not immediately lessen this obscurity, the Session was important to the Ogoni in several ways. First, the Session provided MOSOP leaders with an opportunity to exchange ideas, information, and strategies with other similarly-situated ethnic groups from around the world. Second, it helped MOSCP reconceive the Ogoni "in a global perspective" as part of a larger, politically-resonant international category, "indigenous peoples," engaged in a broader, world struggle for rights.102 Third, and most important, it afforded MOSOP its first opportunity to project local Ogoni demands to a world audience.

MOSOP took full advantage of this opportunity. Saro-Wiwa made a powerful speech directly appealing to the international community to "avert the catastrophe which is about to overtake the Ogoni."103 Accompanying video clips and Saro-Wiwa's book *Genocide in Nigeria* helped distinguish him and the Ogoni cause from scores of other indigenous leaders and groups in Geneva. For purposes of the argument in this dissertation, Saro-Wiwa's UNWGIP speech is particularly significant because it succinctly illustrates MOSOP's reframing of the Ogoni conflict for a global audience. The speech gives great importance to environmental issues, opening with a lengthy and powerful account of the "disaster" created in Ogoniland by oil company operations. Reversing the logic of Ogoni demands over past decades, Saro-Wiwa stated: *Incidental to and indeed compounding this ecological devastation is the political marginalization and complete oppression of the Ogoni and especially the denial of their rights, including land rights.* 104 In this

102 Ibid., 99. Saro-Wiwa writes that he left Geneva "convinced that the exploitation of the Ogoni was the most criminal of the cases I had heard, and that it was the more tragic because its victims weren't aware of it or, if they were, didn't know how to extricate themselves."

103 Saro-Wiwa, "Statement to Tenth Session of Working Group on Indigenous Populations."

104 Ibid. (emphasis added).
speech and in most subsequent appeals to international audiences, MOSOP maintained this stress on Nigeria's "genocide" against the Ogoni and on Shell's environmental impacts--together with a de-emphasis of more concrete political issues such as creation of an ethnically-exclusive Ogoni state and appropriate allocation of national oil revenues to Ogoniland.

International media coverage of Saro-Wiwa's speech was limited, only a single Reuters report, but this report magnified the degree of MOSOP's reframing, making Ogoni demands more relevant and understandable to international audiences unfamiliar with the history and nuances of Nigerian minority politics. The Reuters story highlights Saro-Wiwa's charges of "genocide in which environmental degradation has been a lethal weapon in the war against" the Ogoni; it also reports that Saro-Wiwa's presentations and MOSOP's videotape "focussed on the effects on his people of the discovery of oil in their region in 1958 and its exploitation by international companies whose practices . . . Nigerian governments have condoned."105 Following, indeed exaggerating this focus, the story discusses the Ogoni "environmental" conflict with Shell while omitting the important though "incidental" issues of political rights and oil-revenue allocation discussed at length in Saro-Wiwa's speech and book. Thus, in this early media account, the Ogoni appear to international audiences as indigenous victims of a multinational oil company's environmental insensitivity. While such a portrayal may be accurate, it is also incomplete without discussion of the Ogoni as an ethnic group seeking greater voice in Nigerian politics and increased appropriations from the Nigerian fisc.

In much of the subsequent international media coverage and NGO promotion of the Ogoni, the foregoing pattern is repeated: MOSOP seeks to broaden its support by stressing issues with substantial international resonance, particularly charges of genocide and environmental degradation; NGOs and media unfamiliar with Nigerian minority issues pay primary, often exclusive, attention to these familiar, seemingly clear-cut issues, issues of broad interest to international audiences. In their presentations of the conflict, these transnational actors thereby

magnify MOSOP's refocusing of the conflict, further de-emphasizing, if not eliding the other critical issues in MOSOP's original presentations--and *a fortiori* in MOSOP's conception of the issues prior to seeking transnational support. As shown in subsequent sections, this international understanding of the issues in turn opened international opportunities for the Ogoni and led to changes in MOSOP's domestic mobilization strategy.

*The Heat of the Moment* and Its Impact

The next significant step in transnationalization of the Ogoni conflict occurred on October 8, 1992 with broadcast of the Channel Four documentary *The Heat of the Moment* in the United Kingdom. As broadcast in the United Kingdom, the documentary included four segments of approximately fifteen minutes each on conflicts between multi-national oil companies and local communities in various developing nations. The segment on Shell's operations in Southeastern Nigeria focused on the Etche massacre but featured interviews with Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders, again leading to a perception that oil, not politics, lay at the heart of the conflict.\(^{106}\)

Also on October 8, *The Guardian*, a national newspaper in the United Kingdom, published an 840-word article on the Etche massacre focusing prominently on Shell and on the Nigerian Judicial Commission of Inquiry's *Report* regarding those responsible for the killings. The *Report* blamed the mobile police force called in by Shell, rather than Shell itself but criticized Shell for its operations and community relations in the area. Suppressed in Nigeria, the *Report* was "smuggled out" and distributed widely among NGOs in Western Europe. The *Guardian* article, which refers to the planned screening of *The Heat of the Moment*, mistakenly states that the victims of the massacre were Ogoni, rather than Etche.\(^{107}\) Adding to the attention generated by the Channel Four


and *Guardian* reports, Shell publicly defended its record in an October 1992 "information brief" aiming to "set the record straight" on its alleged responsibilities in the Okeke massacre.\(^{108}\)

The media reports and Shell's response drew the particular attention of a small group of activists in the UK environmental community concerned about the role of multinational corporations in the developing world. These activists were not employed by the larger, more established environmental organizations MOSOP had contacted earlier, although they were linked to those organizations through personal and professional networks. Glen Ellis, through close personal ties to these activists in Oxford and London, also contributed to the environmentalists' interest in Niger Delta oil operations.\(^{109}\) When Saro-Wiwa visited Europe in Fall 1992, Ellis helped him to meet some of the environmental activists; in these meetings, Saro-Wiwa engendered further interest and commitment with his vivid descriptions of Shell's alleged environmental crimes and his personal charisma, warmth, and humor. Saro-Wiwa in turn put the activists in contact with members of the Ogoni expatriate community in the U.K. who had organized as the Ogoni Community Association, later MOSOP-U.K.\(^{110}\)

On November 24, 1992, several small activist groups including the London Rainforest Action Group, the Oxford Rainforest Network, Earth First!, and Reclaim the Streets held a demonstration at Shell's main office in London. A letter from the picketers to Shell's Head of Public Affairs stated that the protest was held to "draw attention to the plight of the indigenes of the Niger Delta" and that the organizers' "demands are those of the affected people." While the letter did not mention the Ogoni, it cited "growing discontent" over Shell operations in Niger Delta communities and threatened that the U.K. groups would "launch an international campaign against


\(^{109}\) Informant 4.

the operations of the company" unless Shell agreed in writing to compensate various local communities for "lives, livelihoods, property and environment lost due to Shell's activities."\textsuperscript{111}

Preparations for Ogoni Day, 1993

To build on this unprecedented U.K. interest in Shell's Niger Delta operations, MOSOP began developing several new strategies to maintain and increase international attention and support. Two days after \textit{The Guardian} article and the Channel Four documentary, Ken Saro-Wiwa met :: London with Ben Naanen, an Ogoni historian and MOSOP official, to discuss the "finer points" of a mass demonstration which Saro-Wiwa hoped to organize in Ogoniland on January 4, 1993. As Saro-Wiwa writes, he had "carefully chosen" the date of the protest for domestic and international strategic purposes. January 4 would be two days after General Babangida's scheduled resignation; marching then would put a new administration on notice that the Ogoni "would no longer accept exploitation and a slave status in Nigeria. If Babangida failed to hand over, we would be confronting him directly and daring him to do his worst."\textsuperscript{112} In addition, the date had strategic importance internationally. The UN had designated 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Celebrating a self-styled "Ogoni Day in the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples" early in 1993 might arouse international interest; reciprocally, the international context for the march might facilitate MOSOP's mobilization of the Ogoni masses and prompt greater attention from the Nigerian press and authorities.

MOSOP took several steps to increase the likelihood that the march would have maximum impact both within and outside Nigeria. In late Fall 1992, Saro-Wiwa and other leaders made frequent visits to Ogoni communities to "broaden the base of our support" and excite interest in the

\textsuperscript{111} Shelley Braithwaite, London Rainforest Action Group et al. to Richard Tookey, Head of Public Affairs, Shell Petroleum Company, Letter, Nov. 24, 1992 (photocopy), in author's files. The letter also refers to the findings of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry concerning the Umuechem massacre.

\textsuperscript{112} Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 105. Saro-Wiwa writes that he adopted this strategy on his own, only took Naanen into his confidence, and "didn't present it directly to the Ogoni people. I would merely guide them to the action, checking on the way if it was acceptable by their collective reaction." Ibid.
planned march. MOSOP also worked hard to improve its organization and command structure. As one aspect of this endeavor, MOSOP strengthened ties between its top leadership and local communities by enlisting Ogoni community organizations into the MOSOP umbrella. These organizations included local dance and cultural associations, village administrative committees, and religious organizations. According to Saro-Wiwa, "we had to use whatever instruments could sell our movement to the generality of our people." In addition to using these pre-existing organizations, MOSOP leaders helped found several new organizations at local and regional levels. Ultimately, MOSOP came to comprise such organizations as the Federation of Ogoni Women's Associations (FOWA), National Youth Council of Ogoni People (NYCOP), Conference of Ogoni Traditional Rulers (COTRA), Council of Ogoni Churches (COC), National Union of Ogoni Students (NUOS) Ogoni Teachers Union (OTU), Ogoni Students Union (OSU), and the Council of Ogoni Professionals (COP).

Furthermore, MOSOP made a key tactical decision to attract support for the march from the Ogoni masses and international audiences: further recasting the conflict to highlight Ogoni discontent over Shell's operations. On December 3, 1992, MOSOP submitted a "Demand Notice" to Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, Chevron, and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. In contrast to superficially-similar Ogoni demands made against the oil companies in the 1970s and 1980s, this one did not seek compensation for a specific pollution incident at a particular site. Instead, the 1992 Demand Notice sought $10 billion in royalties and reparations for the companies' 30 year presence in Ogoniland; cessation of "environmental devastation of all Ogoni land"; and immediate high-level negotiations with Ogoni leaders over the

113 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 102.

114 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 152. These organizational means included the popular Pentecostal churches despite Saro-Wiwa's view that they were often "one man outfits out to exploit the people."


terms for continued oil production. The Notice also gave the companies 30 days to meet the demands or "cease all operations . . . and quit Ogoni land."\textsuperscript{117}

Given the amount of the demand and the time-frame involved, the Demand Notice's primary purposes were clearly symbolic and strategic. Within Ogoniland, the Demand was timed to expire on the eve of the January 1993 march, providing added impetus for mobilization. But the Demand also had important strategic purposes outside Nigeria, building on the groundswell of activist anger against Shell demonstrated by the small but promising protests of November 1992. Finally, as one Nigerian journalist wrote in a contemporaneous and generally sympathetic commentary, the Demand Notice appeared to represent a "lost ditch effort (sic) to drum the plight of Ogoni into the ears of seemingly unwilling listeners" in the Nigerian government, SPDC, and the international community.\textsuperscript{118}

After submitting the Demand Notice to the oil companies, Saro-Wiwa sought to build further international interest in the demonstration. He traveled first to the U.K. with the intention of flying from there to New York for inauguration of the U.N. International Year of Indigenous Peoples. Because of visa problems, he was unable to enter the U.S.; instead, he spent his time in England seeking observers to witness and document the planned Ogoni Day march.\textsuperscript{119} One observer, Shelley Braithwaite, an activist from the small, London Rainforest Action Group readily agreed to travel to Nigeria. Saro-Wiwa had more difficulty convincing Greenpeace to send a representative. At the management level, resistance to a Greenpeace commitment of resources continued for many of the same reasons that had led to Greenpeace's initial refusal to lend assistance. Staff in the "International Oil Campaign," however, argued that filming the Ogoni Day march would meet Greenpeace goals at low cost. Moreover, they argued that sending a photographer would conform to one of Greenpeace's trademark tactics, "bearing witness" to

\textsuperscript{117} MOSOP to Managing Director, Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, "Demand Notice" (signed G.B. Leton, E.N. Kobani, Ken Saro-Wiwa), Nov. 30, 1992, in author's files; MOSOP, "Ogoni People Give Notice to Oil Companies," Press release (signed Ken Saro-Wiwa), Dec. 1, 1992, in author's files.


\textsuperscript{119} Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 105.
environmental issues (though opponents of involvement with the Ogoni countered that Greenpeace typically plays an active role in "bearing witness"—with a Greenpeace "action" itself being the center of attention—and does not simply act as reporter of another organization's protest). 120 Using these arguments and Saro-Wiwa's claim that 300,000 Ogoni would march, Greenpeace staff eventually convinced managers to send a single video-photographer, Tim Lambon, to cover the march. 121

January 1993-July 1993: Successful Transnationalization

Introduction

The Ogoni Day march was a major watershed both inside and outside Nigeria. Within Nigeria, the march marked the beginning of a six-month period of mass mobilization leading to increasingly repressive state responses. Outside Nigeria, the period brought the Ogoni to substantial international prominence. Where earlier periods had been marked either by MOSOP's failure to attract transnational allies or by success at attracting only small, marginal, or specialized organizations, the Spring and Summer of 1993 saw important, mainstream actors giving substantial attention and support to the Ogoni. By the summer of 1993, the Ogoni had become a major object of international concern and support among environmental and human rights communities in the U.K., U.S., Holland, and Germany, with NGOs mounting campaigns, journalists writing supportive articles, and states taking sympathetic actions.

This section of the chapter seeks to explain the reasons that mainstream actors such as these began to take an interest in the Ogoni in 1993. The section ends in August 1993, when the Ogoni had won substantial transnational support. Although I follow this section with a brief discussion of events in the conflict beyond summer 1993, I end the detailed analysis at this stage.

120 Informant 1; Informant 8, telephone interview, London, July 24, 1996.

121 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 105.
Nigerian Context

Within Nigeria, this phase of the Ogoni conflict unfolded against a backdrop of growing tension and uncertainty preceding Nigeria's national election in June 1993 and the country's contemplated transition to democracy. In this context, a broad spectrum of military opponents, including prominent politicians and former military officers, made increasingly vocal calls for a Constitutional convention to re-establish the foundations of democratic politics; mixed with these calls were others, including MOSOP's, for a National Convention aimed at determining the rights and responsibilities of component ethnic groups within the Nigerian federation, prior to any discussion of "political" issues at a Constitutional Convention.122

Within Ogoniland, MOSOP seized the opportunity provided by growing, pan-Nigerian uncertainty to mount a series of successful mobilizations of the Ogoni public beginning with the Ogoni Day marches. The marches, held in the six Ogoni kingdoms immediately following church services among this religious Christian community, mobilized a large proportion of the Ogoni population; the exact number of marchers is unclear with Nigerian press accounts in January giving figures of 100,000 to 500,000; most NGOs, journalists, and foreign governments now use the figure of 300,000 marchers.123 Whatever the precise numbers, it is clear that the march mobilized a large proportion of the Ogoni populace in a peaceful protest marked by strong criticism of Shell and frequent references both to Ogoni status as an indigenous people and to international support for the Ogoni cause.124 MOSOP leaders devoted substantial attention to publicizing the march in Nigeria, and it was headline news in much of the print media.


124 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 149.
In the coming months, MOSOP built on this unprecedented Ogoni activism, mounting a series of smaller-scale mobilizations through the spring and demanding continuous mass attention to the cause through monthly and in many cases weekly meetings by organizations under the MOSOP "umbrella." In February, MOSOP began a fund drive seeking contributions from every Ogoni (the One Naira Ogoni Survival Fund (ONOSUF)). In March, MOSOP held a candlelight vigil in coordination with the Christian churches in Ogoniland offering "prayers to God for the deliverance of Ogoni people from the 35-year old ecological war waged by the multinational oil companies and from sundry oppressive rulers." In late April and May, MOSOP provided extensive publicity for local community protests against a Shell contractor near Biara. In addition, MOSOP seized opportunities presented by the Nigerian democratization movement, often taking maverick stands at critical junctures thereby ensuring itself maximum attention and leverage. MOSOP's "visionary" decision to boycott the June 12, 1993 national election because it presupposed the legitimacy of the Nigerian federation is the prime example of such a stance; it brought substantial attention to the Ogoni, attention they would not have received if they had remained part of the mainstream opposition to the Babangida regime.

On the other hand, continued mass mobilization, particularly the election boycott, created increasingly deep divisions between mainstream Ogoni politicians and new and more radical leaders within MOSOP, leading in June to the departure of several important members of the former group from MOSOP.

Repeated MOSOP mobilizations also brought an increasingly harsh response from the state especially after a number of other Delta minorities became increasingly restive, organizing and

---

125 Ibid., 147.


127 MOSOP, "Press Release L/93/1" (signed B.B.B. Naanen), May 2, 1993, in author's files.


129 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 175-80.
issuing their own proclamations modeled on the Ogoni *Bill of Rights*. Although government officials met with MOSOP leaders on January 9 and May 13, 1993 repressive action grew in late spring. On April 3, Saro-Wiwa was detained and "deported" from a neighboring state, Delta State, where he had been scheduled to address a gathering of students from another oil-producing minority. On April 18 and again on April 23, Saro-Wiwa was also detained, first for about 18 hours and then for about seven. On April 30, paramilitary forces used gunfire to suppress peaceful attempts by a local Ogoni community to block completion of a Shell oil pipeline in Biara, reportedly injuring eleven Ogoni. Then on May 6 the government announced promulgation of the "Treason and Treasonable Offences Decree" making it a capital offense for Nigerians to "conspire with groups within or outside the country, and profess ideas that minimise the sovereignty of Nigeria." While the decree was so vague and broad that it threatened all forms of political expression in Nigeria, one of its chief targets was clearly Saro-Wiwa and the MOSOP leadership. On June 14, 1993, the Nigerian authorities confiscated Saro-Wiwa's passport as he was about to fly to Vienna to address the U.N. Human Rights Conference. Finally, on June 20, 1993, the Nigerian authorities detained Saro-Wiwa and two other Ogoni for one month, sparking a


wave of international action by a wide variety of transnational actors and making Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni into international causes célèbres.\textsuperscript{134} 

Despite MOSOP's use of mass mobilization and the state's mounting repression, in this period MOSOP was largely successful in limiting violence by its followers, violence which might have alienated transnational support. MOSOP was fully aware of the difficulties of controlling mobilized segments of the Ogoni population and took numerous measures to help ensure peaceful protest at the Ogoni Day march and other major events. Saro-Wiwa acknowledged, however, that these measures were not wholly effective.\textsuperscript{135} Given MOSOP's continual repudiation of violence, however, neither these isolated incidents nor Shell's trumpeting of them damaged the Ogonis' international image as peaceful victims of state repression and oil company neglect.

**Transnational Activities**

As the domestic Nigerian conflict intensified, MOSOP also succeeded in gaining substantial transnational support. The January Ogoni Day march garnered no contemporaneous international media coverage, but MOSOP skillfully used videotapes of the march to gain international media attention and NGO support in the following weeks and months. MOSOP's groundwork was instrumental both in keeping the march peaceful and in urging the marchers to focus on internationally resonant issues.\textsuperscript{136} Marchers bore banners proclaiming "Ogoni Day in the International Year of the World's Indigenous People" and carried twigs as a symbol of the environmental issues at stake. MOSOP was fully aware of the potential impact of video images, hiring its own video team to document the march, inviting the Greenpeace photographer to record it separately, and expending considerable resources immediately after the march to produce "the film


\textsuperscript{135} Saro-Wiwa, *Month and a Day*, 181.

of the protest.\textsuperscript{137} MOSOP took these steps with no illusions that the images would appear on Nigeria's heavily-censored broadcast media; instead, MOSOP clearly had an international audience in mind, an audience which MOSOP knew to be interested in proof of environmental devastation and MOSOP's representativeness.

Within weeks of the march, the videotapes found their first use in Europe. At the end of January, Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders traveled to The Hague for the UNPO General Assembly where the Ogoni were formally made members and Saro-Wiwa was elected vice President of the General Assembly. Saro-Wiwa's presentations at this meeting again emphasized environmental problems and Shell's "ecological war on the Ogoni nation."\textsuperscript{138} Thereafter, UNPO served as the European nerve center for MOSOP's transnational campaign, providing extensive promotional and media services to its new and increasingly prominent member.

One immediate effect of the mounting media coverage and NGO activity was Shell's decision to send a public relations officer to meet with Saro-Wiwa during the UNPO General Assembly in The Hague.\textsuperscript{139} The talks proved fruitless, but Shell's European headquarters began to take the threat of international action against the company seriously, closely monitoring the activities of MOSOP and Saro-Wiwa and issuing press releases to the international media critical of MOSOP actions in Nigeria. Shell's primary claims were that much of the oil pollution in the Delta resulted from Ogoni sabotage designed to embarrass the company and force it to pay off local communities and that MOSOP was using Shell and the environmental issue to gain international support for its goal of self-determination. For the most part, MOSOP effectively parried these

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{137} Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 135, 140.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{139} Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 146.
\end{flushleft}
assertions with its own claims of Shell’s environmental double standards and complicity in human rights violations by Nigerian security forces.\textsuperscript{140}

In early 1993, transnational attention and support steadily expanded among human rights and environmental organizations in Europe and North America. For human rights organizations, the major reasons for growing interest in Ogoniland were mounting government abuses against ordinary Ogoni and their leaders in the context of increased international interest in Nigeria’s broader human rights record in the months before the June 12 national election.\textsuperscript{141} In May, shortly after promulgation of the Treason decree, Saro-Wiwa took a tour of Western Europe to criticize the decree. With growing awareness of the Ogoni cause thanks to increasing NGO and media interest and with UNPO taking care of administrative details Saro-Wiwa was able to meet foreign ministry officials in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom as well as officials at the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the International Commission of Jurists.\textsuperscript{142} He also won the support of the British Parliamentary Human Rights Group, with its leader publicly attacking Shell’s environmental record and Nigerian neglect of Niger Delta minorities.\textsuperscript{143}

During his January trip to Europe for the UNPO session, Saro-Wiwa also re-established contacts with environmental NGOs that had earlier rejected his pleas for support on behalf of the Ogoni. As Saro-Wiwa continued his attacks on Shell and as organizations such as Amnesty and Human Rights Watch began to document the deteriorating human rights situation in Ogoniland, environmental organizations in many parts of Western Europe and in North America began to take

\textsuperscript{140} Shell International Petroleum Company, Group Public Affairs, ""Tensions in Nigeria,"" Information sheet, n.d. [1993], photocopy, in author's files. Saro-Wiwa's point by point response to this briefing note is in Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 166-70.


\textsuperscript{142} Informant 21, personal interview by author, tape recording, The Hague, July 11, 1996; Informant 13; Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 174.

\textsuperscript{143} Ekeocha, "Cry for Justice."
further actions supportive of MOSOP, actions which for the most part were directed against the more accessible, familiar, and tractable target involved in the conflict, Shell, rather than the Nigerian state. Greenpeace oil campaigners wrote letters to Shell in May expressing concern over the confrontation at Biara, issued press releases highlighting Shell's alleged responsibility for attacks on Ogoni protesting oil company operations, distributed videotapes of the Ogoni Day march, and accelerated production of a report on Shell's overall environmental record in the Delta. By summer, Greenpeace staff had begun working so closely with MOSOP that MOSOP press releases referred those seeking further information both to UNPO and to Greenpeace's communications office in London. FOE also became heavily involved, with a staff-person in its Amsterdam office becoming one of the central figures in the Ogonis' international support network. In June, FOE-Netherland's "Earth Alarm" coordinated a Dutch letter writing campaign against Shell on the same issues, and FOE-International, also based in Amsterdam, sought to publicize the deteriorating environmental and human rights situation in Ogoniland.

Saro-Wiwa's one-month detention in June-July 1993, provided a seemingly familiar international focusing event--the unlawful detention of a prominent author and human rights champion. With this datum as backdrop and using information from human rights organizations and from UNPO, pre-existing international networks in human rights, environmental, and literary circles could be rapidly mobilized. Among NGOs and media pressuring the Nigerian state directly and indirectly were Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa, International PEN's Committee for Writers in Prison, Article 19, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, UNPO, the U.K.'s Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, the BBC, *The Times* of London, and *The Observer*.


While much of this activity focused on the release of Saro-Wiwa, broad Ogoni demands against Shell and the Nigerian state also gained new prominence, figuring in the international rhetoric and action demanding Saro-Wiwa's release. Saro-Wiwa's detention and the broader Ogoni conflict also garnered attention at several international conferences over the summer of 1993. While Saro-Wiwa was prevented from attending the International Human Rights Conference, other Ogoni leaders present in Vienna distributed a statement by him and held a press conference making the Ogoni case. At the 45th Session of the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in August the Ogoni again made their case, and the Committee for Eradication of Racial Discrimination (CERD) condemned the Nigerian government's treatment of the Ogoni as "development racism."

With growing media attention in summer 1993, the Ogonis' transnational network rapidly mushroomed. Part of this mushrooming involved the activation of transnational networks associated with the organizations MOSOP had already contacted in Western Europe; Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, and Amnesty all have offices in several countries and some degree of international coordination. Many of the activists who work for these organizations also have personal or occupational linkages with activists in other national and international organizations in the same sector. Moreover, Saro-Wiwa's pre-existing, international network of friends, fellow authors and academics, while not active in supporting MOSOP's political demands, could spring into action when Saro-Wiwa himself came under threat during his detentions. This informal literary network, could have rapid and widespread impact because of the fame and expertise of its members and because of its connections to such activist organizations as International PEN and Article 19. Even though their main focus was on Saro-Wiwa's release from detention, articles

---


and appeals from this informal network also lent indirect support and credence to MOSOP's broader claims and support to its demands.

In addition, one important new NGO entered the Ogonis' transnational network in June 1993, the campaigning corporation, the Body Shop. The Body Shop had been an early supporter of UNPO. At a meeting between Body Shop President Anita Roddick and the UNPO General Secretary at the Vienna Human Rights Conference in June 1993, Roddick stated her desire to "do more" to support UNPO members whose problems involved issues of interest to the Body Shop, namely issues of multinational corporate activity and responsibility among local communities in the developing world. The UNPO leader suggested the Ogoni (as well as the Bougainvilleans of Papua New Guinea), and introduced Roddick to MOSOP leaders attending the Vienna conference. Subsequently, the Body Shop provided substantial and continuing financial and communications support to MOSOP, particularly in late 1995 as the campaign to save Saro-Wiwa's life grew.150

July 1993-December 1995: Maintaining the International Focus

With Saro-Wiwa's release from detention at the end of July, the most critical phase of Ogoni transnationalization had been completed and the Ogoni had achieved international prominence matched by few other insurgencies seeking transnational support. Through 1995, MOSOP maintained this high profile, a profile far higher than one might expect for a group as small as the Ogoni. Growing state violence, MOSOP's ability to disseminate news of this violence and to blame Shell for it, and the efforts of MOSOP's transnational support network, all played a role in the Ogonis' prolonged time on the international stage. In this section, I briefly outline some of the key events after summer 1993, providing less detail than in earlier sections because of an assumption that the Ogoni had already accomplished the most difficult task, winning a sustained period of international attention and support from which they could build subsequent, expanded support.

-------------

150 Informant 13; Informant 15.
Domestically, the Ogoni conflict took a new turn in the summer of 1993. With cancellation of Nigeria's national election results, an interim government was installed and sought to open negotiations with Ogoni leaders. Several meetings were held in Abuja between Saro-Wiwa and government leaders, but the talks were fruitless. During this period, government-condoned or government-supported communal violence mounted in Ogoniland. Clashes occurred between Ogoni villagers and several neighboring communal groups including the Andoni in July 1993, the Okrika in December 1993, and the Ndoki in April 1994.\textsuperscript{151} In response to these clashes, MOSOP used its linkages with UNPO and thereby other European NGOs to send numerous press releases alleging that the government and Shell had engineered the violence and appealing for aid to Ogoni villagers displaced by the violence.\textsuperscript{152} During this period, Saro-Wiwa also made visits to Europe and the U.S., seeking to drum up additional support for the Ogoni cause. In the U.S. in late January 1994 under Greenpeace sponsorship, Saro-Wiwa met with Congressional and state department staff and visited media outlets on the East and West coasts.\textsuperscript{153}

After the November 1993 coup by General Sani Abacha, the state ceased negotiations with the Ogoni and further repressed MOSOP activities within Ogoniland, jailing MOSOP leaders, breaking up MOSOP meetings and activities, and eventually seeking to close Ogoniland to outsiders. In early April 1994, the security forces detained for several days a \textit{Wall Street Journal} reporter writing on the Ogoni and in June detained and beat a British citizen and several others visiting an Ogoni detainee.\textsuperscript{154}

Growing state repression in 1994 and 1995 had a number of effects. As the Nigerian state's attitude toward the Ogoni hardened under the Abacha regime, Shell became increasingly important to MOSOP's international campaign. The company presented greater political

\textsuperscript{151} Human Rights Watch/Africa, "The Ogoni Conflict," 12, 14.

\textsuperscript{152} See, e.g., MOSOP, "Shell's Genocide against Ogoni People."

\textsuperscript{153} Informant 22, telephone interview by author, June 21, 1996.

\textsuperscript{154} Human Rights Watch/Africa, "The Ogoni Conflict," 21.
opportunities than the state, and MOSOP and some of its most prominent transnational supporters were drawn into extended confrontation with the company.

Mounting state repression in Ogoniland also increased divisions within the Ogoni community, divisions already sharp after schisms over the June 1993 election boycott. On May 21, 1994, four Ogoni leaders opposed to MOSOP were murdered by a mob of militant Ogoni, perhaps egged on by government provocateurs. In response, the Rivers State Internal Security Task Force arrested Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders, accusing them of incitement to the murders, and began a period of extensive repression in Ogoniland. The security forces reportedly made almost nightly armed raids against villages during the summer of 1994, killed over 50 Ogoni in extrajudicial executions and shootings, and engaged in large-scale looting and rape. Several hundred Ogoni were also detained for several weeks and tortured by the security forces in the wake of the May 21 murders.155

On February 6, 1995, Saro-Wiwa and 13 other Ogoni were put on trial before a Special Tribunal from which there was no possibility of appeal. The trial, marked by procedural irregularities and blatant unfairness attracted increasing international attention over summer 1995, with a variety of NGOs issuing statements and reports condemning the proceedings and lobbying their home governments to pressure Nigeria to halt the trial. On Oct. 31, 1995, nine Ogoni including Saro-Wiwa were found guilty of incitement to murder, and on November 5, 1995 the sentences were carried out. The guilty verdicts, death sentences, and executions generated a huge outpouring of international condemnation from NGOs and a variety of diplomatic sanctions from many governments in Europe, North America, and the British Commonwealth.156

Reasons for Successful Transnationalization

MOSOP succeeded in gaining support from key NGOs in the developing world beginning in Summer 1993 for several reasons.

155 Ibid., 12-25.

156 For a listing of these sanctions, see Welch and Sills, "Martyrdom of Ken Saro-Wiwa," 13.
Growing Correspondence Between MOSOP and NGO Goals

Reframing the Issues. MOSOP's issue reframing was a key reason the Ogoni attracted support from transnational environmental advocacy NGOs in 1993. In the first two years of activism, MOSOP's central goal was similar to that of historical Ogoni demands: enhanced control over Ogoni affairs, or, in the emotive words of the Bill of Rights, "Political Autonomy within Nigeria." In MOSOP's early presentations, this goal was larded with a number of subsidiary aims: increases in oil revenue allocations, growth in indigenous employment in the oil industry, preservation of culture and language, and improvements in the environment. But for transnational environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace and FOE, most of these issues fell outside their substantive interests and expertise--and raised difficult, unfamiliar, and parochial political questions. In addition, some environmental groups such as Greenpeace simply lacked experience in West Africa. This apparent lack of substantive fit, along with other factors discussed below, led Greenpeace and FOE to reject MOSOP's initial appeals.

Beginning in summer 1992 and with increasing force in early 1993, MOSOP shifted the focus of its international appeals. No longer did MOSOP present the conflict simply as one against the Nigerian state concerning a variety of political, economic, and social issues; instead, MOSOP sharpened its attacks against the state and opened a second, equally important front against Shell over its environmental "devastation" of the Niger Delta. Key markers of this shift are Saro-Wiwa's Genocide in Nigeria, his speech at the July 1992 UNWGIP conference, MOSOP's Demand Notice against Shell, and the Ogoni Day March. In this new view, environmental "degradation" and Shell's "ecological war" came to the fore. But Shell is also portrayed in even more sinister terms, as a powerful and malignant political force, not merely a negligent economic actor. Of particular importance, MOSOP sought to portray Shell as directly responsible for Ogoni deaths and injuries in protests at oil facilities and in conflicts with different ethnic communities. Reversing the logic of the earlier period when MOSOP called on the state to better regulate oil company activities, much of the rhetoric in the later period emphasizes Shell's overweening power and calls on the company to use this power to influence the Nigerian state.
Once MOSOP emphasized the environmental and multinational corporate aspects of the Ogoni conflict, environmental NGOs began to see more of an overlap between their own goals and Ogoni interests. While MOSOP's reframing was not the only reason that transnational environmental NGOs shifted to supporting the Ogoni, absent such reframing their support would have been unlikely. Organizations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth were attracted to the Ogoni cause both for its own importance and for its usefulness as a symbol of a broader array of environmental conflicts with Shell and other multinational corporations. As several campaigners stated, the Ogoni case appeared to have potential to leverage change for many other similar groups. In the case of Greenpeace, MOSOP's attacks on Shell fit well with the substantive concerns of the "International Oil Campaign." For campaigners involved with this issue, Shell was a particularly good target: its consumer-orientation, image consciousness, and high-profile "green" advertising contrasted sharply with MOSOP's allegations of Shell's environmental devastation and complicity in deadly human rights violations. Informant 14, a consultant on Greenpeace's 1994 Shell-Shocked report, described his close work with Saro-Wiwa as a "symbiotic relationship" in which Informant 14 sought information on Shell, while Saro-Wiwa sought to publicize the Ogoni cause as widely as possible. In addition, Informant 14 and Greenpeace provided more direct support to MOSOP, health and safety information on petroleum pollution to help influence the domestic Nigerian political debate on Ogoni demands.

While MOSOP initiated the conflict's international reframing, environmental NGOs and the media in the developed world amplified this change. For these transnational actors, the environmental and multinational corporate issues were far more relevant to key constituencies and audiences than the "political" issues which MOSOP nonetheless continued to discuss. As a staff-person in Greenpeace's London office put it, Shell's "insidious presence" and alleged involvement in pollution and massacres gave the Ogoni story "legs," i.e., kept it in the media and public eye in

157 Informant 5; Informant 2; Informant 1.

158 Informant 14, July 24, 1996.
the developed world. Thus, Shell's impacts on the Niger Delta environment--rather than Ogoni political rights in Nigeria, revised allocation of oil revenues, or increased Ogoni employment in the oil industry--became one of two primary focuses of the transnational Ogoni campaign. (I discuss the other focus, individual human rights abuses, below.)

The effectiveness of MOSOP's issue reframing in attracting the support of environmental NGOs does not imply that MOSOP's international environmental allies were "duped" by Saro-Wiwa. While he began highlighting environmental issues beginning in mid-1992, Saro-Wiwa made no secret of the critical importance of political reform and revenue reallocation to the Ogoni; nor did he conceal the Ogoni desire for oil drilling to continue in Ogoniland albeit "in a clean and safe way, under payment of adequate compensation." For NGOs such as Greenpeace and FOE, however, the environmental aspects of the Ogoni case were their primary concern, providing them with their own political opportunity "to have a go at Shell--attack them" in a campaign highlighting charges of environmental insensitivity and double standards. From the perspective of these and other environmental NGOs, political issues were indeed secondary to environmental issues. In fact, many activists are unaware of MOSOP's political, economic, and cultural demands, let alone their lengthy history in Nigerian politics.

Similarly, the fact that MOSOP "used" the environmental issue to garner increased domestic and international support for a broader agenda does not mean that the Ogoni perpetrated a "fraud on the world." There is no denying that Saro-Wiwa and other Ogoni leaders saw political advantage to be gained from emphasizing environmental issues: Domestically, long standing Ogoni resentments against Shell could be channeled into MOSOP's broader political agenda, a fact which Saro-Wiwa appears to have recognized as early as his 1990 trip to the U.S.; internationally, environmental issues could attract the support of developed country NGOs and populations, where

159 Informant 1.


161 Informant 14, June 26, 1996.
issues of poverty, political marginalization, and budgetary and employment policies in Nigeria might not. In a 1993 *Newsweek* article, Saro-Wiwa indicates his own ambivalence toward environmental issues:

Saro-Wiwa asks why the First World can't show as much concern for [Ogoni townspeople] as for threatened plant and animal species. "The West worries about elephants," he says. "They stop the export of rhino horns and things like that. And then they cannot worry about human beings dying." 162

Notwithstanding MOSOP's strategic use of environmental issues, however, the environmental problems of the Niger Delta are real. The World Bank's 1995 report amply documents--indeed, given its approval by the Nigerian government, probably understates--these problems and helps begin an assessment of Shell's responsibility for them. While the World Bank concludes that oil pollution is a relatively minor factor in the Niger Delta's overall environmental problems, the Bank acknowledges oil pollution's prominence and popular resonance in the Delta, especially when combined with the closely related issue of revenue allocation. As a result of Shell's unpopularity among the Ogoni masses, MOSOP was highly successful in mobilizing the Ogoni through appeals to environmental issues.

In sum, environmental issues were clearly important to MOSOP both domestically and internationally. For most supporters in transnational networks and in the developed world, however, the Ogoni conflict appeared to be primarily an environmental issue. For MOSOP, however, political autonomy was more important. Clean-up of environmental problems in Ogoniland--without a change in political and economic relations between the Ogoni and the Nigerian state--would not "solve" the Ogoni problem.

**The Rise of State Violence and Entry of Human Rights NGOs.** A second factor in successful transnationalization at this time relates not to changes in Ogoni framing of the issues but to a change in the issues themselves, the development of widespread human rights abuses in Ogoniland. Prior to 1993, there had been few violations of internationally recognized human rights in Ogoniland, and no systematic pattern of state repression against the Ogoni. Thus, when

---

contacted by MOSOP previously, Amnesty had turned down MOSOP's appeals, rejecting Saro-Wiwa's arguments that the Ogoni faced "slow motion" cultural and environmental "genocide" or other, novel violations of rights. To paraphrase Saro-Wiwa's restatement of Amnesty's blunt response to his initial appeal, no one was dead, no one was in jail. \footnote{Saro-Wiwa, \textit{Month and a Day}, 88.}

This situation changed in 1993. As Ogoni mobilization grew and as other Niger Delta minorities began to view MOSOP as a prototype for their own ethnic movements, the Nigerian state responded with increasing repression and human rights abuses, most notably the detentions of Saro-Wiwa and other MOSOP leaders, the Biara incident, and the Treason and Treasonable Offenses Act. MOSOP had received warnings of coming repression from state actors and from observers knowledgeable about the Nigerian state--and MOSOP leaders were certainly aware of the dangers. For these leaders, however, peaceful escalation appeared the only method of gaining attention and winning concessions, notwithstanding the likelihood of repression; mass action had clear risks but also possible benefits for a group with little to lose. \footnote{Sam Olukoya, "We, Who're About to Die: In a Suicidal Defiance, Ogonis Do Battle with Soldiers to Prevent Laying of Oil Pipelines in Their Land," \textit{Newswatch}, May 17, 1993, pp. (?)}.

Through MOSOP's established connections to transnational NGOs, particularly UNPO, news of state repression rapidly reached the developed world, and Amnesty quickly took an interest, issuing urgent actions for Saro-Wiwa's release from detention and making Saro-Wiwa and others "prisoners of conscience." Similarly, the American organization Human Rights Watch/Africa began monitoring events in Ogoniland as conventional violations mounted; in August 1993, the group presented testimony to the U.S. Congress on Nigerian human rights abuses, including those directed against the Ogoni. From 1993 through 1995, these and other human rights NGOs in Europe and North America continued to monitor the situation in southeastern Nigeria, issued numerous reports and "urgent actions," and used their high levels of credibility to interest government actors in their home countries.
In attracting the attention of human rights NGOs, MOSOP also benefitted from mounting international interest in Nigerian politics, notably in the June 12, 1993 national election, its subsequent annulment, and resulting mass protests. Without this broad, pre-existing interest in Nigeria's rocky "transition" from authoritarianism, Saro-Wiwa's June 1993 detention might not have attracted the degree of international attention it won. Spill-over from state action in broader arenas of Nigerian politics thus facilitated international attention to Saro-Wiwa's 1993 detention and helped cement his international reputation as a human rights crusader. On the other hand, this spill-over also tended to obscure the special aspects of the Ogoni movement, aspects which differentiated Saro-Wiwa's detentions from those of mainstream Nigerian politicians and pro-democracy activists. Framed in this way, the state's individual human rights violations and its repression of democracy, not its neglect of ethnic minorities, could become a dominant international image of the Ogoni movement's conflict with the state.

Yet this view of Ogoni demands and Saro-Wiwa himself was at best incomplete. Of course, many of Saro-Wiwa's publications through 1990 attacked Nigerian repression and human rights abuses in the strongest terms; he won further prominence as a human rights champion during his 1991-92 tenure as president of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), a major pro-democracy organization. And he and many other Ogoni were victims of egregious human rights abuses. Yet Saro-Wiwa's work on issues of democratization and individual human rights did not land him in detention; this occurred only after he shifted focus to the Ogoni cause in late 1990 and especially after 1991 when he became a domestic supporter of Ogoni "ethnic rights" and an international crusader against Shell. Similarly, MOSOP itself sought political goals substantially beyond a basic human rights "core." Thus, while the international focus on human rights violations against the Ogoni was clearly warranted, to see MOSOP primarily as seeking respect for individual human rights, as suggested in some contemporaneous reports, was incomplete and historically inaccurate. Such a limited portrayal of the issues may have made the Ogoni more appealing to foreign audiences in Europe and North America, audiences for whom individual rights are highly attractive but for whom ethnic and group rights remain unclear and
controversial. At the same time, however, this limited portrayal obscured the fundamental issues animating MOSOP, perhaps ultimately to the disadvantage of the Ogoni themselves.

**Satisfying NGO Concerns About MOSOP Legitimacy**

A third reason for successful Ogoni transnationalization in this period was MOSOP's ability to satisfy earlier NGO concerns about its legitimacy and representativeness of the Ogoni people. When Saro-Wiwa first approached environmental and human rights NGOs in 1991 and early 1992, his presentation of the issues appeared exaggerated and almost incredible.\(^{165}\) He had little concrete proof of threats to the Ogoni or of his own right to speak for them. When staff members at transnational NGOs asked about MOSOP's domestic activities, Saro-Wiwa had little to show beyond written declarations.

Critical to meeting these NGO concerns were the videotaped images of Ogoniland and the Ogoni Day March taken by Glen Ellis, Greenpeace photographer Tim Lambon, and MOSOP itself. Principals at Greenpeace, UNPO, and other organizations confirmed the importance of these video images; for many NGOs, this concrete evidence demonstrated MOSOP's popularity with the Ogoni and its ability to mobilize grassroots support, providing necessary information for a significant commitment of resources.\(^ {166}\)

In addition to video images of the Ogoni Day march, MOSOP's monthly mobilizations within Ogoniland in early 1993 had important impacts internationally as well as domestically, further demonstrating MOSOP's legitimacy and the Ogonis' apparent unity behind the organization. Prior to January 1993, MOSOP's domestic activities had been sporadic and involved primarily elites. Beginning with the run-up to the Ogoni Day march, however, MOSOP began a period of sustained mass mobilization including the march itself, the One Naira fund drive (ONOSUF) in February, the candlelight vigil in March, local protests against Shell operations and construction in April, and the boycott of the presidential elections in June. News of these events

\(^{165}\) Informant 2.

\(^{166}\) Informant 1; Informant 2; Informant 8; Informant 14, July 24, 1996.
reached Western Europe rapidly because of MOSOP's strong grassroots network, its impressive public relations and press activities, and its linkage to UNPO. UNPO in turn re-released MOSOP's press statements concerning these events and made sure that key NGO staff members in the Netherlands and the U.K. learned of MOSOP's activities, reinforcing the perception and reality of MOSOP's legitimacy among the Ogoni.

While MOSOP supplied vivid proof of its representativeness of the Ogoni masses, its proof of claims against Shell was less persuasive. Even some of MOSOP's strongest supporters in the transnational NGO network continue to express dissatisfaction with MOSOP's evidence on these matters. In part, this dissatisfaction stemmed from MOSOP's use of political rhetoric concerning "ecological warfare" and "environmental devastation." But the problem was deeper, hinging on MOSOP's lack of technical expertise to prove its claims. For NGOs in the environmental community, this fault was worrying but not necessarily fatal to their support of MOSOP. Other indications of environmental problems were present: the twig-bearing Ogoni populace on January 3, 1993 appeared to demonstrate broad-based popular awareness of environmental issues; the confrontation at the Biara pipeline site (and earlier at Umuechem) indicated serious community antipathy toward this and other Shell operations; video images in The Heat of the Moment showed scenes of environmental impacts from oil; and Shell's sensitivity to criticism suggested to an already partial audience that the company could not be trusted. In addition, by mid-1993 news of Nigerian human rights abuses had made the Ogoni internationally prominent.

Finally, as particular environmental NGOs gave their support, others felt competitive pressure to do so as well. Nonetheless, to provide a scientific basis for their support of MOSOP and opposition to Shell, the environmental organizations sought their own

---

167 Informant 2; Informant 9; Informant 14, July 24, 1996.

168 Informant 14, July 24, 1996

169 Informant 2; Informant 9.
proof of environmental damage, commissioning and issuing various studies of the Niger Delta environment and Shell's impacts.  

The Domestic-International Nexus: UNPO's Role

A fourth reason for successful Ogoni transnationalization in 1993 was UNPO's role. As indicated above, UNPO was critical to the success of MOSOP's rapid transnational communications effort, serving as the primary bridge between MOSOP leaders in Port Harcourt and transnational activists in the developed world. In Saro-Wiwa's words, "how could we make contact with the outside world without them?" As the conflict in Nigeria mounted, UNPO served as a central clearinghouse for MOSOP press releases and information. To get its story to the world, MOSOP faxed international press releases exclusively to UNPO. As it does for other members, UNPO rapidly edited the releases and sought to verify their substance. Independent verification was seldom possible from The Hague, but UNPO stressed the importance of accurate information to MOSOP. After altering MOSOP press releases to improve their appearance and appeal, UNPO faxed them to key media outlets and NGO supporters around the world.

UNPO acted not merely as a clearinghouse for MOSOP press releases but also as a readily accessible and seemingly reliable source of information. At moments of crisis, reporters searching for background or further details on a breaking story in an inhospitable locale could gain needed information from The Hague. UNPO staff could provide the media with press releases and documentation about the conflict, videotapes of the Ogoni Day march and Ogoniland's environment, and rapid access to Ogoni spokesmen resident in Western Europe who had been carefully selected and coached for media interviews. For reporters facing deadlines, the availability of this seemingly reliable information source and of "live" Ogoni interviewees was extremely

\[170\text{ See Greenpeace International, Shell-Shocked: The Environmental and Social Costs of Living with Shell in Nigeria, July 1994, in author's files. The Body Shop also commissioned an independent study of Shell's environmental impact statements concerning operations in the Niger Delta.}

\[171\text{ de Bruin, "Human Rights: Unrepresented Peoples' Forum."}

\[172\text{ Informant 13; Informant 15.} \]
important. Saro-Wiwa stated in a speech to Ogoni leaders in October 1993, "Thanks to the efforts of the UNPO, the European press, BBC radio and television, CNN, Channel Four TV and Voice of America have given us good coverage. The American press, particularly the New York Times and Newsweek have also covered our story."\(^{173}\)

UNPO support had several other dimensions as well. UNPO provided MOSOP leaders with opportunities for training about such topics as non-violent struggle, international law, diplomacy, and media relations. At these training sessions, MOSOP could meet with and learn from representatives of other minority groups seeking similar goals in other parts of the world. Moreover, as a result of these contacts, some UNPO members took an important role in publicizing the Ogoni conflict in their home countries. As one example, the UNPO member from Scania, a region of Sweden, had good connections with the Swedish media and successfully urged Swedish newspapers to write articles about the Ogoni.\(^{174}\)

Finally, the UNPO staff also developed close personal ties to staff in key transnational NGOs based in The Hague and London including Greenpeace, FOE, and Amnesty International. These ties facilitated exchanges of information and increased NGO trust in the reliability of UNPO's information, although UNPO's multiple roles raised questions among some in the Ogonis' transnational support network.\(^{175}\) In some ways, UNPO sought to model itself after Amnesty, issuing "urgent action alerts" and providing documentation of abuses against its member "peoples." But UNPO made no secret that its membership included the Ogoni and that its goal was to facilitate the Ogoni quest for transnational attention and support. As such, there was both a clear conflict between UNPO's roles and the virtual certainty that UNPO information would, at a minimum, portray MOSOP favorably. Some NGOs in the Ogonis' transnational support network clearly saw this conflict and sought independent verification of UNPO claims and press releases; other organizations missed the conflict or believed it had been "solved" by UNPO's record of

\(^{173}\) Saro-Wiwa, Report to Ogoni Leaders Meeting at Bori, 3 (italics omitted in original).

\(^{174}\) Informant 15.

\(^{175}\) Informant 2; Informant 20.
reliability. Many therefore came to rely on UNPO--and thus on MOSOP--as their primary source of information about the conflict.176

Spectacle

The foregoing discussion covers some of the underlying reasons for successful Ogoni transnationalization in 1993 but explains neither its precise timing nor its sharp peaks. To explain these fine points requires the concept of spectacle. Saro-Wiwa, with his work in television and public relations, clearly understood the impact of spectacle and focusing events and sought to create such events to benefit MOSOP. His attempts to organize, publicize, and exploit the Ogoni Day March and other mobilizations in 1993 are prime examples. These events, however, had less effect in galvanizing transnational support than two dramatic events in which Saro-Wiwa figured centrally as victim rather than director. A first peak of transnational attention and support occurred during his detention in June and July 1993; as Saro-Wiwa reported to Ogoni leaders several months later:

Detention drew world attention to the plight of the Ogoni people. Newspapers and magazines in Europe devoted feature articles to the cause. Amnesty International, Greenpeace, International PEN and other worldwide organizations intervened and interceded with the Nigerian government on our behalf. Amnesty International even adopted three of us as 'prisoners of conscience.'177

During this detention, MOSOP, UNPO, and the emerging international support network sought both to generate international pressure for Saro-Wiwa's release and to broaden international support for the Ogoni cause.178 After his release in July 1993, Saro-Wiwa skillfully used his heightened profile to draw greater attention and support to the Ogoni movement. Emblematic of this is his "detention diary," A Month and a Day, a combination of personal drama and political tract issued immediately after his killing.

176 Informant 2; Informant 15; Informant 20.

177 Saro-Wiwa, Report to Ogoni Leaders Meeting at Bori.

178 See, e.g., Ken Saro-Wiwa, "An Appeal to the British Prime Minister, Mr. John Major and the British Public," Letter from detention, July, 9, 1993 (photocopy), in author's files.
The second and greater peak of international attention and support built slowly over 1995 as Saro-Wiwa's trial progressed, then grew to a crescendo as his conviction, sentencing, and killing occurred in quick succession in late fall. While in this case the human aspects of the drama and injustice in Port Harcourt sometimes overshadowed broader political goals, MOSOP and its transnational supporters did what they believed Saro-Wiwa would have wanted them to do, exploit the opportunity for advancing Ogoni goals presented by the drama of his fate.\textsuperscript{179} Thus NGOs in Western Europe, North America, and Oceania carefully planned actions, speeches, and events to coordinate with each stage of the proceedings in Port Harcourt. The slow pace, predictable procedures, and high stakes of Saro-Wiwa's trial created, in the words of one NGO staff person, "a perfect media event," one which momentarily transfixed audiences around the world.\textsuperscript{180}

While focusing events and associated promotional activities were clearly important to Ogoni transnationalization, it bears emphasis that such events seldom propel an unknown problem to prominence by themselves; instead they typically focus attention on a problem "already 'in the back of people's minds.'"\textsuperscript{181} This caveat re-emphasizes the overall course of Ogoni transnationalization: it was a slow and difficult process involving a combination of domestic mobilization and international marketing; it cannot be explained simply by the flash of focusing events. A contrast which clearly illustrates this point is that between the international attention generated by the Biara incident in which one Ogoni was injured and the Umuechem incident several years earlier in which over 80 Etche were killed after similar protests against Shell operations. The Biara incident occurred in the context of ongoing Ogoni transnationalization efforts, and news of it was immediately transmitted to and disseminated to European NGOs providing important "evidence" of Shell insensitivity and Nigerian brutality toward the Ogoni. By contrast, the Umuechem incident, occurring among an obscure ethnic group without international ties, gained little international publicity and sparked no outpouring of support—until Glen Ellis's

\textsuperscript{179} Informant 2, Personal Interview, July 17, 1996.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{181} Kingdon, 103.
investigation and film long after the massacre; even then, the Ogoni rather than the Etche appear to have benefited most from the publicity. In the Biara incident, as in the other major Ogoni focusing events, the event itself gained attention in large part because it occurred within the fertile context of long-term Ogoni efforts to build international support.

*Joining the Transnational Bandwagon*

During peaks of attention to the Ogoni cause, a final factor swelled MOSOP support. Pushed by constituency and competitive pressures and pulled by the enhanced benefits of associating with an already-successful campaign, NGOs formerly reluctant to support the Ogoni joined the transnational bandwagon. In the case of Survival International, constituent pressure in 1993 and 1994 played a major role in the organization's reversal of its 1992 decision rejecting MOSOP appeals. According to Survival's head of Africa operations, as the international campaign "gathered momentum" Survival received many questions about the issue from its members; as a result, Survival believed itself "forced" to take a stand on the issue despite its earlier misgivings.\(^{182}\) In doing so, however, Survival distanced itself from direct support for the seemingly advanced Ogoni. According to Informant 10, Survival joined the international campaign with the primary purpose of "broadening the discussion" to show that the Ogoni "were not alone in suffering environmental damage and repression."\(^{183}\) Thus, Survival set the Ogoni case within a larger context more appropriate to the organization's own substantive focus—the fate of all "tribal" peoples in the Niger Delta and worldwide.

Competitive pressure between NGOs, particularly environmental NGOs, also appears to have pushed some latecomers to support MOSOP. As international attention to Saro-Wiwa's trial slowly built in 1995, previously silent NGOs took public stands, informed their constituencies,

\(^{182}\) Informant 10, June 18, 1996. Greenpeace staffpersons described a similar dynamic in other campaigns: as loosely affiliated national offices of the organization take on a case, it may reach a "critical threshold" of international interest forcing Greenpeace International to pick up the issue. Informant 6.

and lobbied home governments to pressure Nigeria. This competitive dynamic, though tempered by NGOs' shared substantive goals and by personal linkages between staffs, was particularly evident in Holland; there, the unparalleled opportunity presented by Royal Dutch/Shell's role as "villain" exacerbated routine competition between environmental NGOs.\textsuperscript{184} Greenpeace and FOE in particular competed for Dutch public support through their backing for the Ogoni. At times this resulted in the NGOs' adopting each other's tactics and duplicating effort. Ultimately, however, the competition had two effects. On one hand, it pushed the NGOs to differentiate their activities: Greenpeace has moved to a more confrontational approach, exemplified by its October 1995 "Ogoni Blood on Shell's Hands" press release, while FOE, has sought to keep lines of communication open to Shell and has led NGO negotiations with the company.\textsuperscript{185} On the other hand, the competition led to increased cooperation between NGOs. As staff persons at the various Dutch organizations recognized their competition and its detriment to achieving substantive environmental goals, they organized an informal alliance of Dutch NGOs, the "Ogoni Platform," which sought to present a unitary position in negotiations with Shell.\textsuperscript{186}

As the Ogoni campaign mushroomed and gained broad international attention, there were clear benefits and few risks for latecomer NGOs in attaching themselves to an already-popular cause. In deciding whether to support the Ogoni, latecomer NGOs no longer had to base their decisions on the "stories" of a single man from an unknown ethnic insurgency in southeastern Nigeria. The fact that recognized and credible organizations were already associated with the cause—and presumably had already evaluated MOSOP's bona fides—lowered the risks of joining the bandwagon for latecomer NGOs. If UNPO, Greenpeace, FOE, and especially Amnesty and Human Rights Watch had put their credibility on the line for MOSOP, latecomer NGOs could feel

\textsuperscript{184} Informant 2; Informant 6; Informant 9.


\textsuperscript{186} Informant 2; Informant 6; Informant 9.
relatively confident about joining the bandwagon without extensive investigation of MOSOP. Moreover, latecomers did not have to bear the high initial costs of publicizing an obscure cause. For early supporters like Greenpeace, by contrast, benefits were far more speculative while the costs of publicizing an unknown cause and the risks of supporting an obscure group were high. In effect then, the successful Ogoni campaign became a "public good"; latecomer NGOs, whose support could not be excluded even if initial supporters had wanted it to be, could free ride on international attention, reaping high benefits from existing publicity without having to take significant risks or pay substantial costs. While many of the NGO latecomers had "principled" reasons for joining the bandwagon, the foundations created by "early-birds" were critical in the latecomers' decisions to join the bandwagon.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis highlights a number of factors leading to successful Ogoni transnationalization in Summer 1993. Notably, many of these factors involve issues of strategy and tactics rather than "deeper," underlying considerations. While this strategic focus accurately reflects the realities of the Ogoni case, it obscures some of the Ogonis' "structural" advantages which helped them gain access to transnational networks more easily than many other groups. Part II of this Chapter, comparing Ogoni success at gaining transnational support to the failure of a similarly-situated ethnic insurgency, the Bougainvilleans of Papua New Guinea, helps illuminate some of these "structural" factors.

Before undertaking this comparative analysis, however, it is worthwhile considering an important issue raised by the Ogoni case: What were the consequences of transnational support? While I did not design my research to answer questions of transnationalization's impacts, my detailed analysis of the Ogoni case casts light on this important issue. Accordingly, I will briefly discuss the issue, although any "conclusions" must be viewed as tentative, subject to revision after comparative analysis with other "success" cases in this thesis and, more important, after analysis

187 Informant 10, July 22, 1996.
of cases specifically chosen to test hypotheses concerning transnationalization's consequences. One further note of caution: in analyzing consequences, it is difficult to be sure that transnational support, rather than the domestic movement alone, caused a particular effect. In most cases, transnational support activities coincided with or closely followed domestic movement activities, making it difficult to separate the source of an "effect."

Before beginning this discussion it bears reiteration that much of the existing international relations literature on transnationalization examines only the issue of consequences and focuses primarily on whether pressure from transnational actors leads to change in a "target state's" policy. Impact on the target state is clearly an important aspect of transnationalization's consequences, perhaps the most important aspect, but focusing only on that aspect is too restricted; other possible consequences of transnationalization also bear examination. I will therefore discuss the effects of transnational support on the Ogoni movement itself (feedback effects), on the Nigerian state and Shell (target effects), and on broader Nigerian and international society (spillover effects).

**Feedback Effects**

The international attention and support MOSOP received had important feedback effects on the Ogoni movement. As this chapter has shown, the character and activity of the domestic movement shifted in response to international political opportunities and demands; MOSOP's expansion of focus to encompass environmental issues and its attempts to prove its mass support both derive in part from efforts to attract the support of powerful transnational actors, although there were clearly important domestic reasons for these actions as well. Once these transnationalization efforts began to succeed they in turn helped strengthen the domestic movement. As MOSOP began its drive for international support beginning in 1992, it received frequent coverage in the relatively free Nigerian print media. Beginning in 1991, Nigerian periodicals had given substantial attention to the growing political activism among minority communities including the Ogoni. Thus, when MOSOP issued press releases reporting its international activity, journalists deemed these newsworthy. As a result, news of MOSOP's presentation at the U.N. Working Group, its showcasing on British television, its admission to
membership in UNPO, and its support by prominent transnational NGOs quickly became known in Nigeria.  

These Nigerian media reports—and Saro-Wiwa's own reports directly to the Ogoni people highlighting MOSOP's international successes—helped demonstrate that the Ogoni cause was legitimate in the eyes of the world, that the Ogoni were part of a wider struggle (for indigenous rights, human rights and environmental improvement), and that their demands had the support of seemingly powerful international allies. The effect of this international support was particularly evident in late 1992 when Saro-Wiwa and other activists sought to reinvigorate a movement which had scored no domestic successes and whose leaders had "gone to sleep" after signing the Bill of Rights. Saro-Wiwa believed that "[p]erhaps the most important result" of his address to the U.N. Working Group in July 1992 was its publication in Nigerian newspapers. This, along with Nigerian press coverage of The Heat of the Moment and related environmental protests at Shell's London offices, helped persuade Ogoni elites that their struggle held promise and contributed to the revival of domestic mobilization in late 1992. Similarly, the reception given international observers at the Ogoni Day March indicates that their presence served not only to prove MOSOP's mass base to transnational NGOs but also to prove international solidarity to the Ogoni masses.

Thus, MOSOP's international activities and support had important feedback effects on the movement itself. Critically, however, these effects occurred only because of MOSOP's strenuous and self-conscious efforts to link local and international levels, not because of any "necessary" or spontaneous interaction between the two levels. Indeed, excessive or exclusive focus on the international level might have led to disconnection between the local movement and its international

188 See, e.g., Tayo Lukula, "International Bodies React to Ogonis' Agitation," Guardian, June 8, 1993.

189 See, e.g., Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 71-77, 130-32.

190 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 99; Informant 12.

191 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 99. Informant 12.

192 Informant 4.
supporters or to the withering of domestic activities. The Nigerian state apparently recognized this potentially destructive consequence of international action, giving Saro-Wiwa some early support for his international actions because "all [they] wanted me to do was to make noises abroad and not educate the victims . . . ." MOSOP, however, avoided this fate, indeed strengthened both levels of the movement, by consciously linking domestic and international levels, on the one hand demonstrating MOSOP's international support to the Ogoni and on the other MOSOP's mass backing to international actors.

These and other positive feedback effects from MOSOP's transnational activities suggest a hypothesis for future testing: that international "recognition" by NGOs, international organizations, the media, and world audiences plays a role in processes of politicization among insurgencies, or more specifically in cases of ethnic insurgency, "ethnogenesis" among the ethnic group. While obviously a far cry from international recognition of state sovereignty, global civil society's "recognition" of insurgent legitimacy and ethnic identity may nonetheless contribute to politicization, to cognitive liberation of an insurgent group or to transformation of an ethnic group "in itself" to an ethnic group "for itself."

**Target Effects**

MOSOP based its strategy on the belief that transnational pressure would have a positive impact, leading to improvement in Nigerian policy toward the Ogoni and other minority groups. As it sought international support, MOSOP also broadened the movement's targets to include Shell, believing both that pressure on Shell might improve environmental and employment conditions for the Ogoni.

---

193 Saro-Wiwa acknowledged that as late as January 1993, he "hadn't mixed much with" the Ogoni masses, leaving him with little knowledge of the "psyche of the Ogoni people." Saro-Wiwa, *Month and a Day*, 102, 118.

194 *Month and a Day*, 109.

problems directly and that such pressure might prompt Shell to urge the Nigerian state to take other actions beneficial to the Ogoni. Belief in the latter, indirect effects became particularly important in 1995 as environmental organizations claimed Shell had sufficient influence over the state to save Saro-Wiwa's life.196

The Nigerian State

Saro-Wiwa's killing, the flight of most of MOSOP's leadership, and the military occupation of Ogoniland, however, leave little doubt that MOSOP and its international supporters failed to achieve their goals against the Nigerian state. While there are instances in which international pressure may have influenced the state, e.g., in prompting the state to withhold implementation of the Treason decree in 1993, the most vigorous international pressure--from states throughout the world as well as from NGOs and international organizations--failed to save Saro-Wiwa or other Ogoni leaders from execution in 1995. Moreover, the primary state concession to the economic demands of Niger Delta oil communities, formation of OMPADEC in 1992, occurred when MOSOP's international campaign had just begun and when many other minority communities jointly exerted purely domestic pressure on the state. MOSOP's more fundamental political goals--redrawing political boundaries or enhancing minority representation in a reformed Nigerian federation--remain unfulfilled. Thus, in this case transnational action in the form of pleas, threats, and publicity was ineffective in changing critical state policy.197

If international support did not help the Ogoni in their conflict with the state, did it instead harm their cause and worsen the conflict's outcome for the Ogoni? To be more specific, did certain transnational actors take actions that heightened state repression? Given the interwoven nature of MOSOP's domestic and transnational activity, it is probably impossible to answer these questions, but they should be considered in any evaluation of the impacts of transnational support on a

---


197 An argument that the outcome would have been worse absent international pressure tests credulity given the extremely negative outcome in the case.
domestic political movement. Here it need only be noted that MOSOP's domestic goals and tactics by themselves posed substantial threats to the revenue base of the Nigerian state, to the continued dominance of powerful ethnic groups, and to the future of the Nigerian federation itself. When MOSOP turned its rhetoric into mass mobilization and when other Niger Delta minorities began to mobilize in similar ways, the potential impact of these purely domestic activities became clear, and the state had ample incentive to make an example of the Ogoni.

Did the potential for international support prompt the Ogoni to take risky actions or issue provocative statements? In this regard, it should be noted that even if international opportunities altered the character of domestic Ogoni mobilization, MOSOP leaders took these actions with full awareness of their domestic implications. Moreover, Ogoni leaders had substantial input into the actions of transnational supporters, and there appear to be no instances in which MOSOP subsequently disavowed the actions of transnational supporters. Thus, it is untenable to argue that the Ogoni were "pushed into" counterproductive actions by manipulative transnational operators. At most, one could argue that, vis-à-vis, the state, certain actions on the international level may have been "mistakes."

Whatever transnationalization's impacts on the conflict's outcome, did transnational support at least push the Ogoni case higher on the Nigerian political agenda? While MOSOP appears to have believed that international pressure on Nigeria might actually change the outcome of the struggle, the Addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights indicates that the Ogoni also believed, at a minimum, that international attention would give their demands a higher profile in Nigeria. As indicated above, MOSOP's international activities were widely reported in Nigeria in 1992 and 1993. It is difficult, however, to make the case that international attention by itself led the Ogoni case to rise on the Nigerian political agenda since the most important international activities largely overlapped MOSOP's domestic mobilizations.

What is clear, however, is that the Nigerian state found international attention burdensome and embarrassing. Thus, beginning in June 1993, the state interfered with international travel by MOSOP leaders, e.g., confiscating Saro-Wiwa's passport at the Lagos airport as he sought to
board a flight to the Vienna Human Rights Conference in June 1993. Moreover, the state
counterattacked against MOSOP in the international press, at various international forums, and in
presentations to foreign governments. Nigeria's sometimes crude attempts to counter MOSOP's
international activism clearly indicate that the transnational Ogoni campaign had some bite, but the
state's killing of Saro-Wiwa in 1995 demonstrates the limits of international embarrassment and
even sanctions in this case. As Saro-Wiwa himself recognized, "[i]t is one thing being an issue,
another achieving our aims." 198

Shell

The transnational campaign in support of the Ogoni had a stronger impact on Shell than on
the Nigerian state. While Shell has vigorously denied that its actions were influenced by
international pressure, it seems clear that Shell took certain measures in response to intense
amounts of such pressure. Initially, Shell responded to the international attention and publicity in
kind, issuing its own press releases to counter "misinformation" from MOSOP and transnational
environmental organizations and repeatedly charging that the company had been brought into the
conflict to increase MOSOP's leverage on the state. Later, however, reacting to the firestorm of
international criticism around the time of Saro-Wiwa's killing, Shell agreed to sponsor the multi-
million dollar Niger Delta Environmental Survey (NDES) to assess the state of the Niger Delta
environment. Shell also responded to broad international pressure that it urge Nigeria to spare
Saro-Wiwa, with Shell's chairman making a private plea to the Nigerian president on Saro-Wiwa's
behalf in early November 1995. 199 Not surprisingly, Shell, an image-conscious corporation with
operations in many developed states, was more responsive to international pressure than the
Nigerian state.

198  Saro-Wiwa, Report to Ogoni Leaders Meeting at Bori.

Spillover Effects Within Nigeria

There is little clear proof that Ogoni success in attracting transnational attention encouraged other Nigerian minority groups either to seek international support or to mobilize domestically. The Ogoni Bill of Rights served as a model for similar documents by other minority groups, and most of the other minorities issued their own manifestoes after MOSOP won substantial international support. But MOSOP's successful domestic mobilization and the Nigerian media attention it received in 1993—as well as the uncertainties of Nigerian politics in the period—appear to be the most likely causes of these other groups' activities.

International Spillover Effects.

While MOSOP's primary goal was change in the political status of the Ogoni within Nigeria, Saro-Wiwa and the top Ogoni leadership also entertained broader hopes about both the domestic and international demonstration effects of the Ogoni movement for other minority "ethnic nations." In Saro-Wiwa's words, he hoped the "Ogoni revolution" might "undo" the arbitrary, colonially-determined boundaries of today's African states and serve as "a model for the other small, deprived, dispossessed and disappearing peoples" of the Continent. As originally envisioned, EMIRDAF had these broad goals, though the pressing needs of the Ogoni conflict soon forced the organization to narrow its focus. And, while MOSOP's most publicized international support came from relatively powerful transnational environmental and human rights organizations, it maintained its early links to the international indigenous rights movement throughout the conflict.

To what extent did MOSOP's transnational support help it to achieve these far-reaching international goals? As in the case of domestic spillover effects, there is no clear evidence that the Ogoni movement's transnational activities (as opposed to its domestic activities) prompted other African minority groups to mobilize domestically or internationally. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, international indigenous rights forums have seen increasing participation from African

---

200 Saro Wiwa, *Month and a Day*, 134. Saro-Wiwa repeatedly attacked Africa's "indigenous colonialism" and the "new black colonialists wearing the mask of Nigerianism." Ibid., 186.
and Asian minority groups. The international publicity surrounding MOSOP's mobilization may further broaden the indigenous rights movement in Africa, but there is a sense in which MOSOP was unsuccessful in striving for this goal on the international level. The need to reframe its conflict to attract international actors and the strong international focus on environmental and human rights issues, diverted attention and support from the central goal of the struggle, political autonomy for the Ogoni and, more broadly, reform of the political status of "indigenous" minorities in Africa and elsewhere. Although MOSOP succeeded in expressing these goals before "friendly" audiences at UNPO and UNWGIP, its success before broader audiences is questionable.

Thanks in large part to the focus of its most powerful international allies, MOSOP's struggle has come to be seen primarily as an environmental or human rights struggle, rather than a struggle for the "rights" of an "indigenous" people. Even among MOSOP's allies, there appears to be limited understanding of or sympathy for the latter goals—in part because of their complexity and contentiousness, but also because of MOSOP's inability or unwillingness to shift the focus back to these issues and educate unfamiliar audiences about them in 1994 and 1995. Facing increasingly strong state repression after summer 1993, MOSOP's international presentations stuck primarily to pressing themes such as state repression or to themes with proven resonance such as the environment. Similarly, the environmental NGOs in the Ogoni support network maintained their primary focus on issues of ecological impacts and corporate environmental malfeasance in the developing world; they sought to avoid entanglement in the intertwined issues of "indigenous" political "rights" and oil revenue reallocation, rather than expanding their goals to encompass the latter issues. For the most part the latter issues, critical to the historical Ogoni movement, to MOSOP's domestic mobilization, and probably to the Nigerian

---


government's ultimate decision to execute Saro-Wiwa, dropped out of the international Ogoni campaign mounted by the transnational NGOs.

Part II: Ogoni Transnationalization in Comparative Perspective: Why the Ogoni? Why Not the Bougainvilleans?

Introduction

In this Part of the chapter, I make a limited, inter-spatial comparison between the Ogoni and the Bougainvilleans of Papua New Guinea (PNG), a similarly-situated minority group which has sought transnational support but failed to achieve the success of the Ogoni. Despite the geographic distance separating the two groups and the inescapable uniqueness of all cases, there are substantial similarities between them, warranting comparison. Both cases concern ethnic minority insurgencies seeking increased political autonomy; both cases involve allegations of environmental devastation of "indigenous" lands by large and well-known multinational corporations. In both cases as well, political organizations representing an ethnic minority have sought transnational attention and support. And both groups have used some of the same international organizations and transnational actors in these attempts. Given these similarities, the puzzle I seek to explain in this part of the chapter is: Why have the Ogoni succeeded where the Bougainvilleans--and many other obscure groups--have failed?

Background to the Bougainville Conflict

Bougainville is an island of approximately 10,000 square kilometers located about 900 kilometers east of PNG's capital Port Moresby and only a few kilometers north of the Solomon Islands. Like the rest of today's Solomon Islands, Bougainville became a German colony in the nineteenth century, but after World War I it was administered by Australia as part of the U.N. Trust Territory of Papua New Guinea. The colonial amalgamation of Bougainville with PNG generated little sense of common identity or interest; Bougainvilleans perceived themselves as different from other Papua New Guineans because of geographic isolation, skin color, historical
ties to the Solomon Islands, and colonial experience including "a conviction of being 'neglected' and 'exploited' by Australia for the benefit of other Papua New Guineans."\textsuperscript{203}

As PNG approached independence in 1975, separatist movements developed in Bougainville (as they did in several other peripheral areas of the nascent state). As early as 1968, a group of young, educated Bougainvilleans living in PNG's capital demanded that the government hold a referendum in Bougainville to determine popular views on the island's future political relationship with PNG. The colonial authorities rejected the demand for a referendum, helping to maintain and increase Bougainvillean discontent. In the early 1970s, Bougainvillean representatives and the central government held prolonged negotiations concerning Bougainville's political future, with the Bougainvilleans demanding special political status and budgetary preferences as the price for the island's remaining a part of an independent PNG. With the negotiations unfinished, Bougainville made a "symbolic unilateral declaration of independence" on Sept. 1, 1975, two weeks before PNG's own scheduled independence.\textsuperscript{204} In the face of this political gambit, PNG promulgated the Organic Law on Provincial Government in which Bougainville attained status as a separate province with unique political powers and advantageous economic terms.\textsuperscript{205}

While Bougainville leaders cited cultural and historical differences as justifications for special status within PNG, economic issues were also prominent. In 1964, a subsidiary of Conzinc Riotinto of Australia, (CRA), part of one of the world's largest multinational mining companies Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), began exploratory copper mining operations in south central Bougainville. A CRA subsidiary, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), began commercial production at the Panguna mine in 1972. By 1989 the mine accounted for about 40% of PNG's


\textsuperscript{204} Ron J. May, "Micronationalism in Perspective," in Ibid., 22.

national income, and mine revenues returned from the central to the provincial government made Bougainville the country's wealthiest province, with per capita income four times the national average.  

The mining brought rapid and significant change to Bougainville, however, including an influx of Australian and "mainland" Papua New Guinean workers, deforestation and environmental pollution, heightened demand for land, and increased police presence. In this context, ethnic sentiment fluctuated in the 1970s and 1980s fed in part by increasing discontent over the amount of mine revenues returned to Bougainville and the allocation of those revenues among the Bougainville population. Around the mine area, there were complaints that directly affected communities were receiving insufficient royalties and compensation for the environmental impacts of BCL's operations. In 1980, a separate agreement directly between BCL and the landowners in the mine area improved compensation amounts and established a trust fund for the long-term benefit of affected communities. Despite this agreement, discontent with BCL operations continued, along with growing disputes within the landowner community concerning the distribution of mine revenues. National and provincial government attempts to solve the problems failed in part because landowner factionalism led to an escalation in demands and in part because local leaders joined their economic and environmental grievances to long standing ethnically based demands for improvement in Bougainville's lot in PNG.

In 1988, political leaders in southern Bougainville demanded the mine's closure, compensation for its environmental and social impacts, and increased autonomy for the province. Violence erupted with landowner attacks on the mine and formation of the Bougainville

---


Revolutionary Army (BRA) in early 1989. In March, the PNG government sent the PNG Defence Forces (PNGDF) to Bougainville with the mission of restoring order around the mine site. The PNGDF's indiscipline and human rights violations, however, increased popular support for the insurgents throughout the island. In May 1989, the BRA succeeded in shutting the mine and in May 1990, BRA leaders declared Bougainville independent and formed the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG), a largely expatriate, political wing of the BRA.

PNG responded immediately and harshly to Bougainville's independence declaration, imposing a complete blockade on the island and cutting all telecommunications links. Even attempts by the Red Cross to send food, medicine, and other essential supplies were blocked by the PNG government or the PNGDF. Since the declaration of independence, fighting has continued on Bougainville with the PNGDF gaining control of the northern portion of the island but leaving the BRA in control of southern Bougainville. A series of negotiations, including Australian and UN-sponsored negotiations, have broken down and the conflict remains unsettled.

Attempted Transnationalization of the Bougainville Conflict

Like the Ogoni, the Bougainvilleans have taken a number of steps to gain the attention and support of transnational actors. Initially, the Bougainvilleans sought to gain additional leverage against PNG by seeking recognition of their "independent republic." These attempts have failed with no government recognizing Bougainville's declaration of independence. With this failure as backdrop, the Bougainvilleans have shifted the targets and immediate goals of their transnational activities: BIG now seeks the support of transnational NGOs and the media in an effort to publicize PNG human rights violations, gain international, particularly Australian public support, and ultimately pressure PNG to settle the conflict on favorable terms.

---


211 Spriggs and May, "Postscript: August 1990."
To implement this strategy, BIG has sent delegations to international conferences where they have made speeches and won passage of resolutions of sympathy. In 1991, several BIG leaders spoke before the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations in Geneva, and the Bougainville case was referred to the U.N. Human Rights Commission.\textsuperscript{212} Despite difficulty raising funds for international travel, Bougainville has also sent representatives to the Pacific Council of Churches Assembly in Vanuatu, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Harare, and an international conference in Barbados. In addition, BIG leaders, most of whom are based in Australia or the Solomon Islands, have made a few short visits to the U.S. and Western Europe where they have contacted NGOs including the Carter Center.\textsuperscript{213}

BIG's attendance at these conferences has been important in establishing contacts and exchanging information and strategies with other, similarly-situated ethnic groups and some "gatekeeper" NGOs. At the 1991 U.N. Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva, BIG's international representatives met UNPO's General Secretary. Shortly thereafter, UNPO accepted BIG's membership application and BIG has since received some of the same benefits of UNPO membership as the Ogoni, e.g., legal and strategic advice, training in diplomacy and the media, and aid in drafting press releases. UNPO also counseled BIG during recent U.N.-sponsored negotiations with the PNG authorities.\textsuperscript{214}

In addition to this linkage with UNPO, BIG later formed linkages with two other transnational actors prominent in the Ogoni case, the Body Shop and the film-maker Glen Ellis. The Body Shop adopted Bougainville as one of two main cases, along with the Ogoni, at UNPO's suggestion during the 1993 Vienna Human Rights Conference. Both groups are cited as objects of support by Body Shop President Anita Roddick in her book \textit{Body and Soul}.\textsuperscript{215} But since then,


\textsuperscript{213} Informant 11, personal interview by author, tape recording, The Hague, July 13, 1996.

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.; Informant 13; Informant 15.

the Body Shop has devoted little time or resources to the Bougainville conflict.\textsuperscript{216} Glen Ellis has also made a film about the environmental, indigenous rights, and multinational corporate issues on Bougainville. In contrast to his film-making on location for the Etche and Ogoni in Nigeria, however, Ellis was unable to enter Bougainville because of PNG's blockade. Instead, during a stay on the Solomon Islands, he made a 30-minute film including interviews with Bougainvilleans who had recently escaped the island.\textsuperscript{217}

In its attendance at international conferences and its other attempts to gain transnational support, BIG, like MOSOP, has acted strategically and demonstrated some sophistication. In particular, BIG is aware of the need to maintain credibility among potentially powerful transnational actors and has sought to project an image of both grassroots support and detailed knowledge of the local situation, notwithstanding the difficulties created by PNG's blockade. While the blockade prevents the frequent and substantial interaction between local and international spheres which marked MOSOP's early activity, BIG strategy seeks to offset this deficit in several ways. In every international delegation, BIG includes a representative "from the ground," a Bougainvillian who has recently left the island and who can therefore present a vivid, first-hand account of the conflict.\textsuperscript{218} BIG therefore seeks to avoid accusations that its followers are purely expatriates and that the organization has no linkages with those involved in the conflict on Bougainville.

At the same time, BIG recognizes that the international scene has rules and practices with which most Bougainvilleans are unfamiliar. Thus, for many of the same reasons that MOSOP chose Ken Saro-Wiwa as its spokesman, BIG fills key positions in its international networking operations with Bougainvilleans who are comfortable with and knowledgeable about both

\textsuperscript{216} Informant 11.

\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
"Western culture and our Melanesian way of life."219 One of BIG's primary international operatives is its "U.N. representative," an Australian citizen whose family had lived on Bougainville for many years. According to Informant 11, BIG appointed this man its representative because, "as a white person he can handle himself in a way some of us cannot. Language, mentality--because he's a white man he can think like a fellow white man. . . . It's to our advantage having that kind of person there." Similarly, BIG's international political spokesperson also has a "little bit of advantage" because he is married to an Australian woman and lives in Australia.220

Notwithstanding these similarities in MOSOP's and BIG's attempts at transnationalization, however, there are great differences between the Ogonis' robust and varied transnational support network and the far smaller and weaker Bougainvillean network. Nothing similar to the outpouring of support for the Ogoni among powerful transnational environmental organizations or among broader networks of indigenous rights and human rights organizations has occurred in the Bougainville case. The long standing conflict has received media attention in Australia and New Zealand, but this is understandable for purely strategic reasons: the importance of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville to these countries and their active efforts to bring the parties to negotiation and end the fighting. Outside the region, however, attention to the conflict has been slight with The New York Times recently terming it "one of the world's more obscure separatist insurgencies."221

---

219 Ibid.

220 Ibid.

Bougainville vs. Ogoni: Comparing Transnational Success and Failure

**Introduction**

This section seeks to explain the Ogonis' success in gaining transnational support in light of the Bougainvilleans' relative failure. The many similarities between the Bougainville and Ogoni cases throw into sharp relief a variety of factors potentially explaining the different degrees of transnational support in the two cases. Below I discuss some of these factors relying primarily on historical evidence from documentary sources and on testimonial evidence both from key transnational actors familiar with the Ogoni and Bougainville cases and from Bougainvillean activists themselves.

Before proceeding, one important caveat is in order: Because my primary focus is the Ogoni case and my discussion of the Bougainville case has been quite limited, the conclusions with regard to Bougainvillean failure should be treated as tentative pending further research on the case. In this discussion therefore, I use the Bougainville case primarily as a foil for eliciting otherwise "constant" but nonetheless important causal features in the Ogoni case.

Before examining possible causes of different outcomes, it is necessary to examine one potential but unsupported explanation of Bougainvillean failure, "issue fatigue." The issue fatigue hypothesis would hold that international audiences and the global media reach a saturation level concerning particular issues. Applied to these cases, it would suggest that the Ogoni filled the available transnational "issue space," making successful Bougainville transnationalization impossible. The "issue fatigue" explanation reduces the importance of strategy and increases that of timing, suggesting that the Bougainvilleans (or some other group) could well have transnationalized successfully and prevented the Ogoni from doing so—if they had "gotten there first."

This explanation is unsatisfactory in part because of the seeming impossibility of defining the size or elasticity of transnational issue space except in a post hoc manner. Defining the character of such a space is also difficult, especially in cases in which groups seeking transnational attention and support consciously shift their strategies, demands, target audiences, and identities to
fit available opportunities. In addition to these theoretical critiques, the actors involved in the two cases appeared not to subscribe to this "common sense" theory. No interviewees suggested issue fatigue as a reason for lack of Bougainville success; indeed, the Bougainvilleans themselves and transnational allies such as UNPO have actively sought to promote the Bougainville case--notwithstanding the simultaneous or prior success of the Ogoni. While such behavior does not necessarily negate the issue fatigue hypothesis, it seems prudent to eschew this explanation unless others lack empirical support.

**Factors Contributing to Different Degrees of Transnational Success**

Other factors suggested both by empirical contrasts and by informant testimony provide better explanations for different degrees of success in the two cases. To facilitate analysis, it is useful to bear in mind the overall causal sequence in the transnationalization process:

**Figure 5. Two Pathways to Transnational Support (Figure 1 repeated)**

![Diagram](image)

In the discussion below, I first examine factors conditioning the ability of a political insurgency to "lobby" transnational NGOs. I then examine factors conditioning the likelihood that lobbying will lead an NGO to "adopt" an insurgent group, i.e., devote substantial resources to the group for a significant and sustained period of time.

**The Pitch: Publicity, Promotion and Lobbying**

Comparing the Ogoni and Bougainville cases indicates that several factors not flagged in Part I's inter-temporal comparison strongly condition the possibility of an insurgency's lobbying transnational NGOs. These factors, constant over the relatively short time period of attempted
Ogoni transnationalization, were "invisible" to Part I's historical analysis; their absence in the Bougainville case, however, appears to have inhibited successful transnationalization.

**Access.** The Bougainville comparison indicates that the character, timing, and effectiveness of state response to insurgent mobilization plays a large role in a group's ability to initiate transnational contacts. PNG responded to Bougainville's declaration of independence with an immediate and total blockade, one which has been relatively effective in preventing outsiders from entering the island and Bougainvilleans from "escaping." Importantly, PNG imposed the blockade before BIG sought the support of transnational NGOs (though not before BIG vainly sought Bougainville's recognition as an "independent republic"). In the Ogoni conflict, by contrast, Nigeria sought to restrict access to Ogoniland well after the Ogoni had established a robust transnational network. Given Ogoniland's proximity to Port Harcourt, a major African city having relatively easy access to international communications and transportation networks, these late restrictions were also relatively ineffective.222

Nigeria's late and ineffective "blockade" meant that for much of the period in which MOSOP was building its transnational network, Ogoni leaders could travel freely within and outside Nigeria. Saro-Wiwa and other leaders used this freedom to great effect, organizing thousands for the Ogoni Day march and other mobilizations in 1993 and traveling to Europe and North America frequently and with little state interference in efforts to promote the Ogoni cause and win transnational allies. Reciprocally, journalists and representatives of transnational NGOs could enter Ogoniland to give firsthand accounts of conditions in the region. Even the outbreak of substantial violence in late summer 1993 did not prevent relatively free movement by Ogoni leaders, with Saro-Wiwa touring the U.S. and Europe in late 1993 and 1994. As late as April 1994, foreign journalists could enter Ogoniland with relative ease. Only after the murders of the four chiefs did Nigerian security forces attempt to prevent free movement in and out of Ogoniland, but even then MOSOP succeeded for some time in faxing almost daily press releases, apparently based on eyewitness accounts, from Port Harcourt to UNPO in The Hague. In sum, the lateness

---

222 Informant 11; Spriggs and May, "Postscript: August 1990," 117.
and ineffectiveness of state response permitted the development and persistence of a remarkably efficient network linking local Ogoni activists and transnational supporters.

By contrast, when PNG imposed its blockade, the Bougainvilleans had no transnational network in place; BIG representatives in the Solomon Islands and Australia have been forced to develop such a network without regular access to their constituency and leaders on the island. International media access to the island is also risky and has therefore been limited. Finally, the island's isolation has meant that PNG's communications blockade has been highly effective; communication between BRA and the outside world has been extremely difficult since the blockade.223

Thus, rapid and harsh state repression like that used by PNG is a potent tool for preventing the establishment of strong transnational linkages, particularly if it prevents domestic activists from reaching transnational actors. On the other hand, if such linkages already exist, as they did in the Ogoni case, later state repression may well backfire internationally. Of course, in each case, the state's response was itself conditioned by the demands and actions of each insurgent group; PNG met the Bougainvilleans' declaration of independence and use of violence with harsh repression and an effective blockade. For a lengthy period during which MOSOP built a transnational network, the Nigerian state ignored Ogoni activities because MOSOP's ambiguous demand for autonomy and its early lack of mobilization within Ogoniland appeared to create no direct, near-term threat to state interests. When that threat began to emerge, particularly as MOSOP continued to embarrass Nigeria on the world stage, pose a potential threat to state oil revenues, and serve as a model for other restive minorities in Nigeria, the state took harsh but relatively ineffective measures.

Recent studies seeking to explain sharply different international media coverage of seemingly similar humanitarian disasters also point to access as a key factor. As Steven Livingston shows in his comparison of similar cases of famine in Somalia and Sudan, differences in the ease

223 Informant 5; Informant 11; Informant 15.
and safety of media access to the site of a conflict go far in explaining different levels of international attention.224

Resources. Another factor, material resources, also appears to have played a role in the two insurgencies' different ability to gain access to transnational networks. While I have only indirect and circumstantial evidence about the varying financial resources of the two groups, it is sufficient to warrant discussion of this factor and to justify its examination in other cases. Ogoni resources appear to have been substantially larger than those of the Bougainvilleans. Ken Saro-Wiwa's personal wealth is unclear, but appears to have been significant, accumulated through years as a successful businessman, then as writer and producer of a long standing comedy which was Nigeria's most popular television program for over eight years.225 Through these financial successes, Saro-Wiwa was able to send his children to live in England and be educated at prestigious schools such as Eton.226 Saro-Wiwa's financial resources were matched by a willingness to spend considerable sums on the Ogoni cause; Saro-Wiwa mentions in several parts of his memoir that he paid for key MOSOP activities and important travel himself.227 Beginning in the summer of 1993, MOSOP also benefited from the financial and material support of the Body Shop particularly as Saro-Wiwa's execution neared. While the exact amounts involved are unclear, the Body Shop currently provides office space for MOSOP in central London.228 Thus, although I do not have direct evidence to prove it, there is considerable circumstantial evidence that MOSOP leaders had substantial material resources.

It would seem logical to assume that any difference in financial resources would have important impacts. Gaining transnational support does not come cheap; in many cases it requires


227 Month and a Day, 89; Informant 14, June 26, 1996.

228 Informant 12a; Informant 13.
sustained "lobbying" efforts among transnational NGOs, efforts possible only if an insurgent group has substantial resources or a patron willing to supply such resources. Saro-Wiwa could make frequent and extended visits to Western Europe and North America, allowing him to be "doggedly persistent" about contacting transnational NGOs.\textsuperscript{229} His itinerary and actions on these visits could be flexible and open-ended, rather than limited to a set of activities approved by a funding agency. By contrast, the Bougainvilleans have no similarly wealthy leader or benefactor and as a result must spend considerable time simply fund-raising to support international activities. Funding has been limited and difficult to find, and BIG has relied largely on a small Fijian NGO, the Pacific Concerns Resource Center.\textsuperscript{230}

Nonetheless, it is worth stressing that BIG has been able to send representatives to international conferences where it has pleaded Bougainville's case and won some limited support. While BIG leaders complain that these grants are small and often include limitations on usage of funds, they have enabled BIG to establish initial contacts with transnational networks.\textsuperscript{231} The fact that these contacts have not blossomed into the substantial and sustained support won by the Ogoni appears likely to result not so much from differences in material resources as from other factors.

_Knowledge._ One of these factors relates to the knowledge, experience and character of MOSOP's leadership, in particular Ken Saro-Wiwa. As discussed above, Bougainville leaders have recognized the importance of having "attractive" and adept international spokespersons for their movement; for key posts, BIG has carefully selected individuals with various "advantages" in their knowledge of and comfort with international organizations and audiences.

Among staff persons in the few transnational NGOs having substantial contacts with both groups, however, there is agreement that the Ogoni had a clear advantage over the Bougainvilleans.

\textsuperscript{229} Informant 14, June 26, 1996.

\textsuperscript{230} Informant 11.

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
and most other insurgencies in having Ken Saro-Wiwa as their leader and spokesperson. First, Saro-Wiwa had pre-existing contacts with influential literary and journalistic circles in England. By contrast, the Bougainvillians, and most other ethnic insurgencies seeking support, do not have easy access to such networks. As early as 1991, Saro-Wiwa tapped the networks, seeking the English author William Boyd's advice about transnational environmental and human rights NGOs that might help promote the Ogoni cause. "It was to William that I turned whenever I hit a brick wall in my solicitation on behalf of the Ogoni." Moreover, Saro-Wiwa states that before he took on the Ogoni cause, he was "already a regular at Bush House, London," BBC headquarters, thanks to his various literary efforts. Thus, when he "began to push the Ogoni story, the BBC African Service became an ally." Of course, as Part I's analysis showed, while these linkages may have helped Saro-Wiwa "get his foot in the door" at a number of transnational environmental and human rights NGOs, they were not enough to keep the groups from rejecting his initial pleas for support.

In addition to Saro-Wiwa's knowledge of and linkages with networks potentially helpful in the quest for transnational support, his specialized experience with marketing, television production, and the media were a unique asset in "sell[ing] our movement." I realized quite early the value of publicity to the [Ogoni Day] protest march, and, indeed, to the entire Ogoni movement. I had . . . learnt quite a bit about how to promote an idea or a product during my television production days. The lesson came in very handy . . . Now as I tried to promote Ogoni, all the foregoing came together and made my work not only easy but also inexpensive. I am quite convinced that if we had hired a public relations firm to promote our cause, it would have cost us millions of dollars and we would not have achieved the success we did, a success which proved a nightmare to our opponents.

232 See, e.g., Informant 15, Personal Interview, July 12, 1996; Informant 5, Telephone Interview, June 25, 1996; Informant 1, Personal Interview, July 17, 1996.

233 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 88.

234 Ibid., 140. Reporters at the BBC confirm Saro-Wiwa's attempts to use his contacts there to advance Ogoni interests.

235 Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 152.

236 Ibid., 138-39. See also Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day; 58-9, 65, 118, 147, 152. Saro-Wiwa had great faith in the power of public relations; in a 1990 interview for an article giving a purely personal and literary
Two other factors are also worth noting. While Saro-Wiwa was clearly the linchpin of the movement, MOSOP's leadership had considerable depth, with many professionals, including public relations experts, lawyers, and politicians who lent their expertise to the movement as well. Finally, Saro-Wiwa's charisma and sophistication helped considerably in his dealings with transnational NGOs and the media; many interviewees in the transnational support network remarked on these unusual qualities.

On each of the foregoing issues, the Bougainvilleans suffer by comparison to the Ogonis. Lacking a spokesman with even minimal international profile, BRA/BIG appears to have had none of the pre-existing contacts and access to transnational networks that Saro-Wiwa provided for MOSOP. This factor reduced BRA/BIG's ability to lobby transnational NGOs. In addition, this deficit, along with the Bougainvillean leadership's apparent lack of specialized public relations and media experience, helps explain the "fairly uninformed level of understanding by the BRA leadership of the diplomatic and political implications of their acts ..."237 Finally, as several interviewees familiar with both the Ogoni and the Bougainvilleans affirmed, no one in the BIG/BRA leadership can match Saro-Wiwa's charisma and force.

The "Match": Factors Conditioning NGO Adoption

Even if an insurgent group "gets in the door" and establishes initial contacts with transnational NGOs, as many insurgent groups now manage to do, sustained support from transnational NGOs remains a rarity. The theory of this dissertation suggests that support hinges on the "match" between various insurgent characteristics and the interests and needs of potential transnational supporters. While my examination of the Bougainville case has been too limited to provide definitive reasons for BIG's failure to gain transnational support, the case sheds additional light on some of the "match" factors involved in the Ogoni case.

---

Tactical Factors: Insurgent Violence vs. Nonviolence. The Ogoni-Bougainville comparison throws one factor into sharp relief—the tactics of the two insurgencies and their impact on potential transnational supporters. The tactics of the two movements differed sharply. MOSOP leaders repeatedly and publicly stressed MOSOP's nonviolence both within and outside Nigeria; MOSOP's most important mobilization was a peaceful mass protest; MOSOP has never had an armed wing; and MOSOP has denied involvement in violence in the region, most notably the killing of the four chiefs. While some Ogoni undoubtedly perpetrated acts of violence and sabotage, these were not systematic and none were openly sanctioned by MOSOP; indeed MOSOP continually disavowed such acts. BIG sharply differs from MOSOP on these tactical issues, with the Bougainvilleans openly embracing armed struggle through the BRA as the primary means of achieving their goals. Moreover, the BRA (like the PNGDF) has won a reputation both for indiscipline and for repression and killing of civilian opponents.

MOSOP's nonviolence, as continually stressed by Saro-Wiwa and documented by videotapes of the peaceful Ogoni Day March, strongly attracted transnational NGOs. While MOSOP's nonviolence predated its turn to the international realm and served important domestic interests of the movement, MOSOP also understood the importance of continued Ogoni peacefulness in gaining support from the international NGOs and developed country audiences it sought to attract.238 Thus, MOSOP leaders went to considerable lengths to assure that the Ogoni Day march and other mobilizations were relatively peaceful. Throughout the period of transnational support as well, key NGOs in the Ogoni network urged Saro-Wiwa to maintain MOSOP's nonviolence, stressing that nonviolence was critical to continued high levels of transnational support. Once MOSOP had proved its peacefulness and transnational linkages had been established, attempts by Shell and the state to portray MOSOP as violent failed.

238 Informant 13.
By contrast, BRA's embrace of the military option and its use of terror probably foreclosed support from many of the transnational NGOs important in the Ogoni case. For most environmental advocacy NGOs, violence toward people is anathema; "adoption" of an insurgent organization such as BRA/BIG would violate the NGOs' ethical foundations and undermine their constituent support.

**Substantive Match.** My historical comparison within the Ogoni case suggested that NGOs are more likely to support an insurgency if there is a match between the goals of the insurgents and those of potential supporters. Superficially, at least, the Bougainville case presents a challenge to this argument: it presents the same fertile mix of issues that formed the basis for transnational NGOs' interest in and support of the Ogoni--indigenous rights; government human rights violations; and environmental "devastation" by a major multinational corporation. Yet BCL and RTZ have not become objects of transnational attack as Shell did in the Ogoni case. Again, my limited examination of the Bougainville case is insufficient to be sure of the reasons for this, but contrasting the Bougainville and Ogoni cases is helpful in throwing further light on Ogoni success.

BIG like MOSOP has recognized the value of environmental issues as a means of attracting transnational support. And as in the case of MOSOP, there was a basis for attacks on the environmental record of the multinational corporation involved in the conflict. Yet in BIG's case, attempts at reframing did not lead to successful transnationalization. Part of the reason may simply have been that the Bougainvilleans were less adept than the Ogoni at reframing and marketing. MOSOP, led by Saro-Wiwa and a number of other professionals trained as public relations experts, appears to have had an advantage over BIG in this respect. Two other factors highlighted by the Bougainville contrast probably also played a major role in the Ogonis' successful reframing: Shell's continued presence in the conflict region as MOSOP sought to transnationalize the conflict; and the character of MOSOP's political goals and tactics.

---


240 Informant 13; Informant 11.
In seeking to gain the support of transnational environmental NGOs, MOSOP capitalized on Shell's continued presence in Ogoniland through mid-1993. Photographs and videotapes of environmental "devastation" could be linked directly and immediately to Shell's continuing operations. More important, Shell's alleged responsibility for, if not involvement in repression became a key "fact" of the transnational campaign. In particular, the Biara incident attracted the support of transnational environmental organizations such as Greenpeace and FOE even as the charges of Shell's complicity in later assaults and killings resonated with environmentalists' suspicions of multinational corporations. Once Shell had become central to the domestic and international campaigns, the company's withdrawal from Ogoniland in August 1993 did not eject it from the campaign; instead, in part because of Shell's unsuccessful public efforts to defend itself and in part because of its continuing major presence in the Niger Delta among comparably affected minority communities, the company stayed at the center of the conflict. In this light, it seems likely that BCL/RTZ's withdrawal from Bougainville in 1989 before BIG's attempts to gain transnational support may have denied the insurgency a "useful" corporate opponent.

What were the reasons for Shell's late and BCL's early withdrawal from the regions of conflict? As suggested above, this was primarily a result of the insurgencies' contrasting tactics. BRA's violence systematically targeted BCL facilities in 1989, forcing the mine's early closure and the company's withdrawal. By contrast, while MOSOP's publicly proclaimed nonviolence did not prevent some sabotage against Shell, these sporadic and uncoordinated actions did not force Shell to withdraw from Ogoniland early in the conflict. Instead, significant violence forcing Shell's shut down in late summer 1993 began after the Ogoni had established key bases of transnational support, e.g., with UNPO, Greenpeace and FOE.

A broader point may also be made with regard to the issue of reframing: the central goals of an insurgent group may affect its ability to reframe and thereby gain support. The Ogoni-Bougainville comparison provides preliminary support for this hypothesis, though it requires further testing. The initial goals of the two insurgencies differed in several respects. BIG sought independence for Bougainville; MOSOP sought "self determination" or "political autonomy" within
Nigeria. The goals of the two movements also differed in a more subtle but nonetheless important respect: BIG's overt goal, independence, is unambiguous, while MOSOP's is nebulous. While some observers have seen BIG's declaration of independence as a bargaining ploy aimed at improving Bougainville's position within PNG, BIG's message to the world was unequivocal—and backed by arms. 241

These differences may well have had effects on the insurgencies' attempts to gain transnational support. In the Ogoni case, MOSOP's ambiguous political goals made plausible its subsequent casting of Shell as a primary villain. Transnational actors could overlook long standing and continuing demands for greater political autonomy (to the extent they knew about them) because MOSOP had not taken action clearly establishing the state as the primary source of Ogoni discontent. By contrast, the Bougainvilleans' war of national liberation probably made it less plausible for BIG to refocus the conflict on environmental issues or the destructive practices of a multinational corporation even though RTZ's record of environmental impacts in southern Bougainville might otherwise have served as a sufficient basis for such reframing.

To put this hypothesis in more abstract terms, clear and unambiguous political goals reduce the potential for reframing demands and conflicts for new audiences; ambiguous goals are more plastic creating greater opportunities for strategic reframing. It may also be that a "radical" political goal such as national independence is more difficult to transmogrify into a "non-political" objective than a seemingly less radical goal such as "autonomy" within an existing state.

Organizational Factors. Potential supporters of an insurgency are concerned with the costs and benefits of making a commitment to an insurgent group. As a result, certain characteristics of the insurgency, its conflict, and its opponents may affect transnational actors' decisions about whether to give support.

Internal unity of the insurgency. The Ogoni case study underlined the importance of two "cost" issues which transnational actors face in deciding whether to commit resources to an insurgent group: Are the insurgent group's claims accurate? And does the group in fact represent

its putative constituency? My limited analysis of the Bougainville case is insufficient to prove that inability to deal with these issues affected BIG's levels of transnational support, but comparison with the Ogoni case throws further light on the role of these issues and of organizational factors more broadly.

I will concentrate here on proofs of an insurgency's unity. Lack of unity within an insurgency increases potential transnational supporters' risks in allying with a particular faction. First there is the risk of allying with the "wrong" organization, one which does not represent the affected population, thereby risking loss of the transnational actor's reputation. Second, even if the first risk is accepted or minimized through research concerning the rival factions, the efficacy of transnational support may be questioned: Will such support be used to challenge the state and its policies or a rival insurgent organization and its leadership?

The contrast between the Ogoni and Bougainville cases is quite sharp on the issue of insurgent unity despite the fact that factionalism is endemic to political movements and that both the Ogoni and Bougainvilleans suffered from it. In the Ogoni case, Ogoni leaders were relatively unified at the early stages of attempted transnationalization. Despite MOSOP's initial failure to convince leaders of all six Ogoni kingdoms to sign the Bill of Rights and despite early internal disputes between "traditional" and emergent leaders, there was little open disaffection from the movement before mid-January 1993. Moreover, for several months thereafter, defections were limited and factionalism largely unknown to MOSOP's growing transnational support base. Only with MOSOP's decision to boycott the June elections did large numbers of prominent Ogoni leaders leave MOSOP and establish an organized opposition to Saro-Wiwa. By that time, however, Ogoni unity behind MOSOP and Saro-Wiwa had been memorialized for foreign audiences by Glen Ellis's 1992 film which included interviews with Ogoni leaders who later left MOSOP,242 by videotape of the January 3, 1993 Ogoni Day March, and by the testimony of outside observers and reporters. Moreover, even when factionalism grew, it remained largely

---

242 The Heat of the Moment includes interviews with leaders of both future Ogoni "factions," Saro-Wiwa and Edward Kobani one of the four "murdered chiefs."
invisible to transnational observers until April 1994; despite efforts by Shell and the Nigerian state to publicize and thereby support rival Ogoni factions, no alternative Ogoni organization challenged MOSOP on the international stage. Even if such an organization had done so, moreover, it would have had to prove its own bona fides, a difficult task given transnational NGOs' prior commitments to and connections with MOSOP and the videotaped "proof" of Ogoni unity behind MOSOP and Saro-Wiwa. Only with the murders of the four Ogoni chiefs in April 1994 did the true depth of factionalism become clear to transnational actors, but by then MOSOP's most important international linkages had been established and MOSOP appeared the "true representative" of most Ogoni. Moreover, notwithstanding Saro-Wiwa's acid criticism of "vultures" among the MOSOP defectors, he and MOSOP steadfastly denied responsibility for the four chiefs' murders, blaming Nigerian security forces instead.

By contrast, factionalism has been endemic to and prominent in the Bougainville struggle since before BRA's formation and BIG's sustained efforts at transnationalization. Since the late 1980s, there have been bitter and bloody disputes within Bougainville over who among the island's residents should benefit from its mineral riches, the "landowners" in the mine area or the population as a whole. Even within the area immediately surrounding the mine, disputes between "landowners" who hold title and those who do not played a key role in BRA's formation and the start of violence. Incidents analogous to the murder of the four Ogoni chiefs occurred on Bougainville as early as 1989 with assassinations which the BRA openly "justified" by claiming, inter alia, that the victims "wanted to lie to the national government that the people of Bougainville wanted state government. But in fact what the people wanted was full independence from PNG."244 Nor were these assassinations isolated and "understandable" incidents at the commencement of a nationalist struggle. Throughout much of the conflict, the BRA has lacked


discipline and has harassed and assaulted Bougainvilleans who express "any opinion short of total support for independence."\textsuperscript{245} There have also been open divisions between BRA and BIG, probably exacerbated by difficulties in communication between the two groups.

Importantly, these early schisms received substantial Australian media attention. For example, following BIG's signature of an interim peace agreement with PNG in 1991, high-ranking BIG officials and Australian print and television reporters accompanied the first food supply shipment to arrive in Bougainville. In a "public relations disaster," the 23-year old BRA leader at the port publicly insulted the BIG officials, rejected the aid, and forced the ship out to sea. To compound this public show of BRA-BIG disharmony, the local BRA leader at the scene stated in an interview on Australian television that he had sent the ship to sea in direct contravention of the orders of the BRA Supreme Command.\textsuperscript{246} Nor was this incident or the publicity surrounding it unique; other splits between BIG and the BRA, and deadly battles between the BRA leadership and "rascal" elements, are frequent and have been widely reported in Australia.

Staff among the few transnational organizations familiar with both the Ogoni and Bougainville movements, have noted not so much the Bougainvilleans' factionalism as the unusual unity shown by the Ogoni.\textsuperscript{247} While the reality of unity may be questioned in the Ogoni case (as in any other political movement), MOSOP effectively projected itself to international audiences as the legitimate representative of a unified and mobilized Ogoni populace through mid-1993. There appear to be a number of reasons for this, including MOSOP's strong and disciplined organizational structure and its knowledge and skillful use of video images.

To summarize the main points of this section, the timing and visibility of inevitable factionalism play important roles in an insurgency's likelihood of gaining transnational support. If substantial factionalism arises before rather than after establishment of a transnational network, it


\textsuperscript{247} Informant 15.
raises the potential costs of providing support. This negative effect of factionalism is of course contingent on its visibility to potential transnational supporters. In part, of course, visibility hinges on the existence of actual group unity, on the timing of breakdown, and on the character of factionalism, i.e., whether it is expressed violently or not. But the Ogoni case suggests that equally important is the ability to stage events that demonstrate unity. This ability depends in part on the degree of actual unity of the insurgency but also on the ability of an insurgent organization to mobilize its constituency (in a controlled manner) and manage and publicize the event. MOSOP proved highly adept at these skills; BIG did not.

*Nature of insurgency's opponents.* The contrast with the Bougainville case also throws light on two other cost factors that may have affected NGO decisions about whether to support MOSOP: the nature of the corporate opponent and the nature of the state in each case. While my examination of the Bougainville case was too limited to make definitive claims, the following hypotheses are worth further investigation: Insurgencies challenging integrated corporations which produce and sell well-known consumer items in the developed world are more likely to gain support; and insurgencies opposing more"important" states stand a better chance of winning support.

Differences between the multinational corporations involved in the two conflicts may explain differences in the two insurgencies' abilities to attract the support of transnational NGOs particularly in the environmental sector. While both SPDC and BCL are subsidiaries of large and powerful multinational corporations, the parent corporations differ in their corporate operations and images. Informants at environmental organizations in the transnational Ogoni support network described Shell as a good target for transnational action. Because the Royal Dutch/Shell Group is an integrated producer and marketer of petroleum products, activists could draw a common-sense link between Shell operations in Nigeria and the Shell service station "on the corner," notwithstanding Shell's protestations and legalistic distinctions within the Shell Group. Moreover, environmentalists believed that Shell's important retail operations made it image conscious and therefore sensitive to international protests and boycotts. As part of this image consciousness,
Shell had widely advertised an environmentally-friendly image in Europe, leaving it open to one of MOSOP's primary attacks, Shell's environmental double standards for the developed and developing worlds.\textsuperscript{248} By contrast, when questioned about the issue, environmentalists stated that protests against RTZ would be less effective because the company operates under its own name chiefly as a producer and marketer to other companies. As a result, environmentalists believed, a boycott of RTZ would have been harder to mobilize, and RTZ would have been less susceptible to consumer action than Shell, making it a less tempting target for transnational protests.\textsuperscript{249}

Another possible explanation hinges on the contrasting "importance" of the target states in the two cases: Nigeria a large, oil producing country with pretensions of being an African power; and Papua New Guinea, a smaller, "less important" country with few prospects of even regional power status. According to this argument, suggested by Bougainville leaders themselves, conflicts involving "important" states are likely to gain transnational attention because they have implications for many other actors, whereas conflicts in global backwaters may go unheeded. There are several problems with this explanation beginning with the difficulty of defining "importance." In addition, it seems clear that importance of the target state is not a sufficient factor for explaining successful transnationalization. Within Nigeria, the success of the Ogoni is a rarity; other minorities both in the Delta region and elsewhere have unsuccessfully sought transnational support, and the success of Ogoni transnationalization varied over time and with shifts in group strategy.\textsuperscript{250} To evaluate whether state importance is a necessary or at least a contributing factor in the development of widespread transnational support for an insurgency would require examination of other cases.

\textbf{Gatekeeper Groups.} The Ogoni-Bougainville comparison also indicates that a seemingly important instigating factor for successful Ogoni transnationalization, MOSOP's early linkage with

\textsuperscript{248} Informant 2; Informant 5; Informant 14, June 26, 1996.

\textsuperscript{249} Informant 5, June 26, 1996; Informant 9.

\textsuperscript{250} Chapter Four's comparison between vastly different international attention and support for two similar Mexican insurgencies also makes this point.
UNPO, may be less important than Part I of this Chapter would indicate. BIG established close relations with UNPO at almost the same time as MOSOP and has taken advantage of or been capable of taking advantage of many of the same benefits of UNPO membership as MOSOP. \textsuperscript{251} If correct, this conclusion de-emphasizes the role of early international supporters such as UNPO and highlights the central importance of the strategies and decisions of insurgents themselves in the transnationalization process. As such, this conclusion confirms the common sense expectation that insurgent actors who initiate the transnationalization process are themselves agents, albeit agents in need of assistance, rather than passive objects of transnational gatekeepers. Moreover, this conclusion conforms to the testimony of those involved in the process, both entrepreneurs who emphasize that their own organizations "call the shots," and staff at transnational NGOs who claim merely to "facilitate" the transnationalization process. Thus, while early contact with and adoption by groups such as UNPO may enhance the likelihood of substantial and sustained transnational support, it does not guarantee it.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The comparative analysis in Part II has identified several additional factors explaining Ogoni success in light of Bougainvilllean failure at gaining transnational support. In contrast to the largely strategic factors uncovered by Part I's historical analysis of the Ogoni case, many of these factors concern underlying "structural" differences between the two cases. I do not claim that these factors necessarily exhaust those relevant to the transnationalization process; while the particular cross-case comparison in Part II of the chapter has helped uncover these factors, a comparison with other "success" and "failure" cases in subsequent chapters will give a more complete picture of the factors involved.

With the execution of Saro-Wiwa, with most other MOSOP leaders having fled Nigeria, and with continuing repression in Ogoniland, some of the key factors that facilitated Ogoni

\textsuperscript{251} Informant 11; Informant 13.
transnationalization have disappeared. It is therefore worthwhile considering the implications of this chapter's analysis for the Ogoni movement's future. On the domestic level, the result may be withering of the movement in its present form. The probability of continuing state repression and some Shell concessions seems likely to defuse major domestic mobilization in the near future. But Ogoni and broader minority discontent are perennial features of Nigerian politics, and the explosive issue of indigenous rights in Africa, half submerged in the environmental and human rights issues of the Ogoni conflict, is likely to recur.

Internationally, prospects for the Ogoni are also mixed. On one hand, certain aspects of the movement appear strong and secure. Many of the NGO staff members who composed important links in the transnational Ogoni support network continue to work for powerful environmental and human rights NGOs. They and others in these NGOs appear ready and willing to spring into action on behalf of the Ogoni in the future if necessary; in some cases in fact, these staff members continue to work on Ogoni issues or broader issues of Nigerian oil exploitation and the Niger Delta environment. There is little doubt as well that Saro-Wiwa himself has entered the pantheon of environmental and human rights martyrs. He and the Ogoni will undoubtedly long serve as powerful international symbols of multinational corporate excesses and egregious human rights violations.

On the other hand, the Bougainville example bodes ill for one of the most unique and important aspects of the Ogoni movement, the dynamic and powerful linkage between local-level MOSOP mobilization in Ogoniland and transnational NGO supporters. In its heyday, that linkage produced coordinated action in local, national, and international arenas. But the Nigerian state's harsh repression in Ogoniland has severed the linkage, probably permanently. Much of the Ogoni leadership has been killed or fled the country, and the new Ogoni diaspora is scattered across

---

252 Human Rights Watch/Africa.

North America and Europe. While MOSOP's current leader attempts to remain in contact with events on the ground in Ogoniland, travel is now risky and communication difficult.254

As in the Bougainville case, these factors may take a toll on MOSOP activities. Without Saro-Wiwa's leadership, factionalism may become more rampant and visible both in the Ogoni diaspora and between the diaspora and those who remain in Nigeria. Moreover, with the MOSOP leadership scattered, coordinated action will probably become difficult even on the international plane. And perhaps most important, long-term coordination between local and international levels is likely to become extremely difficult.

254 Informant 12.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING AND THE
MEDIA-CENTERED PATHWAY TO TRANSNATIONAL SUPPORT

Introduction

Shortly after midnight on January 1, 1994, 2000 guerrillas from the Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional (Zapatista National Liberation Army) (EZLN or Zapatistas), a previously unknown organization, attacked and seized four towns in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. Composed largely of Mayan Indians, the EZLN proclaimed its uprising the product of 500 years' neglect and abuse suffered by Mexico's poor and indigenous. In the following twelve days, the Zapatistas attracted tremendous international media attention as they fought and then retreated under heavy government fire. Simultaneously, they gained a burst of sympathy and support from Mexican and international NGOs. Over 140 NGOs arrived in Chiapas in the first week, while both within and outside Mexico public protest against government counterattacks grew rapidly.1 Responding to the mounting pressure, the Mexican government declared a unilateral cease-fire on January 12, 1994, allowing the Zapatistas to retain their arms and a territorial base.

Over the following months, outside awareness, sympathy, and support continued to grow as the Zapatistas, leading and responding to mobilized public opinion, pushed for political reforms. Within Mexico, political, social, and cultural organizations expressed support for the Zapatistas,

and the masked Zapatista spokesman subcomandante Marcos became a national celebrity. Outside Mexico, the rebels received moral, tactical, and material support from a wide variety of NGOs in the indigenous rights, social justice, human rights, labor, and peace sectors; they became darlings of leftist intellectuals and academics; and they became objects of intense media attention. Since spring 1994, Zapatista-government negotiations on a wide variety of issues have proceeded slowly and haltingly, but, while media interest has waned, much of the Zapatistas' NGO base has remained interested, aware, and supportive.

The Puzzle

As Jorge Domínguez has commented, the early stages of the Zapatista uprising "worried or enthralled most Mexicans and much of the world."² For this dissertation, the question is Why? Why did their uprising become an object of such tremendous attention outside Mexico despite the fact that the Zapatistas clearly posed no military threat to the Mexican state? Why did Zapatista support grow so rapidly during the uprising's first 12 days even though almost nothing was known about the EZLN other than the seemingly damning fact that it had initiated a conflict costing hundreds of lives, displacing tens of thousands of civilians, and causing great amounts of damage? Why, moreover, did the Zapatistas' international support remain strong for so long, continuing to this day, albeit at reduced levels?

The Argument

This chapter offers the following explanation for Zapatista transnationalization: First, the Zapatistas won great international attention both through reporting by the world media and through their own lobbying. In the first twelve days of the uprising, when lobbying was difficult because the Zapatistas were fighting or in retreat, media reporting was the primary means by which the Zapatistas won attention. The EZLN's spectacular attacks, on NAFTA's implementation date, attracted strong media interest, and the territorial seizures and urban occupations permitted

---
journalists relatively easy access to the zones of conflict even after the Zapatistas began retreating. After the January 12 cease-fire, Zapatista lobbying played a far greater role, as the Zapatistas made their case directly to domestic and international actors through a torrent of communiqués and interviews published in the Mexican and international press and distributed over electronic communication networks. (Promotion and lobbying.)

Second, despite Zapatista initiation of violence, international awareness of the uprising changed to support even among some transnational actors normally opposed to violence. This change occurred in part because Zapatista violence was perceived as legitimate: authoritative reports, many prepared in the context of the recent NAFTA debates, quickly confirmed political repression and economic oppression particularly of Chiapas’s Indian population; and in the initial weeks of the uprising, the Zapatistas strove to prove their own bona fides as indigenous peoples. In addition, the Zapatista strategy of territorial seizure invited a strong military response from the Mexican state. When this response quickly ensued, it was perceived as disproportionate and indiscriminate, transforming the Zapatistas into victims or potential victims and pushing initial Zapatista violence into the background. (Tactical Fit.)

Third, Zapatista successes at seizing towns and quickly winning a cease-fire created powerful organizational incentives for various international actors to lend their support. On one hand, the benefits of support appeared high, particularly for "leftist" and indigenous actors looking for successful contemporary political models. On the other hand, the costs of support appeared low. From early in the uprising, there was little question about the legitimacy of Zapatista grievances because of the spate of widely available reports from the media and independent experts substantiating Zapatista grievances. Nor did transnational supporters question Zapatista representativeness given the size of the Zapatista fighting force and the overwhelmingly positive response to the uprising within Mexican civil society. (Organizational Fit.)

Finally, in the initial period, the vagueness and moderation of Zapatista goals encouraged support from a wide variety of international actors who had strong incentives to find or construct matching substantive goals with this highly successful and popular insurgency. Later, as Zapatista
goals became clearer and expected matches did not materialize, some initial supporters withdrew or reduced their support. At the same time, however, the Zapatistas attracted or increased support as a result of other processes: Increases in state violence brought in international human rights organizations, and they became heavily involved in monitoring and reporting violations. In addition, the Zapatistas' reframing of their goals and identity increased their support particularly among international networks that had recently opposed NAFTA and among indigenous rights organizations. (Substantive Fit.)

Design of the Chapter

Most analyses of the Zapatista's domestic success and international resonance have examined the case in isolation or have made broad comparisons without controlling for critical variables. Moreover, existing accounts have failed to recognize two distinct stages of external response to the uprising, the period January 1 - 12, 1994 and the period after January 12, particularly January 12 - March 2, 1994. Because there have been no systematic analyses of these questions thus far, reliable explanations for Zapatista success are not yet available; while some of the current, mostly journalistic explanations may be correct, this remains uncertain without controlled comparative analysis.3

In my case study of the Ogoni, I sought to overcome similar analytic deficits through historical and cross-case comparison. In the Zapatista case, historical comparison is less useful; prior to Jan. 1, 1994 the Zapatistas were unknown and after that date they won attention and support immediately--literally within hours of their initial attacks on San Cristóbal and other Chiapan towns. While it is possible to analyze the ebb and flow of international media coverage.

---

and NGO support after the armed uprising (and I do so), such an analysis does not directly tackle the animating question of this dissertation. In addition, these ebbs and flows all occurred in the wake of—and were therefore affected by—the tremendous national and international attention won by the Zapatistas at the earliest stages of the revolt. This problem, while not fatal to historical analysis, makes it less useful than in the Ogoni case.

A recent political development—the rise of a second armed guerrilla movement in Mexico's southern states—provides a good basis for comparative analysis, however. As discussed, in greater detail below, the Ejército Popular Revolucionario (Popular Revolutionary Army) (EPR) attacked government installations in several Mexican states in late August, 1996 and has sought Mexican and international attention since then. In many ways, the EPR is quite similar to the EZLN—their goals, ideology, tactics, and social context all overlap to a significant degree. Yet, in comparison to the EZLN, the EPR has been strikingly unsuccessful in gaining international attention and support, a fact which directly challenges some of the prevalent explanations for Zapatista success. The contrasting EZLN and EPR experiences create conditions close to a "natural experiment," and I therefore structure the core of the Chapter, Part II, as a comparison between the two insurgencies though with an explanatory focus on the EZLN. To further support the argument, I will also make explicit though limited counterfactual analyses in Part II. I begin, however, with brief empirical accounts of the EZLN and EPR, their activities, and national and international reaction to the two groups (Part I).

Caveats

Before proceeding to the body of the chapter several caveats and definitions are necessary. First, I use the terms "uprising," "revolt," and "rebellion" interchangeably, to refer not only to the Zapatistas' short-lived armed actions but to the subsequent period of negotiations. By this definition, the uprising continues because the Zapatistas retain their arms and are still negotiating with the Mexican government over a variety of issues. In this chapter, however, I focus on the early stages of the uprising, primarily before March 2, 1994, because these stages saw the initial and most rapid growth of outside attention and support.
Second, for analytic purposes, I draw distinctions between a number of causal factors. As will become clear, however, there are substantial overlaps between some of the factors, and my analytic distinctions are therefore artificial. Without question, multiple factors were involved and synergies developed between these factors, leading to enhanced attention and support for the Zapatistas. Notwithstanding this inevitable analytic difference from the "real-world," the distinctions I draw are prerequisites for analysis and theory-building; I will use them despite their artificiality.

Third, the Zapatista case raises a threshold issue not raised by the Ogoni case. Unlike the Ogoni, the Zapatistas won tremendous domestic backing along with great international attention and support. From an empirical standpoint, this means that it is often difficult to state that the Zapatistas took actions or issued statements solely with an international audience in mind. On one hand, it is clear that the Zapatistas placed great importance on the revolt's reception outside Mexico: asked in his first interview on January 1, 1994 whether conditions were right for the revolt, subcomandante Marcos focused first on the international context, "We think that the times are ripe at the international level . . . for the Mexican people to rise up against a long-standing dictatorship, in this case, a party dictatorship, as happened in [Eastern] Europe." In addition as discussed in the chapter, the Zapatistas took many actions aimed at gaining international attention and support. On the other hand, the reactions of Mexican society were of primary importance, and Zapatista strategy centered on the domestic arena though actions aimed at a Mexican audience often had

---

4 Subcomandante Marcos, "Subcomandante Marcos: On Origins," press conference, Jan. 1, 1994, in Voice of Fire: Communiqués and Interviews from the Zapatista National Liberation Army, ed. Ben Clarke and Clifton Ross, trans. Clifton Ross, et al. (Berkeley: New Earth Publications, 1994), 48. Note that several compilations of Zapatista documents and interviews have been published in Spanish, English, and other languages. For the most part in this chapter, I have relied on English translations of Zapatista documents and interviews, using a variety of translations rather than a single source. In most cases, I have checked English translations against each other and against the Spanish versions, then selected the translation that best captures the meaning of the original Spanish text. Most communiqués have been written by Subcomandante Marcos under that name or sometimes under the name Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. Other have been signed by the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee of the General Command (hereafter designated as EZLN, CCRI-CG), the General Command (hereafter designated as EZLN, CG), or another EZLN sub-unit. For the most part, EZLN communiqués are not titled; to reduce confusion, however, I have included titles composed by translators or editors from the cited compilations. In dating communiqués and interviews, I generally use the date of writing or interviewing as well as the date of initial publication. Particularly at the beginning of the uprising, there was often a significant gap between these dates and both dates are important.
parallel if weaker impacts on international audiences. The problem of determining whether the Zapatistas intended certain actions for a domestic or international audience is not fatal to my analysis, however, because the theory proposed in this dissertation focuses not only on the intentional actions of insurgent groups (although those are important) but also on the results of those actions whether intentional or not.

The uprising's domestic impact also raises a more fundamental issue for a dissertation concerning the reasons that small-scale Third World conflict sometimes gains great international attention and support: arguably, the Zapatista uprising was anything but small-scale; it shook Mexico's political structures to the core. In fact, however, it was the responses of third parties both national and international that gave the uprising much of its power. The Zapatistas seized only a handful of small municipalities on the periphery of southern Mexico, held them for only one to two days, and had at most about 2000 soldiers under arms. From this perspective, the Zapatista uprising closely resembles many other small-scale peasant uprisings which have remained far less well known.

Part I. The EZLN and EPR Insurgencies: An Empirical Account

The Zapatista Uprising and International Response

Background to the Zapatista Uprising

A key cause of the uprising is the poverty and backwardness of Chiapas, particularly the region around the Lacandon jungle where the Zapatista army formed. On most measures of socio-economic indicators, Chiapas ranks at or near the bottom of Mexico. Monolingual Indian speakers, who comprise a significant proportion of EZLN soldiers, account for a disproportionate

percentage of those in the deepest poverty. These Indians, classified under the broad rubric Mayas, include several language groups with members active in the EZLN.

For much of the Indian population, economic deprivation has been compounded by political repression. Chiapas has long been a bastion of authoritarian rule, marked by electoral fraud, lack of political accountability, and significant human rights violations. For the poor and indigenous of Chiapas, the result has been long-term frustration and rising resentment, with legal and political redress largely blocked and economic improvement a distant, seemingly futile hope.

Beyond these general background factors, a number of other factors helped shape the social context within which the Zapatista movement arose. In the 1970s and 1980s, rural discontent in the Lacandon region rose sharply because the Mexican government declared parts of the area an ecological reserve and sought to expel many of those living there. Leaders of the Catholic church in San Cristóbal, strong exponents of liberation theology, helped organize the peasants against these expulsions and in the process raised political consciousness among some in the region. Then, in 1983 12 urban-based, leftist organizers who would form the core of the Zapatista movement arrived in the jungle intending to propagate a relatively, conventional socialist ideology. Quickly finding their message unsuited for the isolated indigenous populations of the Lacandon, some of these leftists departed, but a core group remained for over ten years, gradually building a dedicated following of a few hundred mostly indigenous inhabitants. United behind vague goals of economic and political improvement, the Zapatista leaders shed much of their Marxist ideology in response to two harsh realities, ordinary life in the jungle and the extraordinary demise of state socialism in Europe. Throughout its slow expansion in the jungle, however, the EZLN focused on military strategies as a means both of bringing long-term social change and of protecting its constituent communities from attacks by local landowners.

---

6 Much of the information in this paragraph comes from Ross, *Rebellion from the Roots*, 278-81 passim.

Several events gave the final impetus to armed revolt and increased the numbers of Zapatista soldiers. While the Mexican government's agreement to sign NAFTA played some role, heightening fears that poor Mexican's would lose their meager income to cheap imported corn, events in earlier years were more important. From 1989 onward, economic conditions deteriorated markedly in the Lacandon, swelling EZLN ranks. In addition, Subcomandante Marcos has cited "two detonators": the 1988 Mexican presidential election "fraudulent[ly]" won by Carlos Salinas, the candidate of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) over the candidate of Mexico's left; and the Mexican government's unpopular 1992 decision to change Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which had previously held out the possibility of land redistribution to the rural poor through the ejido (communal land) system.\(^8\)

The Uprising: January 1 - January 12, 1994

The Zapatista attacks

The uprising began early on January 1, 1994, when Zapatista forces attacked the administrative seats of Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, and Altamirano, and the major city of San Cristóbal de las Casas, a popular destination for foreign tourists with a population of approximately 100,000. These attacks, timed to catch government forces at their least watchful, succeeded quickly and with relatively few casualties; by dawn on January 1, the Zapatistas controlled the four cities although fighting continued at police stations and nearby military bases. During the day, Zapatista forces also captured a number of smaller towns and villages nearby.\(^9\)

Zapatista declarations

In its written statements and press interviews on January 1, the EZLN vowed to march on Mexico City and topple the Mexican government. The group's positive political goals were less

---


9 On Dec. 30, 1993, the Zapatistas had seized an isolated government hospital, but this seizure appears to have gone unreported and unnoticed by the Mexican authorities until after the Zapatistas' main attacks on January 1, 1994. Rogelio Gómez Mejía, "Repelió el ejército ataque de alzados a la 31 zona militar" (Army repulses guerrilla attack on 31st military zone), La Jornada, Jan. 3, 1994, 5.
clear, with some rebels calling for socialism while others phrased their goals in broad terms of social justice and democracy. Concretely, they demanded a society in which the poor would gain "work, land, housing, food, health, [and] education"; in which Chiapas's indigenous populations would win democracy, representation, and respect; and in which the newly implemented North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA)—"a death sentence for the Indians... an international massacre"—would be repudiated.¹⁰

Even in the uprising's first hours, it was clear that the Zapatistas sought these goals within the existing Mexican state: the EZLN labeled themselves Mexican "patriots," took on the mantle of the Mexican revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, and claimed a right to rebel under Article 39 of the Constitution. At the same time, however, they sought status as a "belligerent force" under the Geneva Conventions of 1949. They also urged the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international organizations to enter, monitor, and police the conflict.¹¹

**Military and political response of the Mexican state**

The Mexican police and army, unprepared for the initial Zapatista attacks, took several days to regroup. Whether because of internal conflicts about how to proceed or simply because of organizational slowness, government reaction on January 1 and 2 was moderate and limited, particularly given the provocative Zapatista attacks and rhetoric. On January 1, the federal government signaled that it considered the uprising a local matter to be handled primarily through dialogue by the Chiapas state authorities. Military responses were small-scale and largely defensive, involving local police forces and army garrisons using light weapons.¹²


¹¹ EZLN, CG, "Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle."

¹² "Insta Gobernación al diálogo ante los sucesos de Chiapas" (Government urges dialogue for events in Chiapas), La Jornada, Jan. 2, 1994, 7; Tim Golden, "Rebel Attacks Hit 4 Towns in Mexico," New York Times,
By January 3, however, the army began a more vigorous counterattack and the Zapatistas fell into retreat. In army actions, dozens of combatants and civilians were killed, most in the rebel withdrawal from Ocosingo on January 4 and in an attempted rebel assault on a military base near San Cristóbal. By January 4, the military had begun extensive use of helicopters and heavy equipment, firing machine guns and rockets at villages and forests outside San Cristóbal and in the process wounding several Mexican journalists. By January 5, evidence of more serious and widespread army human rights abuses began to appear including news of seven summary executions in Ocosingo. Finally, by January 6, the government sealed the combat zone in apparent preparation for further assaults away from the media and local human rights organizations. With rapid augmentation of government fire-power and growing reports of army abuses, this strategy appeared likely to have bloody and brutal results. While the government made vague offers of a cease-fire, military action appeared the chief strategy, marked by aerial strafing, bombardment, and violent house-to-house searches of suspected rebel sympathizers.¹³

Simultaneously with its military response, the government opened a war of words against the Zapatistas. Aimed at tarring the group as violent radicals lacking popular support, government propaganda included accusations that Zapatista leaders were "foreigners," "professionals of violence," and members of notorious Mexican terrorist factions, the Revolutionary Workers Clandestine People's Union Party (PROCUP) and the Party of the Poor."¹⁴

---


Media reporting on the conflict

Once the Zapatistas abandoned the main towns and began their retreat to the jungle, they had few opportunities to counter government allegations or present their message to outside audiences. Their "voice" disappeared from the conflict until January 10.15 Though media accounts frequently referred to their earlier statements, their leaders were unable to respond to the government’s ongoing rhetorical attacks.

Notwithstanding this disadvantage, the Zapatistas appear to have suffered little from the Mexican government’s propaganda efforts chiefly because of reporting in the independent domestic and international media. As the fighting began, journalists from major domestic and international media flooded the region, and stories about the uprising led the news for much of early January. These stories called into question key aspects of the government "spin" on the Zapatistas. Just as important were detailed reports about the government’s increasingly heavy-handed counterattacks—particularly its use of air power—and about serious army human rights violations. These reports supported the EZLN’s eventual communiqué denying government "slanders and lies" about the group’s indigenous identity and its conduct of the war.16

Response of Mexican society

In their Declaration of War, the Zapatistas had explicitly appealed for support from Mexican and international civil society. While uncertain what their revolt would "provoke," the Zapatistas hoped it would spark a broad uprising in civil society, one comparable to the upheavals which toppled some of the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe in 1989. Within days of the uprising's start, initial Zapatista appeals for revolutionary solidarity were joined by appeals from Mexican
días, el EZLN paso de ser un grupo de '200 transgresores de la ley' a 'una organización profesional y bien entrenada'' (In a few days, the EZLN shifted from a group of '200 lawbreakers' to 'a professional and well-trained organization), *Proceso*, Jan. 10, 1994, 18-9.


sympathizers and human rights advocates, most importantly the well-known Catholic Bishop of San Cristóbal Samuel Ruiz, for outside action to prevent further bloodshed. The impact of these appeals is uncertain, but in the space of 12 days Mexican civil society "went from condemning us to trying to understand us" to massive demonstrations of sympathy and support.\textsuperscript{17} By January 12, there were harsh criticisms of government policy and major outpourings of support for the Zapatistas including a protest of tens of thousands in Mexico City's central square.\textsuperscript{18}

The international response

International responses paralleled Mexican ones, first largely surprise, concern, and condemnation both of violence and its presumed socio-economic causes, then a few days later rhetoric and action supporting the Zapatistas. In North America, Europe, and Latin America, various NGOs sprang into action despite uncertainties about the Zapatistas' goals, tactics, and identity. These actions centered on two locations, Chiapas itself and the NGOs' home states. In early January, international human rights NGOs including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Americas, and Physicians for Human Rights announced they were sending fact-finding missions to Chiapas to monitor the conflict and thereby reduce human rights violations.\textsuperscript{19} Indigenous peoples organizations based throughout the Americas sent delegations to the region to assess the situation and provide various forms of support to indigenous communities displaced by


\textsuperscript{18} Alonso Urrutia and Víctor Ballinas, "Un 'alto a la masacre' encabezó la marcha por la paz en Chiapas: La manifestación más numerosa desde 1988" ('Halt the massacre' led the march for peace in Chiapas: Largest demonstration since 1988), \textit{La Jornada}, Jan. 13, 1994, 8.

\textsuperscript{19} For overviews of international human rights activity surrounding the uprising, see Anne Marie Mergier, "5 organismos canadienses reportan crímenes del Ejército Mexicano: Condenar los abusos en Chiapas y condicionar el TLC, piden a Canadá" (Five Canadian organizations report Mexican army crimes: They ask Canada to condemn abuses in Chiapas and condition NAFTA), \textit{Proceso}, Jan. 24, 1994, 59-63; Anne Marie Mergier, "Organismos internacionales confirman detenciones masivas, torturas, desapariciones, ejecuciones sumarias y crueldad con enfermos y heridos" (International organizations confirm massive detentions, torture, disappearances, summary executions, and cruelty to the sick and wounded), \textit{Proceso}, Feb. 28, 1994, 24-8.
the fighting. And religious and social justice organizations rapidly established ties with local Chiapan NGOs sympathetic to Zapatista goals of economic and political reform.

In addition, these and other NGOs organized a variety of solidarity actions and peace protests outside Mexico as a means of calling international public attention to the fighting and pressuring the Mexican state. In North America, the network of labor, environmental, and leftist organizations that had fought and lost the NAFTA battle formed the nucleus for a Zapatista support network which picketed Mexican consulates and took other direct actions. In Europe, a variety of organizations sympathetic to the plight of Mexico's poor and indigenous staged protests, made statements of solidarity with the Zapatistas, and lobbied their states and the European Parliament for actions supporting peace and justice in Chiapas. Finally, within days of the uprising, many solidarity groups established Internet websites for exchange of information and coordination of protest activity, and the Zapatistas soon established their own.

20 For discussion of the responses of indigenous and indigenous rights organizations outside Mexico, see Jose Barreiro, "Native Response to Chiapas," Akwe:kon: A Journal of Indigenous Issues 11, no. 2 (1994): 78-80. See also supportive statements by indigenous organizations of Chile and Bolivia decrying Mexico's "cultural ethnocide and centuries of oppression." "Continuó el bombardeo en la zona sur de San Cristóbal" (Bombardment continues in southern zone of San Cristóbal), La Jornada, Jan. 6, 1994, 3.


22 Jim Cason and David Brooks, "La Casa Blanca monitorea reportes sobre la crisis armada: Se solidarizan indígenas estadunidenses con los chiapanecos" (White House monitors reports about armed crisis: American Indians in solidarity with the Chiapanecos), La Jornada, Jan. 8, 1994, 14. Carlos Puig, "En la mira, el gobierno mexicano; se multiplican en Estados Unidos las denuncias contra el Ejército, por violación de derechos humanos" (In the gunsights, the Mexican government; in the U.S., condemnations multiply against the army for human rights violations), Proceso, Jan. 17, 1994, 12.


The cease-fire

With domestic and international pressure against military operations rapidly growing and with reports of mounting casualties and army human rights violations reaching the press, the government dismissed key ministers (Jan. 10), appointed a peace commissioner for Chiapas (Jan. 10) and then proclaimed a unilateral cease fire (Jan. 12). The Zapatistas, retaining both their arms and a territorial base in the mountains of Chiapas, accepted the cease-fire. In the following weeks, the government made several important concessions, agreeing to a broad agenda for February 1994 negotiations in San Cristóbal, reforming important aspects of the Mexican electoral and political process, steeply increasing social spending in Chiapas, ratifying local land seizures, and accepting changes in the rights of Mexico's Indian population.

Casualties and displacements

With both sides agreeing to the cease-fire, the first phase of the conflict ended—arguably with a massive victory in Mexican and international civil society for the ragtag, militarily vulnerable Zapatista army. While the exact costs of the fighting are uncertain, there were 145 confirmed deaths, and human rights monitors estimate that over 200 people are likely to have died. Numbers of persons displaced by the fighting are also uncertain, but the Mexican Red Cross estimated approximately 35,000 while the Mexican Ministry of Defense estimated 20,000.25

January 12 - March 2, 1994

While the fighting in Chiapas ended on January 12, outside awareness, sympathy, and support grew over ensuing months as the Zapatistas promoted their goals—and themselves—through numerous biting and witty communiqués sent to and published by the Mexican press. In addition, several rebel leaders gave interviews to the media, including Subcomandante Marcos who, along with several female comandantes, became a rebel "media star." The communiqués and interviews covered a range of issues, from denials of government accusations against the

---

Zapatistas and critiques of Mexican politics, to descriptions of Zapatista origins and goals, to highly personal accounts of daily life as a Zapatista. A central and repeated refrain was Zapatista dependence on national and international civil society (invoked literally). Many communiqués urged Mexican and international civic organizations to join with the Zapatistas by whatever means to topple the government and reform Mexican politics. A communiqué of Feb. 1, 1994 requested that NGOs form a "belt of peace" around the negotiation site in San Cristóbal to prevent violent disruption of the negotiations.26 And North America was a particular object of several early communiqués, with the Zapatistas urging the public there to initiate actions in solidarity with the Mexican populace and demanding that the U.S. government prohibit use of American military equipment in the conflict. Notably, in making the latter demands, the Zapatistas resisted easy anti-Americanisms in favor of a respectful but informative tone questioning the use of American equipment to "massacre Chiapaneco Indians" struggling for "a life of dignity."27

Within Mexico, Zapatista appeals for support and rising excitement over government concessions generated a frenzy of popular curiosity and admiration for the Zapatistas in the lead up to the negotiations scheduled for San Cristóbal February 16, 1994. By February 18, over 75% of the Mexican electorate expressed support for the Zapatistas, up from 61% on January 7 according to a poll by Market Opinion Research International.28 Opposition political parties paid heed to the Zapatistas, with the leader of the most important party the PRD meeting personally with Zapatista leaders. And many Mexicans believed it possible that the Zapatistas might act as catalysts for fundamental political reform. In Chiapas, over 140 indigenous and peasant organizations formed a neutral coalition, CONPAZ, to coordinate nonviolent actions aimed at ameliorating Chiapan


oppression, poverty, and displacement. Less publicized but equally important, peasants in many areas of southern Mexico invaded large land holdings. In Chiapas alone, peasant organizations belonging to the nongovernmental umbrella group the State Council of Indian and Peasant Organizations (CEOIC) seized over 100,000 hectares from 342 estates by mid-April 1994. 

Outside Mexico, the rebels received attention and support from a wide variety of organizations over the early months of 1994: Journalists from around the world vied to interview Zapatista leaders and cover the face-to-face negotiations. NGOs promoting social justice and indigenous rights provided in-kind or monetary support to the Zapatistas themselves or to local NGOs having social and economic goals parallel to the Zapatistas'. Left-leaning NGOs from North America and Europe adopted the Zapatistas as prominent symbols of a new campaign against neo-liberal economic policies and economic globalization. And international human rights organizations, while not taking sides in the conflict, issued reports finding that the Mexican army committed the bulk of major human rights violations in the conflict.

The San Cristóbal negotiations from February 16-March 2 also provided a ready-made opportunity for the Zapatistas to gain further publicity as equal negotiating partners with the government. Live broadcasts of important meetings and nightly news conferences in which "Marcos instantly took control," held Mexican public interest. On March 2, the two parties reached a tentative agreement, but Zapatista leaders warned that it might not satisfy their constituents in the jungle. Three months later, the Zapatistas reported the proposal's overwhelmingly rejection.


Later Developments

Since this Zapatista rejection, the EZLN and the government have held a series of on-again, off-again negotiations over a variety of issues, and these are still underway. Internationally, attention to the Zapatistas has declined markedly, but the EZLN retains support from a core group of international supporters on the left and among indigenous rights organizations. For purposes of the argument in this thesis, a number of key incidents since June 1994 are worth brief mention:

- In August 1994 on the eve of national elections, the Zapatistas convened the National Democratic Convention in Aguascalientes, a tiny jungle village. While the Convention showed the Zapatistas' ability to rally thousands of domestic and international supporters to a remote location—and to build a huge theater to stage the convention—it appears to have had little impact. While there were hopes that the Convention might lead to formation of a broad leftist opposition coalition, this remained unaccomplished and two weeks later the PRI won the election easily (and probably legitimately despite some irregularities).

- In February 1995, after negotiations again broke down, the newly-installed government of Ernesto Zedillo issued arrest warrants for Zapatista leaders, publicly identified Marcos as Rafael Guillén, a former professor of Theory and Analysis at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, and sent troops to the jungle to make arrests. In response, thousands of Zapatista supporters again took to the streets of urban Mexico and international networks rolled into action, flooding the Mexican government with letters and e-mail demanding an end to the sweep. With this pressure, the government again withdrew before capturing the Zapatista leadership.

- In June 1995, with negotiations continuing to falter, the Zapatistas issued a call for direction from its domestic supporters, focusing particularly on whether the EZLN should continue the armed struggle or convert itself into an unarmed political force. In a poll conducted on the Internet, a majority of the 1.5 million respondents supported a shift to
nonviolent tactics. Within several months the Zapatistas had established a political wing, the FZLN, with close ties to a number of leftist political groupings in Mexico.\textsuperscript{33}

- In February 1996 after the resumption of negotiations, the Zapatistas, government negotiators, and many of Mexico's existing indigenous organizations, reached an agreement on indigenous rights for Mexico's Indians.
- In July-August, 1996, the Zapatistas held another large international conference, the Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and Against Neo-liberalism, solidifying their role as international leaders among left-leaning groups fighting economic globalization.

**EPR Actions and International Response**

The EPR's goals, ideology, and tactics closely resemble those of the EZLN, but the EPR has failed to gain support or significant attention internationally or even domestically.

**EPR Actions**

The EPR first made itself known in June 1996 when dozens of armed and masked people unexpectedly but peacefully intruded on a memorial march for 17 slain campesinos in Aguas Blancas, Guerrero state. After reading a manifesto that arguably comes close to Marcos's in rhetorical skill--"we have sprung forth from the sorrow of orphans and widows, from the absence of loved ones disappeared, from the pain of the tortured . . ."--the group returned to the mountains surrounding the town.\textsuperscript{34}

Later in the summer, the group granted interviews to several Mexican newspapers and threatened attacks throughout the country.\textsuperscript{35} These threats were dismissed by the government, and the EPR received relatively little attention from the Mexican or international media. On August 28, 


\textsuperscript{35} See, e.g., Guillermo Correa and Julio César López, "El comandante José Arturo analiza al país y explica al EPR: A quién tenemos que pedir perdón por estar dispuestos a impedir que el gobierno siga asesinando?", Proceso, Aug. 11, 1996, 22.
1996, however, they made good on their threats, mounting coordinated armed attacks on cities in several states including the important resort town of Huatulco, Oaxaca state. While these attacks were more widespread than those of the EZLN, they involved far fewer guerrillas; moreover, the EPR did not seize the towns, but instead attacked military and police targets. According to the Mexican Interior Ministry, casualties in the attacks and later violence included 22 police and soldiers, 2 civilians, and 5 guerrillas.36

Since the August 1996 attacks and several other, smaller-scale military operations in early September, the EPR, like the EZLN before it, has resorted primarily to a public relations war, one which has been markedly less successful than the EZLN's. Among other efforts, the EPR has sought to gain publicity and support through press interviews and about 250 armed but nonviolent demonstrations primarily in rural areas of southern Mexico.37

**EPR Goals**

The EPR's goals are vague and expansive, but with clear roots in leftist political doctrine. The EPR calls for a "short-cut to democracy" through armed popular struggle and for "reinstatement of the fundamental rights of man," "just international relations," "popular sovereignty," and a "new and distinct government."38 Bowing to the realities of the post-Cold War era, the EPR has avoided calls for a communist revolution. While the EPR's vague goals of social justice and political opening resemble those of the Zapatistas, there are some clear ideological differences, in particular the EPR's lack of prominent support for the rights and interests of Mexico's indigenous population and its relative de-emphasis of Mexican nationalist themes. Moreover, the EPR has come to appear more radical and violent than the EZLN because it initially


37 Preston, "With Nonviolent Sallies."

38 EPR, "Manifesto of Aguas Blancas."
failed to deny (and later acknowledged) linkages with a number of groups long branded as terrorists by the Mexican state.39

EPR Constituency and Broader Mexican Response

While it is difficult to judge the exact size of the EPR, its membership is clearly smaller than the EZLN's, in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Journalistic reports indicate, however, that the EPR has considerable local sympathy if not direct local support in a number of areas in urban and particularly rural Mexico.40

The Mexican government initially feared that the EPR would generate public support similar to that won by the EZLN, and the initial government response closely paralleled that to the Zapatistas. Government ministers denounced the EPR as mercenaries and "terrorists" without a social base. While the governor of Guerrero offered to open negotiations, he demanded that the EPR lay down their weapons, an offer rejected by the EPR with the statement "we don't negotiate with assassins."41

Mexican civil society has responded to the EPR largely with fear or indifference rather than sympathy. In part this appears to stem from the EPR's failure to counter effectively the government's attempts to portray the group as a minuscule and violent fringe. Thus, in contrast to the explosion of popular support for the Zapatistas throughout Mexico in January 1994, even the Mexican left is "at best, ambivalent" about the EPR, and many in the left have denounced the group. For their part, the Zapatistas have rejected EPR support, and have underlined their pursuit of a different path to change in Mexican politics.42


International Response

International media coverage of the EPR has been far smaller than in the EZLN case but not for lack of EPR attempts to gain publicity. The EPR has sent communiqués and manifestoes to newspapers in Mexico and has granted interviews to selected correspondents from both national and international media. These interviews have given the group an opportunity to broadcast its goals and showcase its leadership before national and international audiences. These opportunities have failed to generate support either within Mexico or outside, however; in contrast to the immediate outpouring of NGO support for the EZLN, the EPR has faced inaction, silence, or criticism from many of the same NGOs active in support of the EZLN.

Part II. Zapatista Transnationalization in Comparative Perspective: Why the EZLN? Why Not the EPR?

Introduction

This section of the chapter seeks to explain the Zapatistas' tremendous international resonance through the theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two. Accordingly, I focus both on the dynamics of Zapatista lobbying and the "match" between Zapatista goals and tactics and transnational actors' interests and needs. Each of the sections below focuses on a key variable in the theory. Within each section, I follow a rough chronological approach differentiating where appropriate between the two periods described above, January 1-12, 1994 and January 13-March 2, 1994. Throughout, I use comparison to the EPR case as a means of assessing the weight of particular variables.

Differentiating between the two periods is useful because several factors which may have played a role in the second period could have had only minor impact in the first. As explained in detail below, Zapatista lobbying ability and the specifics of Zapatista goals seem unlikely to have had a major impact on support levels in the first twelve days of the uprising, though they had important impacts later. More likely to have contributed to international actors' supportive actions


43 Preston, "Mexican Rebels Vow Hard Battle."
were the "facts" reported by the independent national and international media. To a great extent, the most reliable major news story during the first 12 days concerned military engagements between the Zapatistas and the Mexican army. This fact highlights the central puzzle of this Chapter: Why did the Zapatistas, the initial aggressors in the conflict, receive so much support so rapidly when so little was known about them and when they had so few opportunities to promote themselves and their goals? Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos noted the importance of this puzzle in a February 1994 communiqué focusing on the role of the media but equally applicable to the many NGOs which jumped to the Zapatistas' aid, particularly in the first twelve days of the uprising:

[O]ur communications would provoke a logical question in the media that received them: are the communiques authentic . . . . Supposing their authenticity was accepted (they would have no way to know for sure), then comes the key question: should we publish them? Certifying the authenticity of the communiques was already a risk for the editorial committees of these media; the responsibility of publishing them was an even greater one. Perhaps only the editors themselves can tell us the story of their decision to create an opening for a movement that no one except us knew well--a movement whose origin at the very best, was an enigma, and, at the very worst, a provocation. The EZLN had risen up against the almighty government, had taken seven municipal seats, was fighting the Federal Army, and was formed by indigenous people--all this was a fact. But who was behind the EZLN? What did they really want? Why do it this way (with arms)? Who financed them? In sum, what was really happening? There must have been more than a million questions. Some day the media will tell us their version of this story (surely an important one).44

This Part of the Chapter seeks to illuminate this important story both for the media and for the NGOs whose responses in many cases occurred almost simultaneously with media reporting.

In Section A, I set the stage for detailed analysis, briefly reviewing potential causal factors controlled for through the EPR comparison. Sections B through E focus on each of the key variables in the dissertation's proposed theory.

A. Variables Controlled For

By comparing two insurgencies within the same state, one can move beyond the argument that a state's importance determines international attention to and support for a local-level insurgency. Similarly, arguments that Mexico is in some sense "unique"--because of its historic

and geographic closeness to the U.S. or because of recent strengthening of ties through NAFTA—
lose explanatory power. The vastly different international resonance of the EZLN and EPR
insurgencies strongly indicates that state importance and Mexican uniqueness are not sufficient to
explain international support. The comparison allows us to say nothing about whether these are
necessary factors, but by holding state context constant one can examine many important
explanatory variables in the case, variables that may also help explain why some small-scale
conflicts even in "less important" countries garner surprisingly large amounts of international
interest.

The EZLN-EPR comparison also controls for factors primarily relating to international
context. The supposed dawn of a new "post-modern" age or the presumed retreat of the Left after
the fall of Soviet communism can not explain the reasons that one post-Cold War rebel group
should be supported while another is shunned. Differences in the character of the two
movements and the skill with which they exploited the new context may have played a role and are
discussed below, but the bankruptcy of "traditional" leftist goals and strategies cannot have done
so.

The EZLN-EPR comparison also helps control for a hypothesis that would explain
Zapatista popularity as the result of a fortunate conjuncture (coyuntura) of political, economic, and
social circumstances on the international level. Given the temporal closeness of the two conflicts,
it could be argued that many of the same factors contributing to a postulated conjuncture in January
1994 still operated in June or August 1996. The conjuncture argument may also be questioned
on other grounds. The argument downplays the significance of the uprising itself, reducing it to a

45 The idea that NAFTA would increase outside "oversight" of Mexico's human rights, indigenous rights,
and environmental records is suggested in Carlos Fuentes, "Chiapas: Latin America's First Post-Communist
Rebellion," interview, New Perspectives Quarterly, Spring 1994, 58. Even if true, this does not explain major
variation in oversight of government responses to similar, post-NAFTA political movements.

46 Roger Burbach, "Roots of the Postmodern Rebellion in Chiapas," New Left Review 205 (1994): 113-
24; Elaine Katzenberger, introduction to First World, Ha Ha Hal!, i-vii; James Petras and Steve Vieux, "Myths and

47 My argument, however, assigns some importance to one international event, the recent passage of
NAFTA. See section E below.
spark in an environment already primed for sympathy and support. In such a view, the EPR attacks would have had an effect similar to that of the EZLN's if they had occurred in 1994; but as the analysis below indicates, the many differences between the two insurgencies makes this counterfactual seem improbable.

Similarly, counterfactual analysis casts doubt on the "issue fatigue" hypothesis—that the EPR would have drawn greater attention if it had not attacked after the Zapatista uprising, indeed at a delicate point in the ongoing EZLN-government negotiations. The discussion below suggests that even if the EPR had attacked before the EZLN, the EZLN would have received substantially greater national and international support than the EPR, probably amounts similar to those that it in fact received.

B. The "Pitch": Raising International Awareness

The theory proposed in this dissertation suggests that an important factor conditioning whether a local insurgency in the developing world gains transnational support is its ability to "lobby" transnational actors. The ability to lobby is conditioned by three factors: physical access to transnational actors; material resources permitting lobbying; and skill at and knowledge of international public relations. Lobbying serves at least two functions: it advertises the insurgent group's existence to actors in other political spheres; and it advertises the group's "selling points" to these actors. The more conventional form of lobbying involves face-to-face interactions


49 The conjuncture argument may be more persuasive if confined to the Mexican context: it might be argued that the Zapatista rebellion and other major upheavals and reforms since January 1994 had changed a formerly explosive political scene so significantly by summer 1996 that any new insurgency would have fallen flat by comparison to the Zapatistas. Ross, "The EZLN: Miracles, Coyunturas, Communiqués." On the other hand, both the EZLN and EPR would probably deny that such important changes had occurred—except in the fitful empowerment of Mexican civil society, a factor that would seem likely to increase rather than decrease popular support for a later insurgency.

between representatives of insurgent groups and potential NGO supporters, often in the NGOs' home countries. But lobbying may take other forms as well. It might occur in the insurgents' home country, as transnational actors drawn to the region for a variety of other reasons come into contact with persuasive lobbyists, or it might be done not by the insurgent group itself but by the group's allies abroad.

Closely related to such lobbying by surrogates is publicity concerning an insurgent group provided by unaffiliated third parties, in many cases the press. If an insurgent group can gain the attention of the press, the publicity generated by media stories can win allies even if journalists maintain their objectivity and neutrality. In some cases merely reporting the "facts" about an insurgent group can make potential supporters aware of desperate needs, common concerns, and mutual interests--any of which may incite outsiders to take supportive action.

The initial problem in this regard as in conventional lobbying, however, is gaining substantial media attention. The theory in this dissertation indicates that the three factors conditioning lobbying ability also affect a group's ability to gain media attention. In addition, a fourth factor is critical: the existence or creation of "spectacle," a major, highly visible, and often novel event, one which attracts media and public interest. Insurgencies often use violence and terror to create spectacle and generate media interest. Notably, however, these methods may frustrate the other important goal of most insurgencies, gaining support to pressure a home state. Creating spectacle through nonviolent action is probably more difficult but also stands less chance of alienating potential supporters. Finally, if an insurgency is the victim of another's spectacular violence (e.g., state violence), attention and support may be more likely to go hand in hand.

In the Zapatista case, media reporting played an important role in drawing world attention to the group's existence particularly in the first twelve days of the uprising when lobbying was almost impossible. After January 12, the media continued reporting but the Zapatistas were also able to lobby more conventionally, albeit from the jungles of Chiapas, through communiqués and interviews published in the Mexican and international media and available with great rapidity on the Internet. For analytic purposes, in the following discussion I differentiate between media attention
in the first period of the uprising and Zapatista lobbying in the second, though there is no clean break between the two periods.

January 1-12, 1994: Generating Media Attention

In the first phase of the uprising, lobbying by the Zapatistas themselves had only limited impact because there were few opportunities for group leaders to showcase themselves and promote their cause. Such opportunities existed primarily on January 1—and the Zapatistas took advantage of them. But by January 2, the EZLN was for the most part "off camera," battling or retreating into the jungles, and from January 6 to January 12, the Mexican government closed the combat zone, successfully prohibiting entry by most of the domestic and international press as well as local civilians. The kind of direct, overseas lobbying done for the Ogoni by Ken Saro-Wiwa was therefore impossible.

Instead, reporting by the domestic and international media played the major role in projecting the Zapatistas and their cause to outside audiences. The content of these early media stories was critically important even though for the most part it was not "managed" by the Zapatistas as in the later period. I examine several substantive aspects of story content in sections C and E; here, however, I focus on the question of why the media reported so extensively on the early days of the EZLN uprising, drawing contrasts to the EPR to bring out differences in insurgent strategy relevant to variation in media attention.

Two factors are particularly important in explaining media attention to the Zapatista uprising: degree of spectacle; and ease of access to the conflict region.\(^{51}\) Both of these factors are in turn affected by the interaction of insurgent strategy and government responses toward the insurgents and the media. (The other factors conditioning the success of lobbying and promotion had less impact in this early period: both the EPR and EZLN had limited resources, nullifying this potential explanatory factor; and variation in public relations skills, though important to explaining

later contrasts in lobbying success, played little role before January 12 because the Zapatistas had few opportunities to exercise their superior skills.)

Spectacle

In the first two days of the uprising, Zapatista strategy, rather than government policy, played the major role in creating a spectacle that generated tremendous media interest—the takeover of towns and territory by an unknown guerrilla group and the simultaneous humiliation of a major state. What created the spectacle of January 1? The timing of Zapatista attacks, on the first day of NAFTA's implementation, undoubtedly helped increase the rebellion's international, particularly North American, profile.

More significant than timing as a strategy for gaining international media attention, however, was the fact of Zapatista violence and its character: highly visible; astonishingly successful; yet quite limited. By declaring war on the Mexican state and making good on that declaration with the seizure of large towns and substantial territory, the Zapatistas became an object of instant and intense interest among the international media. An early communiqué expressly acknowledges the attention-getting intent of the initial Zapatista violence: "On January 1 of this year, our Zapatista troops began a series of political-military actions whose primary objective was to inform the Mexican people and the rest of the world about the miserable conditions in which

52 My examination of spectacle in this part of the chapter is open to challenge on theoretical grounds. While the existence or creation of spectacle affects an insurgency's ability to promote its cause, it might be more appropriate to examine spectacle—or at least reporting about it—as an organizational interest of the media, i.e., the media has an interest in finding and reporting spectacular stories. While the latter classification may well be more appropriate in some circumstances, particularly those in which a spectacle develops spontaneously and with little strategic input, e.g., as a result of unpredictable state action, I choose to analyze Zapatista spectacle in this section for practical and theoretical reasons. First, because the overt aspects of the Zapatista rebellion began with spectacle, postponing discussion of it could lead to unnecessary confusion. Second, in the Zapatista case (as in the Ogoni), the creation of spectacle was part of a concerted Zapatista strategy to gain attention, even if the outcome of this strategy depended to some extent on the uncertain reactions of the Mexican government and national and international audiences outside Chiapas.

53 The military advantages of a surprise New Year's attack, however, were more important considerations in the rebellion's timing than the tie to NAFTA implementation. Subcomandante Marcos, "Interview with the CCRI-CG," interview by Blanche Petrich and Elio Henríquez, La Jornada, Feb. 8, 1994, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 144; Subcomandante Marcos, "Interview: Subcomandante Marcos," interview by Medea Benjamin, n.d., in First World, Ha Ha Ha!, 69. See also discussion in section E.
millions of Mexicans, especially us, the indigenous people, live and die."\textsuperscript{54} The Zapatistas also hoped that their attacks would do more than merely attract attention, that they would lead to major reforms favoring Mexico's poor and perhaps spark a general uprising leading to government collapse: "We want to know what this event will provoke, what will occur in the national conscience. We hope that something will occur, not only at the level of armed struggle, but in all senses. We hope to put an end to this disguised dictatorship."\textsuperscript{55} Though the Zapatistas failed to spark a revolution, the attacks had major impacts: Even though control of the towns was fleeting, it instantly made the Zapatistas highly newsworthy; moreover, it forced the government to focus on issues involving Mexico's poor and indigenous.\textsuperscript{56}

Had the Zapatistas not attacked but simply issued a statement condemning NAFTA as a "death sentence for the Indians," this statement would have received as little attention as similar warnings made in the NAFTA debate of 1993. One of the uprising's primary goals, bringing the world's attention to the plight of impoverished Mexicans, would probably have remained unachieved if violent action had not matched powerful rhetoric. The nonviolent actions surrounding the Columbus Quincentenary provide an apt comparison. These well-planned and heavily-promoted events, including a protest by 10,000 Indians in San Cristóbal on Columbus Day 1992 and the 700 mile Xi'Nich (Ant) March for agrarian reform from Chiapas to Mexico City, won relatively little media attention or public interest.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54} EZLN, CCRI-CG, "Here We Are the Forever Dead . . . " Communiqué, Jan. 6, 1994, in Shadows of Tender Fury, 55. Early in the uprising, Marcos and other Zapatistas also stated that "January 1 was our way of making ourselves heard." Marcos, interview by Petrich and Henríquez, ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 165; EZLN, CCRI-CG, interview by Blanche Petrich and Elio Henríquez, La Jornada, Feb. 4-5, 1994, reprinted in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 131-9.

\textsuperscript{55} Marcos, interview by L'Unita, in Proceso, 8.


\textsuperscript{57} Van Cott argues, however, that Indian organizing for the Columbus Quincentenary "made possible the widespread sympathy later expressed for the EZLN." Van Cott, Defiant Again, 70. For a similar view, see Neil Harvey, "Playing with Fire: The Implications of Ejido Reform," Akwe:kon: A Journal of Indigenous Issues 11, no. 2 (1994): 20-7.
In addition, the Zapatistas' violent territorial strategy invited a vigorous state response, increasing the likelihood of a bloody, second spectacle—annihilation of the Zapatistas by a vengeful army. As the Zapatistas have stated, they fully expected to die in the first days of the uprising.\textsuperscript{58} In risking death, however, they hoped to raise domestic and international awareness about Mexico's poor and indigenous:

Enough of this dying useless deaths . . . . If we die now, we will not die with shame, but with the dignity of our ancestors. Another 150,000 of us are ready to die if that is what is needed to waken our people from their deceit-induced stupor.\textsuperscript{59} In the event, this second spectacle was only in an early stage when the government, under mounting domestic and international pressure, proclaimed a cease-fire. Nonetheless, even the prospect of the Zapatistas' imminent destruction helped elicit great international attention and, as shown in section B, considerable sympathy and support from outside audiences.

Comparison with EPR activities further supports these arguments: the EPR's peaceful "gate-crashing" of the memorial march in Aguas Blancas in June 1996 and its leaders' interviews in \textit{Proceso} and \textit{La Jornada} created some attention in Mexico, but almost no interest outside the country. Only with the group's attacks in late August did Mexico take the group seriously and some international attention develop. This comparison indicates therefore that, for better or worse, violence is in many cases the quickest, surest, and cheapest means of gaining world attention—as many terrorist groups clearly believe.

\textit{Access}

Once the Zapatistas had grabbed media attention, ease of media access became important to the quantity and quality of reporting. The EZLN's seizure of land and cities made access easy and permitted the Zapatistas to showcase themselves in an attitude of triumph. If only for a single day, they had secure urban bases in which to hold news conferences, distribute manifestos, and pose


\textsuperscript{59} CCRI-CG, "Here We Are, the Forever Dead," Jan. 6, 1994, 58.
for dramatic photographs and video images. Because of this concentrated urban base, it was easy for the press to reach both Zapatista leaders and the impoverished Mayan Indians on whose behalf they had claimed to rebel. The "simple" voice of ordinary Zapatistas and Indian sympathizers was therefore heard, substantiating the grievances initially voiced by Zapatista leaders and adding legitimacy to the revolt (though these untrained voices also clouded Zapatista goals). Even as the Zapatistas retreated, the area of fighting remained relatively accessible, easing reporting about government attacks and mounting human rights abuses. The result was a spate of stories in national and international media, many of which increased sympathy for the plight of Mexico's poor and indigenous, though not for the Zapatistas' strategies of violence.

While the Zapatistas' territorial strategy enhanced media access, the extent to which this effect was intended is less clear. I have found no statements directly indicating that this was the purpose of Zapatista strategy. There is some circumstantial evidence to support such an inference, however: As indicated by the statements quoted above, the Zapatistas clearly intended their attacks, even their deaths, to focus national and international attention on the plight of Mexico's poor, attention that would only be possible through media reporting. Moreover, the Zapatistas were clearly "media savvy" and appear to have been primed for press interviews from the first day of the uprising. It seems possible therefore that the Zapatistas planned the seizure of towns at least partly as a means of improving media access, not simply as a means of gaining attention.

Nonetheless, subsequent Zapatista statements throw some doubt on this inference; in a number of interviews, Marcos expresses apparent surprise over the crucial role of the media in the domestic and international response to the uprising, surprise that would seem unlikely if enhancing media access had been planned as a specific goal of seizing the towns.⁶⁰ It seems most likely, therefore, that easy media access to the Zapatistas and their civilian sympathizers was more an unintended but beneficial consequence of the EZLN's territorial strategy than a deliberate plan.

---

Mexican government policy also facilitated media access. In the initial week of the uprising, the government made few efforts to prevent reporters from covering the fighting. This "policy" may well have resulted from government unpreparedness or inability to control media entry, though the government sought to win points internationally and domestically by trumpeting its openness. And openness at first succeeded for the government, but only because the initial government reaction to the Zapatistas was relatively moderate. In the first two to three days of the uprising there were many condemnations of Zapatista violence but little domestic or international criticism of the government response (though there was much criticism of long-term government neglect). When the government stiffened its military response toward the Zapatistas without ending its policy of relatively open media access, however, condemnation of the government increased sharply and critique of the Zapatistas declined. By January 7, as army attacks intensified and bad press grew, the government apparently concluded that untrammeled media reporting would undermine its offensive. It therefore cut off access, though by this time several critical issues were in the open—chronic poverty and repression in Chiapas; the Zapatista retreat; and the increasingly sharp government counterattack.

In contrast to the EZLN, the EPR faced a very different situation as a result of different strategic choices and government responses. Before its guerrilla attacks, the EPR's rhetorical

61 "Llegó la lucha a las comunidades del sur de San Cristóbal de las Casas" (Fighting comes to communities south of San Cristóbal), La Jornada, Jan. 5, 1994, 3.

62 "No a los violentos" (No to the violent), editorial, La Jornada, Jan. 2, 1994, 1; "Privilegiar el dialogo" (To Promote Dialogue), editorial, La Jornada, Jan. 3, 1994, 3; "The Other Mexico," editorial, New York Times, Jan. 4, 1994, A14; Jim Cason and David Brooks, "Diarios estadunidenses expresan su simpatía al origen social de la rebelión chiapaneca" (U.S. dailies express sympathy for the social origins of the Chiapan rebellion), La Jornada, Jan. 5, 1994, 23; "La 'rebelión de indios mexicanos', en la prensa de América y Europa: Exhorta el FMLN a Salinas a emplear la diplomacia" (The 'Mexican Indian rebellion' in the Latin American and European press: The FMLN urges Salinas to use diplomacy), La Jornada, Jan. 5, 1994, 13.

"assaults" met indifference and inattention. Even after attacking, however, the EPR received substantially less media attention than the EZLN in part it appears because of greater difficulties reporting about the EPR than the EZLN. The dispersed nature of EPR action and the group's lack of a territorial base made reporting about the group more difficult and less sharply focused than in the EZLN case. Moreover, without having seized territory or gained a cease-fire, the EPR was forced to take "exceptionally careful measures" in granting interviews to the national and international press. While they have succeeded in having their demands publicized in a handful of in-person interviews, there has been far less press interest than in the Zapatista case, and, probably as both cause and consequence, the market for information about the EPR has failed to grow as it did for the Zapatistas.

In sum, the intended and unintended consequences of Zapatista strategy and government policy led to substantial media access beginning at the earliest stages of the conflict. While it is dangerous to draw conclusions from the short time periods involved, it appears that media reporting helped the party which appeared less violent, the government in the first days of the conflict, the Zapatistas thereafter.

January 12 - March 2, 1994: Maintaining the Focus

With the cease-fire and reopening of communications beginning January 12, the Zapatistas soon enjoyed unparalleled access to the domestic and international media, now with their own voice back in the conflict. And the media amplified that voice, providing extensive space for interviews with Marcos and other Zapatistas. As a result, in this second period, the Zapatistas could resume the lobbying they had suspended after January 1 rather than relying solely on attention generated by media reporting of events. The audiences for this lobbying were particularly receptive since in many cases they rightly believed that their mobilization had helped change the course of events in the conflict, pressuring the state into a cease-fire.

64 Preston, "With Nonviolent Sallies"; Preston, "Mexican Rebels Vow Hard Battle."
In subsequent sections, I explore the "fit" between Zapatista rhetoric and action and transnational actors' goals and interests, but in the remainder of this section, I focus only on the mechanics of lobbying, again making reference to the main factors conditioning its effectiveness: access, resources, and skills.

Access

As in the first twelve days of January, the Zapatistas enjoyed great access to the media, and in the second period, to substantial numbers of NGO supporters. Moreover, the Mexican government granted the Zapatistas unprecedented and open media access during the negotiations in February 1994, with live television coverage, news conferences, and media interviews. Beginning in late January and continuing until late summer 1994 a stream of journalists and "political tourists" has visited the Zapatistas in their jungle territory.

The reasons for this tremendous access again relate to the interaction of Zapatista strategy and government policy, both now strongly conditioned by the influence of "outside" parties, namely Mexican and international society. Because the Zapatistas had taken substantial swaths of territory and because the Mexican government tolerated long-term Zapatista control over this territory, tacitly if not explicitly permitting media and NGO entry, direct access to the Zapatista leadership became relatively easy and the number of firsthand accounts of the rebels and interviews with their leaders, especially Marcos, swelled. The sine qua non for most of the interviews, for the live broadcasts in February 1994, and for the national and international Zapatista conferences in the summers of 1994 and 1996 was the Mexican government's acquiescence in them. An important question is, Why has the Mexican government permitted such access? As the EPR has found, the answer does not lie in a blanket Mexican policy of indulging insurgent groups.65 Instead, the answer stems largely from the Zapatistas' stunning success in Mexican and international civil society and the government's commensurate hobbling, neither of which applies

---

65 On the other hand, the Mexican government, with its revolutionary tradition, has for decades prided itself on providing refuge and voice to distant insurgent groups and individuals, from Leon Trotsky to the Sandinistas. Matt Moffett, "Leftists Find a Home in Mexico, Provided They Aren't Mexican; Country's History of Coddling Foreign Radicals Backfires When Rebels Rise at Home," Wall Street Journal, Oct. 30, 1996, A1.
to the EPR. As in the case of other important political insurgencies of this century—from Gandhi's nationalist movement to the American civil rights movement—the Zapatistas succeeded in attracting the interest, sympathy, and support of audiences outside the zone of conflict, indeed outside the country, who pressured the government first into a cease-fire and negotiations and then into providing the Zapatistas' substantial media exposure. Had popular pressure not prevented it, the government could surely have limited if not halted Marcos's spate of interviews with the domestic and international press. Stanching the flow of Zapatista communiqués would have been more difficult (Chiapas is not Bougainville), but it seems likely that the government could have sharply reduced this flow had popular support for the Zapatistas not prevented this.

An alternative explanation for the government's permitting access—that these seemingly superfluous concessions were part of a government plan aimed at co-opting the Zapatistas—is unconvincing. The length and difficulty of the negotiation process must quickly have shown the government that the Zapatistas would not be easily co-opted, yet the government continued to permit relatively open access. Moreover, the government's abortive February 1995 offensive was again thwarted by an outcry from Mexican and international civil society, demonstrating the continuing power of the Zapatistas' Schattschneiderian strategy of expanding the scope of conflict to broader arenas.

The direct media and NGO access permitted by the government was certainly the most important mechanism for promoting the Zapatista cause domestically and internationally, but a number of other mechanisms for gaining access to potential international supporters are also worth brief mention. First, as others have noted, the Zapatistas used fax machines from the beginning of the uprising and quickly gained access to the Internet, thereby facilitating "direct" contact with their international supporters.66 This well-documented electronic support network is of secondary concern to the theory in this dissertation, however. While immediate, "virtual" access to the

---

Zapatistas surely has raised interest among international supporters and increased the speed with which information is exchanged, this alone cannot explain the Zapatistas' success. Many other insurgencies including the EPR (and the Bougainville Interim Government) have their own home-pages yet remain obscure.\textsuperscript{67} Rather, this extensive electronic network should be seen largely as a consequence of the Zapatistas' successful efforts to gain international support.

Similarly, the EZLN's ability to attract staff and funding for a more traditional technique of transnational persuasion--a U.S.-based lobbying unit, the El Paso-based National Commission for Democracy in Mexico (NCDM)--is largely a result of the Zapatistas' original success in gaining international prominence. The NCDM, however, also seeks to increase U.S. attention and support for the Zapatistas. In an effort to reach sympathetic American audiences, the NCDM has adopted a national media strategy, recently inaugurating the "Giving Voice to Silence Fund," a campaign aimed at keeping the "low-intensity war in Mexico in the public eye," thereby helping to prevent a "creeping genocide of indigenous people." According to campaign documents, the primary technique for achieving these goals will be a "sophisticated press strategy" and "a national public relations campaign," one that the NCDM will develop with the help of "professional media consultants."\textsuperscript{68}

\textbf{Resources}

Using a rigorous definition of the term "resources," i.e., material resources such as cash, one can conclude from the Zapatista case that such resources are not necessary for effective lobbying and promotion. In neither the first nor the second period of the uprising did the Zapatistas have substantial material resources. Instead, they relied primarily on the resources of others, particularly the media and NGOs, to promote their cause. While one might stretch the


definition of resources to include the "social capital" generated by the Zapatistas, i.e., the curiosity, even fascination with a group that had boldly challenged and in some senses beaten the Mexican state, it is analytically preferable to maintain the more rigorous definition of the term. Accordingly, I analyze the concepts covered by the term "social capital" elsewhere (particularly in the discussion of organizational fit) and provisionally conclude that substantial material resources may not be necessary to generate outside interest in an insurgency (at least if attention is generated "on the cheap," through violence).

**Skill**

Zapatista public relations skills were evident from the first day of the uprising, with an articulate, sophisticated native Spanish-speaker acting as the group's main spokesperson. But these skills came into their own only with the cease-fire, when media and NGO access to the freshly legitimated Zapatistas re-opened, and the Zapatistas became able once again to send many and varied messages to a fascinated world. Freed from struggle for their immediate survival, the Zapatistas could seek to inspire and sway with their goals, to move and manipulate with their stratagems. At the same time, both goals and stratagems could become more complex and more responsive to allies and opponents. I will discuss some of the Zapatistas' protean goals in other sections but here confine discussion to two issues directly related to lobbying and promotion, Zapatista press strategy and subcomandante Marcos's personal qualities.

**Press Relations.** Critical to the Zapatistas' public relations campaign were their relations with the press. From the beginning of the uprising, the Zapatistas carefully planned a media strategy and cultivated relations with the "honest press," both domestic and international, seeing the media as critical to publicizing the Zapatista cause. As one aspect of this strategy, the Zapatistas were extremely wary of creating bad relations with the press; thus in one of the earliest EZLN communiqués, the Zapatistas apologize for their soldiers' "illegitimate" detention and

---

extortion of several reporters, and return the money stolen. As another key aspect, they opened themselves up early on to interviews with journalists from important foreign periodicals.

The Zapatistas have also documented the domestic aspects of their press strategy. Marcos devotes one early communiqué to the "reasons and nonreasons why some media were chosen" to receive Zapatista communiqués. The communiqué includes lengthy descriptions of the careful analysis that went into decisions about the best means for "our truth to reach those who want to hear it." For local audiences, the Zapatistas chose Tiempo, a San Cristóbal daily long sympathetic to and popular with the Indian and campesino populations. In addition, for local populations and rural populations elsewhere, the Zapatistas placed great emphasis on radio. Finally, for national, especially urban audiences, the Zapatistas chose three periodicals for privileged receipt of communiqués and early interviews La Jornada, El Financiero, and Proceso, each in Zapatista estimation objective, open-minded, and influential both domestically and internationally. Conversely, two major Mexican television networks were specifically excluded from covering the San Cristóbal negotiations because of alleged reporting biases and lack of professionalism in offering payments for interviews. The Zapatistas likely engaged in similar strategic thinking regarding the foreign press, as indicated by the early interviews granted to prominent international periodicals such as The New York Times and by specific invitations to cover the San Cristóbal negotiations made by the EZLN to key international media including The

---

70 EZLN, CCRI-CG, "Concerning the Red Cross and the press," Communiqué, Jan. 5, 1994, in EZLN: Documentos y comunicados, 69-70. See also the EZLN's apology to Proceso for omitting the magazine from the distribution list for the previous week's communiqué: "I hope that the people at Proceso forgive us for this mistake and receive the present letter without any ill feelings or resentment." Subcomandante Marcos, "What Are They Going to Forgive Us For?" Communiqué, Jan. 18, 1994, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 108.


Marcos's Personality. Many analyses of the EZLN's international resonance place major emphasis on Marcos's rhetorical skill and personal qualities. Through the strong, sometimes humorous prose displayed in his communiqués and interviews, Marcos quickly became the leading man in the drama. His articulateness and dramatic flourishes made him a media and civic idol in Mexican society for months beginning in late January, allowing him to give powerful voice to Zapatista goals.

There is little doubt that the Marcos "phenomenon" has contributed to the Zapatistas' international resonance and popularity. Marcos and the Zapatistas certainly seem to believe this and have taken many actions that support this view despite the fact that personalization of the movement does not appear to have been intended: the Zapatistas have repeatedly warned against a personality cult, claim to wear ski masks in part to prevent creation of a "superstar," and credit the media for initially selecting Marcos, chiefly because of his fluency in Spanish. Nonetheless, Marcos and the Zapatistas have opportunistically responded to and skillfully exploited the explosive interest in him shown by the media and civil society. Asked in an interview whether the EZLN had become too closely associated with him, Marcos responded: "I don't gain anything personally. It is the movement that benefits, because this way more people pay attention to the issue."  

74 Ibid.

75 Domínguez and McCann, Democratizing Mexico, 181; Gómez Peña, "The Subcomandante of Performance"; Guillermoprieto, "The Shadow War"; Golden, "Voice of the Rebels."

76 An early example of Marcos's rhetorical abilities is his January 18, 1994 communiqué responding to the government's offer of a pardon by turning the tables. Subcomandante Marcos, "What Are They Going to Forgive Us For?" Communiqué, Jan. 18, 1994, in Zapatistas! Documents, 108. Alma Guillermoprieto also describes an important later example of the power of Marcos's pen—regaining Mexican public attention and support after the government's February 1995 offensive. Guillermoprieto, "The Unmasking," 44.

77 Marcos, interview by Hinojosa, Feb. 20, 1994, in CovertAction, 37.

78 Marcos, interview by Benjamin, in First World, Ha Ha Ha!, 69.
Comparison with the EPR provides further support for the argument that Marcos's personality played a key role in Zapatista ability to build on the attention generated before January 12, 1994. The EPR like most other political movements has no leader to match Marcos's charisma and verve. Notwithstanding the fact that EPR leaders wear masks and military uniforms, no appealing personality has emerged to popularize the movement or counter the government's campaign to portray the group as a terrorist organization, and this probably played a role in the EPR's failure to appeal to Mexican or international audiences. Thus, in any comparison between the EZLN and the EPR, Marcos's personality stands out clearly as a basis for the group's success, in much the same way that Ken Saro-Wiwa's personal charisma played an important role in the Ogoni gaining support from NGOs. Without Marcos's remarkable strategic skills, rhetorical abilities, and sense for the resonant, it seems likely that the Zapatista phenomenon would not have been what it was domestically and certainly internationally. If, for instance, Marcos had been killed on the first day of the uprising, much of the Zapatistas' unique and fascinating allure would have vanished too, and the group's ability to promote its other resonant features, i.e., its indigenous image, would probably have been severely impaired.

But another counterfactual cautions against placing excessive weight on Marcos's personal qualities. What if Marcos, "faceless stand-in for all the oppressed, . . . anonymous vessel for all fantasies from the sexual to the bellicose, . . . star,"79 had spouted the Maoist rhetoric of Abimael Guzman, leader of Peru's Shining Path? Or had adopted similarly murderous tactics, rather than provisionally ending violence after 10 days? While bloodshed, perhaps even loud and pointedly unstylish rhetoric, might have gained international attention, a charismatic but fanatic Marcos would likely have attracted little of the international support the Zapatistas actually won. By extension, public relations cannot turn every cause into a cause célèbre; blue smoke and mirrors make magic, not miracles. Nonetheless, Marcos's personal appeal and Zapatista public relations

79 Guillermoprieto, "The Unmasking," 42.
skills clearly made important contributions to the Zapatistas' international resonance after January 12, 1994.

C. Tactical Match: Transnational Support
Despite EZLN Violence

The theory proposed in this dissertation suggests that a transnational NGO is more likely to support a domestic insurgency if there is overlap between the domestic tactics of the insurgency and the ethos of the transnational NGO. Thus, NGOs for whom violence is anathema are more likely to support a nonviolent than a violent insurgency.

Support for Nonviolent Organizations
in Solidarity with the Zapatistas

There is ample support for this proposition in the Zapatista case. Many NGOs particularly in the social justice and religious sectors became involved in the conflict and expressed general support of Zapatista demands for basic necessities, democratization, and indigenous rights. But instead of supporting the Zapatistas concretely and directly, they assisted other Chiapen and Mexican organizations seeking similar goals through peaceful means. One of many examples is the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (U USC) which prior to the uprising had done no work in Chiapas. Shortly after the end of the fighting, the U USC entered Chiapas and embraced the Zapatistas' "call . . . for fulfillment of the promises of democracy for the indigenous and poor throughout Mexico."80 Because nonviolence is a central U USC tenet, however, the organization has not provided direct support to the Zapatistas but has given most of its support to CONPAZ, a newly-formed coalition of human rights, social justice, and indigenous rights NGOs pursuing peaceful change in Chiapas.

Support for the Zapatistas Despite Their Violence

Less easily explained by the theory, however, are transnational NGOs that profess nonviolence as a tenet yet have provided direct support to the Zapatistas. Indigenous rights

organizations and organizations promoting "global understanding" have taken actions directly supportive of the Zapatistas or have provided them with monetary or in-kind support. Moreover, some of these NGOs have played an important role in protecting the Zapatistas against potentially violent retaliations by the state and local vigilante groups. In many cases, observation and reporting of past government abuses has helped prevent future ones; in the case of the civilian cordon around the San Cristóbal negotiations, NGOs have provided direct protection themselves. It is also arguable that transnational NGOs which support local organizations in solidarity with the EZLN provide support, albeit indirectly, for the EZLN itself. At a minimum, while maintaining their nonviolent credentials, these domestic and international NGOs provide additional leverage to organizations pursuing Zapatista goals through peaceful means. For the UUSC for example, support of CONPAZ represents a means of supporting the Zapatistas' "low intensity revolution."

This awakening of solidarity and support in broader civil society was central to Zapatista political strategy from the beginning. And the Zapatistas and some outside observers believe that the strong international response has been critical to giving them leverage in negotiations and preventing their violent suppression.

The EZLN as more violent than the EPR

The upshot of this argument is an important puzzle concerning both direct and indirect NGO support for the Zapatistas: Why have NGOs imbued with an ethos of nonviolence supported an insurgency whose violent revolt sparked a fortnight of combat, hundreds of deaths, and extensive damage? To explain this puzzle, it is helpful to compare the EZLN with the EPR, whose violence has had the predictable result of scaring off potential support from outsiders imbued with a nonviolent ethos. Before tackling the puzzle directly, it is important to show that differences in


82 EZLN, CCRI-CG, "Letter from the CCRI-CG to the NGO's" (sic), Comuniqué, Feb. 20, 1994, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 234-5; Cecilia Rodriguez, U.S. Representative of the EZLN, "Chiapas Update: The Zapatistas and United States Intervention in Mexico" (speech presented at Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, Nov. 20, 1996), answer to author's query; Prof. George Collier, Stanford University, "Ford Methodology Seminar" (speech at Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, Apr. 11, 1996), answer to author's query.
Table 3. Comparison of Violence Surrounding EZLN and EPR Uprisings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EZLN</th>
<th>EPR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casualties</td>
<td>Dead: 145 confirmed; 200 estimated</td>
<td>Dead: 12-16 confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wounded: not available</td>
<td>Wounded: not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacements</td>
<td>20,000-35,000</td>
<td>Not available (probably small)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Damage</td>
<td>Not available (probably relatively large)</td>
<td>Not available (probably relatively small)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location and Extent of Violence</td>
<td>Southern Chiapas; widespread</td>
<td>Six states; isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Violence</td>
<td>Twelve days over twelve day period</td>
<td>Six days over approximately three month period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>No; surprise attacks</td>
<td>Yes; period of peaceful protests followed by attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territorial Gains</td>
<td>Yes, including major cities</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Insurgent Violence</td>
<td>Pitched, offensive battles, mostly directed at military garrisons; use of landmines</td>
<td>Hit and run attacks on police and military garrisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Military Response</td>
<td>Large-scale offensive actions including air power and heavy weapons</td>
<td>Troop build-ups; arrests of some alleged leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cease-Fire</td>
<td>Yes; formal; armed; with negotiations mutually offered and accepted</td>
<td>Yes; informal; armed; with negotiations offered by state but rejected.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Notes: For the EZLN, this table covers the period Jan. 1-12, 1994. For the EPR, this table covers the period June 28-Sept. 1, 1996.
levels of international support for the two insurgencies do not simply reflect different levels of group violence.\textsuperscript{83} Table 3 indicates that violence surrounding the EZLN uprising has been greater than that associated with the EPR as measured by several indicators known within the first days of the two uprisings. In addition, while little publicized, Zapatista weaponry included land mines, a weapon often associated with indiscriminate violence and human rights violations.\textsuperscript{84}

There is no question that the EPR's reputed (and eventually admitted) association with other groups notorious for violence in the 1970s and 1980s, created the (possibly valid) perception of EPR violence or potential violence against civilians. Notably, however, in the first days of the Zapatista uprising the Mexican government lodged similar charges against the EZLN. But, as measured by indicators of actual violence known in the initial period of the two uprisings, the EZLN should be considered the more violent group—yet it received vastly more support beginning at the most violent period of the rebellion. Thus, direct comparison of violence deepens the puzzle of why the EZLN should have obtained far more support than the EPR, of why the EZLN should have obtained support at all, particularly in the critical 12-day period beginning January 1, 1994.

The puzzle also pertains to the period after January 12, 1994. Since the cease-fire, the Zapatistas have never repudiated violence nor given up their arms. In fact, Subcomandante Marcos has frequently praised military means, both as a viable strategic threat in the ongoing conflict and, more strikingly, as an under-used tactic appropriate to a variety of political conflicts:

\begin{quote}
[The January 1 offensive] was an act of propaganda, and it was a total success. We have to give credit where it's due. It was a military wonder, and nobody seems to want to admit that. Now everybody says that those who speak about military matters are rash warmongers who haven't realized that the military course of action is not inappropriate [sic] for Mexico. In my view that's the reason people from the press and the intellectuals have criticized the military aspect of this affair. . . . It seems clear to me that there is consensus among the government, all of you [the press], and civil society that the world has to be shown that military alternatives are not a viable option. . . . I don't know why. The January offensive demonstrated that it is possible to carry out sizable military operations if
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{83} Journalists have pointed to "civilian deaths and the violence deployed by" the EPR as reasons for the EPR's failure to gain the domestic and international support won by the EZLN. Torres and Solis, "Mexico Says Euroterrorists Aid Rebels."

a series of conditions are present. . . . We don't give arms a value they don't have. We don't worship arms, but we understand what they represent at one political moment or another. In our view, at this moment, arms are our guarantee of survival, a guarantee we are ready to defend with dignity.\footnote{Marcos, interview by Petrich and Henríquez, \textit{¡Zapatistas! Documents}, 155, 156, 165.}

These are not the words one would expect from the leader of an organization embraced by peaceful NGOs and responsible media.

\textit{Counter-arguments}

Before attempting to explain this puzzle, it is useful to examine and refute two arguments that, superficially at least, cast doubt on my conclusion concerning Zapatista violence.

\textbf{Unreality of Zapatista Threat.} First, it might be argued that notwithstanding Zapatista violence in the first days of 1994, it became clear early in the conflict that the Zapatistas posed little serious military danger to the Mexican state. This is correct. For observers in San Cristóbal, this was evident from the beginning, and, as early as January 3, the international press reported that many Zapatista soldiers had outdated and inferior weapons, strongly indicating that the seizure of towns was more an attention-getting device than a threat to the state notwithstanding Zapatista calls for a march on Mexico City.\footnote{Golden, \textit{"Mexican Troops Battling Rebels."}} Moreover, much of the early Zapatista violence was narrowly targeted at government offices and files, rather than at civilians or government personnel.\footnote{\textquote{Six Killed in Attacks in Mexico; Indian Rebels Storm Four Towns, Declare War on Military,\textquotenewline} \textit{Houston Chronicle}, Jan. 2, 1994, 1(A).} Notwithstanding the element of theater, however, hundreds of people, both civilians and combatants, died in the uprising--directly from Zapatista bullets or as an indirect result of Zapatista assaults--and tens of thousands of civilians were displaced. The violence in the earliest stages of the Zapatista uprising was real, yet national and international support rapidly developed.

Even if one insisted that this early EZLN violence was heavily larded with performance, however, it would be difficult to argue that the EPR assaults in late August 1996 were any
different. They too used violence to gain the attention which their peaceful march and press interviews had failed to gain them earlier that summer.

**EZLN Openness to "Peaceful" Alternative Strategies.** A second argument potentially undermining my conclusions concerning Zapatista violence would also grant that the Zapatistas engaged in substantial violent activity, but would claim that the Zapatistas, unlike the EPR, claimed to be open to other paths of struggle, through "civic, legal, and open movements," and that this openness attracted NGO support.\(^{88}\) While this was indeed the Zapatista claim from early in the conflict, there are several problems with the argument. First, while it seems clear today that the Zapatistas were sincere in this claim, in early January 1994 there was no way to test the Zapatistas' truthfulness on this point. Indeed, given their violent actions and contemporaneous statements denying all links to other Mexican political organizations--"We have no . . . relationship with any above ground organization. Our organization is exclusively armed and clandestine."\(^{89}\)--most evidence suggested that their asserted openness to other tactics was merely propaganda. Second, the EPR too has made statements of solidarity with peaceful organizations seeking social change in Mexico, yet their reputation for violence remains firm.\(^{90}\) Thus, the EZLN's rhetorical embrace of nonviolence as a supplement to military means seems an unlikely reason for the outpouring of support for the group in the first days of January 1994.

*Reasons for Zapatista support before January 12, 1994*

Why then did the EZLN win such great direct and indirect support in the first days of January 1994? Why did Zapatista violence not deter NGO support as it appears to have done in the EPR case?

**Perceived Legitimacy of Revolt.** First, Zapatista violence rapidly came to be perceived as understandable if not justifiable even though there had been no attacks on the Zapatistas themselves


\(^{89}\) Ibid.

\(^{90}\) EPR, "Manifesto of Aguas Blancas."
immediately preceding the uprising. In their initial statements, the Zapatistas justified their military action by asserting that the Mexican masses had suffered "500 years" of oppression, had exhausted peaceful and lawful means of change, and continued to live in economic misery and political repression. Press reporting in the days after the uprising helped substantiate the general validity of these claims, with reports on the conflict providing background information on Chiapas's lengthy and continuing history of poverty and repression.

More authoritative support for Zapatista claims came from several reports of chronic, low-level repression published in the years preceding the revolt and widely circulated in the days after the revolt. Chiapas had long been a focus of U.S. concern over human rights abuses in Mexico. The 1991 and 1992 U.S. Department of State country reports on human rights include specific examples of human rights abuses in rural Mexico including Chiapas. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also issued reports dealing with the Mexican human rights problems in general but with a specific focus on Chiapas. Of particular note in addition were reports concerning chronic severe human rights violations in Chiapas, particularly against the indigenous population, published by Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights to little notice in October 1992 and August 1993; these reports gained substantial attention by the media and policymakers after the uprising.91 Finally, in the NAFTA debate, Congressional hearings highlighted problems of human rights, authoritarian politics, and economic inequality in Mexico. Mexican human rights monitors including some from Chiapas had come to Congress to testify in the NAFTA debate, and Bishop Ruiz traveled to the U.S. in 1993 to receive the Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award, an

annual award from the Robert Kennedy Foundation.92 Thus Ruiz was well known in Washington before the revolt and his assessments were accorded significant weight.

The result in the first days of the revolt were media, NGO, and foreign government statements that, while decrying Zapatista violence, portrayed it as an understandable result of gross government neglect and abuse.93 As Arturo Gomez has stated, the Zapatistas found “widespread sympathy in Mexico and abroad--not for the war, necessarily, but for the justice of their cause, and for the passionate demand to break with 500 years of oppression.”94

Notably, however, comparison with the EPR calls into question the foregoing explanations for the relatively positive early response to the EZLN. The EPR used rhetoric similar to that of the EZLN to justify its attacks, and media reports on the EPR attacks included descriptions of rural Mexico's poverty and repression. While there was nothing comparable to the Minnesota Advocates' report, the report and other similar ones clearly had wider applicability than Chiapas and could have been applied to a similar uprising in nearby Guerrero state. Yet EPR violence has not gained international legitimacy while the EZLN uprising did so with great speed.

1. Impact of international context. There are a variety of reasons for EZLN success and EPR failure, but two important contributory factors are worth discussing here. First, coming on the heels of the NAFTA debate's sustained and extensive examination of Mexico's economic and political systems, the revolt occurred in a context of substantial knowledge which organizations recently defeated on NAFTA were only too willing to use. Just as important, extensive


93 See, e.g., Jorge Castañeda, "The Other Mexico Reveals Itself," Los Angeles Times Jan. 5, 1994, B7; "Mexico's Second Class Citizens Say Enough is Enough," Economist, Jan. 8, 1994, 41-42; Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mexico: The Uprising in Chiapas. European reactions to the uprising are discussed in Anne Marie Mergier, "Condenas en Europa: 'Chiapas descubrio ante el verdadero rostro del PRI y de Salinas'" (Condemnations in Europe: "Chiapas shows the world the true face of Salinas and the PRI"), Proceso, Jan. 17, 1994, 14; Anne Marie Mergier, "Democracia, justicia y derechos humanos, reclama a México el Parlamento Europeo: Una resolución condena 'los excesos del ejército' en Chiapas" (European Parliament demands of Mexico democracy, justice and human rights: Resolution condems "army excesses" in Chiapas), Proceso, Jan. 31, 1994, 61.

international mobilizing, organizing, and networking against NAFTA created a fertile organizational environment for Zapatista transnationalization; when the uprising occurred, the Zapatistas and international supporters could use existing organizations and networks rather than building new ones, increasing the speed and lowering the costs of transnationalization. While the exact date of the uprising was probably not crucial, the fact that the uprising occurred so soon after the NAFTA battle, apparently vindicating the arguments of defeated NAFTA opponents, sharply distinguished the EZLN attacks. By contrast, the EPR attacks two years later did not benefit from the immediate after-effects of massive U.S. and international organizing around Mexican-related issues.

2. Impact of Zapatistas' perceived indigenous identity. The EZLN also gained legitimacy for its military actions because of the group's perceived indigenous identity. While the EPR expansively claimed its actions to be on behalf of a generalized class of "oppressed" Mexicans, the Zapatistas appeared to represent a more concrete, defined, and sympathetic group, the indigenous people of the Lacandon, and more generally of Chiapas and Mexico. Draping themselves in the mantle of indigenous identity, the Zapatistas gained legitimacy for their uprising in a way that the EPR, with its class-based rhetoric, has failed to do.

How did this classification of the Zapatistas as indigenous occur? Of particular importance was Marcos's statement on January 1 that NAFTA represented a "death sentence ... an international massacre" for the Indians. This statement gained great prominence, helping to make the uprising appear chiefly an Indian revolt against a "dictatorship that had been waging an undeclared, genocidal war for many years." In other early communiqués, the Zapatistas made strong statements condemning Mexico's "historic injustice against its original inhabitants" and its continuing treatment of the indigenous as "anthropological objects, touristic curiosities, or part of a

95 Harry Cleaver, introduction to ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 21-22.

96 For more on the importance of the uprising's timing relative to NAFTA, see section E.

97 EZLN, "Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle."
'jurassic park.'

Marcos's statements were not, of course, the only reasons for this classification of the revolt; there was also the evidence of reporters' eyes and ears--many of the Zapatista fighters were Indians who spoke no Spanish.

This "spin" in turn helped increase international attention and support both from a natural constituency of other indigenous organizations outside Mexico and from non-indigenous groups fascinated by the seeming anachronism of an Indian revolt in 1994 and filled with guilt over the plight of a group so long neglected, abused, and killed. Mexican journalist Blanche Petrich captured the Mexican public's "unstoppable surge of sympathy and understanding" after the initial shock at the rebellion: "'Why wouldn't they rebel!' people were saying. 'This country has been extremely unfair to them.'" Similar if less fervid sentiments echoed in the U.S. and Europe, acknowledging the long history of neglect and abuse of indigenous populations in the Americas. No similar outpouring of sympathy and support has followed the EPR's rebellion of the "oppressed" even though that ill-defined grouping certainly includes the equally ill-defined category "indigenous peoples."

Providing further, backhanded support for this argument, the Mexican government clearly saw the power of the indigenous image, and immediately but unsuccessfully strove to blame the rebellion on non-indigenous "foreigners" who had deluded the Indians. While these rhetorical attacks probably reflected government fears over the particular resonance of Indian identity in Mexico, they also reflected awareness of similar international perceptions and sympathies.

---


99 For strong emphasis on the Indian aspects of the revolt, see, e.g., the Latin American and European press coverage. 'Rebellion of Mexican Indians,' in Latin American press," La Jornada.


Zapatistas in turn fought early and hard to retain their indigenous credentials against the skepticism of both the government and "corrupt 'Indigenous' leaders" in mainstream Indian organizations.\(^{102}\)

The commanders and troop elements of the EZLN are mostly Indians from Chiapas. . . . The government says it is not an Indigenous uprising, but we believe that if thousands of Indigenous people rise up in arms, then yes, it is an Indigenous uprising. There are also in our movement Mexicans of other social origins and from other states of our country. They agree with us and have joined us because they do not agree with the exploitation we suffer. . . . Currently, the political leadership of our struggle is totally Indigenous: 100% of the members of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committees in the combat zones are ethnic Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Chol, Tojolobal and others. It's true that not all the Indigenous people of Chiapas are with us yet, because there are many people who still believe the government's lies and deceptions.\(^{103}\)

The importance of this fight over identity at the uprising's earliest stages underlines both the political power of the indigenous image and its lack of strict definition, which together make it a useful tool for political mobilization and legitimation.\(^{104}\) Whether or not the Zapatistas were in fact a pure or homegrown Indian movement was largely beside the point for most international (and urban Mexican) audiences; the crucial fact was that the uprising was perceived to involve indigenous populations.\(^{105}\)

**Change in Character of Violence.** A second factor prompting domestic and international audiences to overlook Zapatista initiation of the violence was change, both actual and perceived, in the relative violence of the Zapatistas and the army. In the first days of the uprising, many observers while expressing understanding for Zapatista grievances had condemned their violence. For many of these observers, the initial government reaction to the uprising seemed measured and


\(^{105}\) For Mexico's Indians and for indigenous populations outside Mexico, Zapatista identity was a more important issue, though even these groups were willing to overlook the niceties of identity because the Zapatistas created "a level of attention to [Indian] demands and . . . problems that they had been struggling to achieve for many years." Van Cott, Defiant Again, 84. For more on the relationship between the Zapatistas and indigenous rights organizations see section E.
proportionate to the provocation even if there was substantial criticism of long term government neglect of rural Chiapas.106

This international reaction changed dramatically with the government's increasingly forceful and violent counter-attacks—at the very time that the Zapatistas had shifted from offense to retreat. On January 3 and 4, when army responses mounted in firepower and intensity, when widespread army human rights abuses became visible, the eternal indigenous victims of Mexican indifference and abuse appeared poised for yet another slaughter. Chronic, low-level victimization seemed likely to be compounded by substantial, indiscriminate, and abusive killing—despite the apparent justice and legitimacy of indigenous grievances. And as the Zapatistas' likely victimization loomed closer, their proximate responsibility for having started the violence receded, replaced by dismay over the apparent "disproportion between the forces of the EZLN and the methods being used to combat them."107

News coverage rapidly reflected these changes in the conflict. Before the Mexican army began its counter-offensive, it enjoyed a brief honeymoon with the international and domestic press. Within days of the uprising, however, news coverage began to highlight army violence and abuse, while Zapatista violence largely dropped out of the coverage. As early as January 3, The New York Times provided a stark contrast: on one hand, government forces deploying air power and heavy weapons; on the other hand, rebels, some armed with automatic weapons, but many others "outfitted with pistols, ancient carbines and even toy wooden rifles."108 Along with early reports of the Zapatistas' ill-preparedness came characterizations of the rebels not as professional soldiers, but as ordinary poor Mexicans, largely "young Indian men and women . . . having more


107 Bishop Samuel Ruiz, quoted in Rojas and Morquecho, "New front in San Cristóbal."

108 Golden, "Mexican Troops Battling Rebels."
discipline than training.\textsuperscript{109} Similarly, a front page article in the January 5, 1994 \textit{New York Times} which reported allegations of army human rights abuses and chronicled the Zapatista retreat before army "strafing and rocketing" included the following paragraphs from a section headed "An Army of Innocents":

Compared with the hardened, disciplined traditions of the peasants who fought in Central and South America over the last two decades, the innocence of many of the Mexican insurgents would be hard to overstate.

On the edge of Altamirano this afternoon, two young rebels appeared to have simply taken off their bandannas and uniforms, showered and settled in by the wooden shack of one of their families, waiting to fight another day.

"I think the war can be won," said one, a 29-year old man who might have given his full name had reporters not been uneasy about taking it. . . .

He said he had joined the Zapatista army two years earlier, but that he still only knew "more or less" how to handle a gun. He said he trusted in God to help the rebels overcome the far more powerful Mexican Army.\textsuperscript{110}

Notably, until the air bombardments, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch limited their reactions to a close monitoring of the Chiapas situation; when the bombardment and other heavy-handed responses began however, they reconsidered and quickly decided to send human rights observers. A contemporaneous statement by Juan Méndez, director of Human Rights Watch/Americas, encapsulates the shift: "At the beginning we were pleased by the measured form in which the Mexican federal government appeared to be responding, but now we are worried because this moderation appears to have disappeared."\textsuperscript{111}

Thus, while the Zapatistas won world attention with spectacular but short-lived violence, they gained international support for contrasting reasons: because they rapidly halted offensive action; and because they (and civilians in the region whether sympathetic or not to the EZLN) became victims or potential victims of abusive and seemingly disproportionate government attack.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{111} Cason and Brooks, "U.S. television reports executions," \textit{La Jornada}, Jan. 6, 1994 (author's translation).
This dynamic, interactive relationship between Zapatista and government actions had a direct and significant effect on the growth of international support. Had the Mexican government not responded to the Zapatistas with disproportionate violence, the EZLN's initiation of the violence would probably have loomed larger and international intervention would probably have been weaker. While it is impossible to prove this counterfactual, Cecilia Rodriguez, the U.S. spokesperson for the Zapatista rebellion made a similar point about an analogous issue, the maintenance of existing international support and sympathy for the Zapatistas. According to Rodriguez, such support is largely contingent on continued Zapatista nonviolence; in fact, according to Rodriguez, since the cease fire, both the Zapatistas and the Mexican army have come to recognize the political advantages of maintaining a peaceful dialogue. In this situation, "the first party to fire a shot loses politically."  

Several facts are particularly noteworthy with regard to the dynamic by which the Zapatistas gained transnational support: The transformation in Zapatista status from aggressor to victim occurred despite the EZLN's not having given up its arms and despite its continued resistance to government assaults; the Zapatistas were outgunned, but far from powerless, nor were they perceived simply as "helpless" women and children. In addition, this transformation occurred without a substantial Zapatista public relations effort aimed at emphasizing their imminent victimization.  

Important to this transformation was the role of the press, particularly the print media both domestic and international. As Marcos himself states:

What made society change the way it looks at us was the press. Not even television; the written press, photographers and all that. . . . It's when journalists themselves say: 'You see? They really are Indigenous people, they aren't foreigners and we've seen that this is the way they live,' and all that. So it really was the written news media that began to awaken that change, or critical distrust, that reality was totally different from what the government was saying. That was it. It wasn't the government, or our weapons; nor was it Don Samuel [Ruiz] or [Peace Commissioner] Camacho. It was the press, that looks and

112 Rodriguez, answer to author's query.

looks and starts to bring out more and more information, and makes people say: 'Wait a minute, look, something is happening.'

Marcos, interviewed in a mountain shack, provided no support for his conclusion, and definitive proof of his claims would require detailed content analysis of many newspapers. I do not undertake this task here, but *The New York Times* articles quoted above lend support to Marcos's views.

Yet while the press played a key role in conveying information about rapidly unfolding events, the state's repressive response to the Zapatista provocation played an even larger role, creating victims and potential victims out of former "aggressors." An important question is whether the Zapatistas deliberately incited this repression to gain outside sympathy and support. Other insurgent groups have used such strategies according to some analysts. As Doug McAdam reports in his study of the American civil rights movement, Black leaders seeking to gain federal government support for their protests in southern states quickly became aware of "the importance of white [supremacist] violence as a stimulus to federal involvement." To gain outside support in 1963, civil rights leaders "consciously . . . decided to elicit violent behavior from their immediate opponents," carefully selecting as protest sites cities where hot-headed local authorities such as Bull Connor and Jim Clark would likely counter nonviolent protest with violent suppression. Similarly, journalists have documented the willingness of Tiananmen Square protest leaders to provoke state repression to gain outside attention and support. By dramatically encapsulating chronic, low-level repression in a single bloody and clearly unjust


incident, insurgents can gain publicity and sympathy for an issue that might otherwise be overlooked.

In the Zapatista case, however, the evidence for such a strategy is ambiguous. On one hand, it is clear that the uprising aimed first and foremost at making Mexico and the world take notice of the Zapatistas. Moreover, Marcos's statements clearly demonstrate the Zapatista view that creating and becoming victims bring attention and voice (though it is uncertain whether these statements represent post hoc rhetoric or pre-existing strategy): "Why is it necessary to kill and die, to get you [the country], and through you, the world, to listen to [us]... say a few small, true words without seeing them lost in the void?" One might therefore surmise that Zapatista territorial seizures were suicidal gestures aimed largely at arousing outside sympathy once predictable government counter-attacks began creating Zapatista and civilian victims. But, while loss of life was predictable, the Zapatistas never settled for mere victim status, never sought merely the sympathy and succor that are a victim's lot. Instead, throughout the uprising they aspired to the role of protagonist. Thus, it is incorrect to view the Zapatista seizure of towns and territory simply as a means of provoking a disproportionate government counter-attack; individual martyrdom or group annihilation would have stanchèd the flow of words with which Marcos and the Zapatistas sought to sway civil society. Thus, while violence and bloodshed were useful means of gaining attention, the Zapatistas' territorial seizures appear to have been more demonstrations of power, audacity, and skill aimed at inspiring support for the Zapatistas as heroes, rather than cunning invitations to state repression intended to evoke sympathy for the Zapatistas as victims. Of course when disproportionate state repression swiftly came, the Zapatistas benefited because army victimization helped obscure the fact that the EZLN had initiated the violence. But, while there is insufficient evidence to draw definitive conclusions on this point, it seems likely that the creation of victims was not the result of some latent Zapatista stratagem.

---

Reasons for Zapatista success after January 12, 1994

After the end of hostilities on January 12, the puzzle of NGO support for the Zapatistas largely recedes; with the Zapatistas following peaceful tactics, albeit without rejecting future resort to arms, the support of many domestic and transnational NGOs becomes more understandable. Two issues require brief discussion, however: the legacy of earlier violence; and the flowering of the Zapatista strategy of inciting the support of civil society organizations.

The Legacy of Earlier Violence. One aspect of the earlier violence had lingering effects: allocation of responsibility for serious human rights violations during the 12 day war. This issue had the potential to undermine Zapatista legitimacy and reduce outside support, but for a variety of reasons the Zapatistas suffered few ill effects.

In the rhetorical conflict over these issues, two new voices took a much larger role, the Zapatistas themselves and prominent international human rights NGOs including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Commission of Jurists. These new voices supplemented those dominant in the earlier period, the Mexican state and the press, both of which continued to be important in the later period though in different ways than before. In the continuing debate over past Zapatista violence, the press took a distinctly secondary role, instead focusing primarily on the rapid flux of events in late January and February. The state, of course, maintained significant interest in the issues, but its formerly unitary "voice" took on multiple, often conflicting chords with splits between the President, the chief negotiator, and the independent human rights investigative arm of the government. In this context there would be no more attempts to tar the Zapatistas as "professionals of violence."

In the period after January 12, the Zapatistas, who had been unable to counter government allegations of abuse during the armed conflict phase, took pains to highlight their relatively good human rights record and maintain their credibility on human rights issues. In some of their earliest communiqués and interviews, the EZLN denied government accusations that their troops had
committed particular abuses and provided detailed accounts blaming government forces. More unusual, the Zapatistas admitted some human rights abuses, further underlining their care in maintaining credibility on this issue and in avoiding the pejorative label human rights violators. In addition to admitting their troops' mistake in demanding payments from reporters, the Zapatistas admitted kidnapping the ex-governor of Chiapas, trying him, and sentencing him to hard labor in an indigenous region; but in many eyes, this was not a serious abuse because it appeared justified by the former governor's reputation for indifference and abusiveness toward Chiapas's Indians. Finally and strikingly, the Zapatistas condemned army violations in measured terms, acknowledging that violations are not "the policy of the Mexican army . . . Certain sectors of the Armed Forces fought with military honor avoiding harm to the civilian populations."  

After January 12, 1994, international human rights organizations also provided significant support for the Zapatista position on human rights violations. Within weeks of the Zapatista attacks, these organizations issued reports about the uprising. These reports, both by Mexican and international groups, lent substantial credence to Zapatista claims of abuse, thereby playing an important political role in the domestic conflict and in the perception of the conflict internationally. In addition to chronicling human rights abuses, these authoritative and widely circulated reports also provided capsule summaries of the reasons for the revolt, reasons generally confirming the Zapatista claims of discrimination and poverty, and the Zapatistas' claimed identity as indigenous. Notably, key reports included discussion of abuses by the Zapatistas, with particular attention to displacements of civilian populations as a result of the fighting. Moreover a few journalists


120 Marcos, interview by Leñero, Feb. 21, 1994, in ¡Zapistas! Documents, 208.


reported on the high and long-lasting costs of conflict borne by civilians, many of whom opposed the uprising and its violence. Yet the human costs of the uprising have not hurt the Zapatistas, a testament both to the public fascination with the Zapatistas themselves and to the swamping effect of larger government abuses, both chronic long-term neglect and acute short-term violations.

The Zapatistas' Civil Society Strategy. From the beginning of the uprising, the Zapatistas sought active participation from "civil society."

The struggle must be fought on all fronts and here your [civil society's] sympathy, your support, the publicity you give our cause, your making your own the ideals we demand, your spreading the revolution by awakening the people wherever you find them, will be very important factors leading to the final victory. Statements such as these went far beyond appeals for mobilization against government attacks. The Zapatistas have consistently viewed "civil society" as an accountable and progressive alternative to conventional political and economic institutions both domestic and international. And they have specifically rejected state power for themselves: "It is civil society that must transform Mexico—we are only a small part of that civil society, the armed part--our role is to be guarantors of the political space that civil society needs." Rather than taking a dominant role for themselves the Zapatistas have expressed great faith in civil society and NGOs, the "vanguard of civil society," with Marcos going so far as to say:

We don't believe that the result of this revolution that we are proposing will be a new world, new country; it will only be a first step, an antechamber . . . . We are proposing a space, an equilibrium between the different political forces, in order that each position has the same opportunity to influence the political direction of the country—not by backroom deals, corruption, or blackmail, but by convincing the majority of the people that their position is best. . . . If there is a neoliberal proposal for the country, we shouldn't try to


126 Peter Rossett, "Understanding Chiapas," in First World, Ha Ha Ha!, 158.
eliminate it, but confront it. . . . We are talking about a democratic space where the political parties, or groups that aren't parties, can air and discuss their social proposals.127 Whether or not one credits Zapatista sincerity, the strategy they suggest probably matches the core ethical and political tenets of many NGOs, both domestic and international, providing an added reason for outside groups to support the Zapatistas.

D. Organizational Match: Low Costs and High Benefits of Support

The theory proposed in this dissertation assumes that even "principled" transnational actors have interests and needs paralleling those of other organizations. To understand why NGOs support particular insurgent clients, one must look not only at their lofty goals but also at their often mundane organizational requirements. In this dissertation, I examine the latter issues by separately analyzing the costs and benefits of NGO support for a particular insurgency.128 The costs include most obviously the material expenses of providing support. In addition, the costs of support include potential but often important risks to NGO reputations. These risks, deriving from information deficits concerning potential insurgent clients at great physical and cultural remove, take two primary forms: the risks of supporting either an insurgent organization that is unrepresentative of its asserted constituency or one whose goals or grievances are exaggerated or unwarranted. To minimize these risks an NGO must incur other costs: the transaction costs of obtaining sufficient information to determine an insurgency's representativeness and the legitimacy of its grievances.

On the other hand, there are potential benefits to providing support; if a transnational NGO associates itself with an insurgency that has great international attention, it will likely benefit from


128 In the Zapatista case, the responses of individuals--often alerted by the Internet--were also an important part of the international reaction. While it would be possible to study an individual's reasons for supporting the Zapatistas, I do not do so here, confining myself primarily to the realm of organizations. It seems likely, however, that factors analogous to those in this dissertation's theory could be used to analyze individual responses to the Zapatistas.
this association, perhaps through an increase in membership, funding, or both. Reflected glory from the support of an international *cause célèbre* can be valuable for transnational actors in competition with other similar groups (though it is often impossible to prevent competitors from adhering to a popular cause as well).

The relationship between organizational costs and benefits varies with the form and character of a particular insurgency. In the Ogoni case, where MOSOP sought to build international support *before* gaining significant international attention (indeed as a means of gaining such attention), cost considerations were particularly important to transnational actors' decisions about providing support. Because MOSOP and the Ogoni were virtually unknown when Saro-Wiwa began lobbying, NGO staff worried about the risks of providing support, demanded proof of MOSOP's claims and constituency, saw few benefits to providing support, and initially rejected Ogoni appeals. By contrast, the Zapatistas sought international support *after* they had won great international attention, creating a different dynamic with regard to organizational issues. For many transnational actors, the benefits of providing support appeared large given the Zapatistas' great international resonance. At the same time, the potential risks of support appeared small because, as a result of international attention to the uprising, there was substantial available information, much of it confirming Zapatista grievances and, to a lesser extent, Zapatista representativeness.

**Benefits of Supporting the Zapatistas**

Even in the earliest days of the uprising, transnational actors could easily benefit from association with a cause that had already gained great public attention, a cause generally portrayed as just, and one in which important and neutral local notables actively sought outside support to prevent further bloodshed. To add to their appeal, the Zapatistas conveniently provided a number of resonant international "hooks" readily marketable and to some extent already promoted by the media--NAFTA, indigenous rights, genocide. In these circumstances, there were strong organizational benefits for various transnational NGOs to support the Zapatistas--and the result was a plethora of both words and actions. One could do well for one's own organization, one's own cause, by doing good for the Zapatistas.
Media reporting about the Zapatistas can also be analyzed as a function of the media's organizational interest in reporting "hot" stories: the Zapatistas created news, big news, by seizing towns and starting a war in an important state on the fringe of the developed world. Zapatista actions, tactics, and goals fit media interests, and the result was an access of media stories in the early months of 1994. Reciprocally, of course, news media actions—publishing front-page news stories—helped the Zapatistas meet their immediate goals of gaining world attention. Later as the novelty and spectacle surrounding the conflict gave way to mundane, plodding negotiation, the match between Zapatista goals and media interests (particularly international media interests) disappeared, and so did stories about the Zapatistas.

For many international NGOs, however, the period after January 12 and through late February 1994 saw substantial increase in the benefits of association with the Zapatistas. By "winning" the cease-fire, by snatching political victory from the jaws of military defeat, the Zapatistas had made another dramatic turn, from victims back to protagonists in the process shedding the pejorative though arguably apt initial role of aggressors. And in the weeks before the San Cristóbal negotiations, the Zapatistas enhanced their appeal by granting lengthy interviews to key Mexican and international journalists and by releasing pointed and irreverent communiqués addressed to the Mexican and international public, communiqués immediately distributed by the Mexican press, the Zapatistas' international electronic support network, and to a lesser extent the global media.

On this basis—and without the usual trappings of power—the Zapatistas disrupted and reordered Mexican society in the first months of 1994. Like a political black hole, they sucked in support from like-minded organizations and individuals, captivated broader Mexican society, won the attention of long standing opposition political parties, and shook the institutions of Mexican politics—all while core Zapatista goals remained obscure. In the heady days of February 1994, as

129 Note that while I classify reporting about "hot news" as an organizational interest of the media, it might also be classified as a substantive media goal. For most international actors distinguishing substantive goals from organizational interests is relatively easy, but for the media there is considerable overlap. If one assumes that the media seek to report the news neutrally and objectively, there would seem to be perfect correspondence between media organizational interests and "substantive" goals.
the Zapatistas' public approval ratings soared and they appeared poised to radically reform Mexico's entire political structure, many Mexican politicians and NGOs eagerly took advantage of the situation to support the Zapatistas or to win concessions from a weakened state.¹³⁰

On the international plane as well, Zapatista attractions proved powerful, and transnational actors in a variety of NGO sectors rapidly fell into orbit. For leftist organizations, the benefits of association with the Zapatistas were clear. Their rebellion was an immediate success with much of the Mexican population, in contrast to the string of leftist failures and retreats worldwide since 1989 and in particular contrast to the recent history of other Latin American guerrilla movements that had "la[ld] down their arms and enter[ed] into political deals with the neo-liberals in power."¹³¹ The fact that the Zapatistas' success was sharply limited and that they too began to negotiate soon after their revolt was largely overlooked in the astonishment over a seemingly radical group with broad popular appeal, a group whose leader had become a "symbol of revolt in the post-cold war era."¹³² Even if its calls for change were moderate and nonideological, its vigor and verve could breathe life into a movement in danger of irrelevancy. Representative of the left's rapid embrace of the Zapatistas are these words of Noam Chomsky:

The forces that are taking command of the international economy are mounting a very serious threat to freedom, democracy, and social justice, which calls for popular resistance on a global scale. The Zapatistas have provided an inspiring example of forms it might take, an initiative that merits committed support and that should be studied carefully for the lessons it teaches.¹³³

For indigenous rights organizations there was a similar logic to supporting the Zapatistas at least at the beginning of the uprising. The Zapatistas claimed to represent an indigenous

¹³⁰ For descriptions of the eruption of popular Mexican support for and solidarity actions with the Zapatistas in late January and February 1994, see e.g., Ross, Rebellion from the Roots, 172-79; Guillermoprieto, "The Shadow War." Of particular interest were the reactions of Chiapas' Indian and campesino organizations which "took advantage of the notoriety the Zapatistas gained" to make broad demands for Constitutional reform and who organized to form an independent coalition "to represent their interests in the context of EZLN-government negotiations." Van Cott, Defiant Again, 78, 84. For more detailed discussion, see section E below.

¹³¹ Petras and Vieux, "Myths and Realities of the Chiapas Uprising," 3054.

¹³² Shadows of Tender Fury, back cover.

¹³³ ¡Zapatistas! Documents, back cover.
constituency, they were fighting for goals overlapping those sought by indigenous organizations worldwide, and they had just scored a stunning if uncertain victory over the oppressors of "500 years." In these circumstances, association with and support of the Zapatistas could only benefit indigenous organizations involved in parallel struggles. The interest of U.S., Canadian, and South American Indian organizations was therefore great. Canada's Assembly of First Nations for instance, cited the Zapatista revolt as proof of the need for a "NAFTA Commission committee" to monitor the treaty's impacts on indigenous rights, human rights, and development throughout North America. More ambitiously, with an eye to future indigenous mobilizations, some Indian activists quickly placed the Zapatistas in the pantheon of North American Indian revolts and embraced the Zapatistas because they "represent the revitalization of revolutionary potential in America." 

Finally for the coalition of U.S. labor, human rights, indigenous rights, and environmental organizations that had recently opposed NAFTA, the Zapatistas' resonant attack on NAFTA made them a natural and inviting object of support. The uprising appeared to vindicate some of the coalition's criticisms of NAFTA, and served as an obvious springboard for further rhetorical attacks strongly tinged with an "I told you so" tone. Moreover, the uprising served as fuel for related attacks on the U.S. and Mexican governments for withholding vital information about an issue which might have thwarted NAFTA's passage; as a Congressional staff person stated before February 1994 hearings called by NAFTA opponent U.S. Rep. Robert Torricelli, What had the White House known about Chiapas and when had they known it? 

Of course, most of those who took actions supportive of the Zapatistas had altruistic as well as interested reasons for doing so, and the Zapatistas themselves sought and needed outside support. This fact becomes most obvious through examination of "support" by human rights and


136 Ross, Rebellion from the Roots, 135.
social justice organizations. Many of the international human rights organizations who sent
observer delegations believed their bearing witness would help protect the Zapatistas and local
sympathizers from government attack; the Zapatistas themselves believed this, and there is
evidence to show that the presence of human rights observers and the actions of outsiders both
domestic and international softened government policies. Similarly, among the many religious and
social justice NGOs that dispatched personnel and resources for ameliorating poverty, there was
undoubtedly a sincere belief that economic assistance would help improve conditions and in the
long run reduce the likelihood of further bloodshed. However, the sheer number of organizations
with identical or overlapping agendas indicates that more than selfless sympathy and support was
involved.\footnote{Ross, \textit{Rebellion from the Roots}, 113-37 passim.} Most groups sought to get their own piece of the action rather than relying on
surrogates from other organizations (although there were exceptions among some of the major
international human rights organizations who sent joint missions and published joint reports).\footnote{Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch/Americas, \textit{Waiting for Justice}.}
At a minimum, this indicates lack of coordination, duplication of effort, and possible waste of
scarce resources; more generally, it illustrates sharp competition between NGOs in the context of a
major international event. Just as large-scale humanitarian emergencies such as the 1994 Rwandan
refugee crisis have attracted a host of competing international relief agencies seeking to augment
their own support base even as they provide assistance, so the Zapatista uprising drew a host of
well-meaning but unavoidably self-interested international NGOs.

The weighty benefits of joining the Zapatista bandwagon also led to some bizarre but telling
incidents. In the commercial realm, where Zapatista magnetism and corresponding third-party
opportunism were highly visible, there was the unauthorized growth of a small-scale Zapatista
"industry" selling everything from T-shirts to condoms, most emblazoned with a bootleg image of
the Zapatistas' "trademark" ski-mask. As one Zapatista comandante stated in righteous disgust:
"People of our own blood, our own death, are selling us like merchandise. They are selling the
heroic blood of our martyrs right here, in the streets of San Cristóbal. The Zapatistas have also decried Mexican political organizations that falsely claimed to raise money for them. One Mexico City artistic group, for instance, declared the EZLN its vanguard organizing concerts and raising funds ostensibly on the Zapatistas' behalf, yet according to subcomandante Marcos "we're going to wait until the money arrives... nothing has arrived."

On the other hand, recognizing the advantages of mutual opportunism in some circumstances, Subcomandante Marcos quickly approved multiple re-issues of Zapatista communiqués and letters by "all the large, medium-sized, small, marginal, pirate, buccaneer, and etcetera presses." In this case, the advantages of broadly disseminating the Zapatista word outweighed questions about whether some portion of a book's price would in fact "return to indigenous and peasant communities in southern Mexico to aid them in their struggle for dignity." Purveyors of political tourism also exploited the new opportunity presented by the Zapatistas; within months of the uprising, a market in Zapatista tours tacitly approved by the EZLN (and the Mexican government) developed among sympathetic and curious international audiences, reaching high points at the mass gatherings engineered by the Zapatistas in August 1994 and July 1996.

Costs of Supporting the Zapatistas

The foregoing benefits exercised a strong, often decisive, pull on potential supporters, but the risks of support are also worth examining.

139 Subcomandante Juan, quoted in Ross, Rebellion from the Roots, 238.

140 Subcomandante Marcos, interview by Aguilera, May 11, 1994, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 301.


142 ¡Zapatistas! Documents, back cover.
Transaction costs: The legitimacy of Zapatista grievances

The legitimacy of Zapatista grievances was never a major question: as discussed in Section A, ample and readily available information documented the plight of southern Mexico's poor and indigenous populations as well as broader issues of Mexican political corruption and repression. When the revolt erupted, many in key international NGO communities were already aware of conditions in Chiapas, and for those unaware, information could be readily and cheaply obtained. In this dissertation's terms, information about the Zapatistas had low transaction costs. This is in sharp contrast to the Ogoni case in which, prior to Ken Saro-Wiwa's lobbying in 1992 and 1993, there was almost no knowledge of the Ogoni or their grievances—one reason for the failure of Saro-Wiwa's initial efforts to gain transnational support.

In itself, however, the easy availability of information about Mexican political repression and economic inequality is not sufficient to explain support for the Zapatistas; most of the information supporting Zapatista claims also substantiated EPR grievances yet the EPR did not win international support. Other factors were clearly involved, factors such as Zapatista public relations skills which made the group itself, not just its cause, appealing to outsiders and Zapatista goals which while hazy pointedly avoided tired ideologies of the left.

Zapatista representativeness and transnational support

While the legitimacy of Zapatista grievances was never in doubt, the representativeness of the Zapatistas was a more difficult issue, one which caused some concern to transnational actors (and probably should have caused more). The Zapatista uprising was clearly symptomatic of major problems in Mexican society and politics, and the Zapatistas certainly commanded a substantial fighting force. But who, if anyone, did this force of 2000 represent?

Part of the problem was Zapatista ambiguity about the issue. On one hand, the Zapatistas claimed their revolt to be on behalf of all the poor and indigenous of Mexico; on the other hand, they often claimed only to represent themselves, and to be mere catalysts for the transformation of
The Zapatista's asserted constituencies also reacted ambiguously. While the revolt, or at least the threat of its violent suppression, elicited an outburst of activism from some urban Mexicans, the situation in rural Mexico, particularly in the region of revolt, was less clear. In parts of Chiapas and in other regions, the Zapatista uprising prompted a rash of land invasions. In the immediate vicinity of the rebellion, however, some peasants complained of harassment and impositions by Zapatista forces, many expressed disagreement with the Zapatistas' violent means, and tens of thousands were forced into flight.

The Zapatistas' most visible asserted constituency, the indigenous, also gave a decidedly mixed reaction to the revolt. While some of Mexico's indigenous organizations took actions in solidarity with the Zapatistas, many others were skeptical of Zapatista goals and apparent ladino leadership. Given the Zapatistas' powerful impact on Mexican politics, many Mexican indigenous organizations took advantage of the historically high profile accorded indigenous issues in the wake of the uprising. But, as Donna Lee Van Cott has shown, the marriage between the Zapatistas and a presumed indigenous constituency was a marriage of convenience, with each side approaching the other opportunistically.\textsuperscript{144}

The upshot domestically was that Zapatista representativeness was always a central issue. Critical political interests were continually at stake within Mexico, and even at the height of Zapatista popularity, few organized interests were willing to be supplanted by the Zapatistas notwithstanding Zapatista claims to have acted on behalf of these constituencies. For their part, during the negotiations in San Cristóbal the Zapatistas avoided claiming to represent major constituencies other than their own, and in the 1995 negotiations over indigenous rights, invited all of Mexico's main indigenous organizations to participate with them.

While Zapatista representativeness was a continuing issue in Mexico, it was notable chiefly for its absence in the international arena. There, the dazzle of Zapatista success was sufficient to

---


\textsuperscript{144} Van Cott, \textit{Defiant Again}; for further discussion of Van Cott, see section E below.
attract support, and the question of who the Zapatistas in fact represented was often overlooked. In the first 12 days of January 1994, the issue was largely "solved" by the fact that the Zapatistas directly represented a threatened, largely indigenous fighting force of 2000 people, and presumptively a far larger number of civilian noncombatants in the zone of conflict. As the Zapatistas stated in an early communiqué, "We are thousands of armed Indigenous people, and behind us there are tens of thousands of our families. Therefore, there are tens of thousands of Indigenous people in struggle." By comparison, the EPR's inability to muster even a fraction of this number in arms or to demonstrate broad support in Mexican society probably constitutes further reason for its lack of international support; in these circumstances, government charges that the EPR was a fringe, terrorist cell could stick, where similar charges early in the Zapatista uprising rolled off the EZLN because of their clearly substantial membership and base of domestic support and sympathy. Comparison to the Ogoni case is also instructive. Because MOSOP had little concrete proof of its constituency prior to January 4, 1994, it faced serious and persistent questions about its representativeness—-at least until the Ogoni Day rally helped provide this proof.

After January 12, the Mexican government's cease fire and agreement to negotiate solidified Zapatista legitimacy among many transnational actors. An aroused Mexican civil society had halted the army and dealt the state a major blow; thereafter, civil society passed the torch back to a reinvigorated Zapatista force. For potential international supporters, this dynamic reinforced the perception of Zapatista legitimacy. The Mexican public's apparent support, demonstrated in the dynamic of Zapatista/civil society interactions and in civil society's fascination with the Zapatistas, was sufficient to keep many transnational actors from worrying about the real issues of Zapatista representativeness. Over time, however, as transnational actors have learned more about the Zapatistas' relationship to presumed constituencies, doubts about representativity have crept in and some transnational NGOs have withdrawn their support for the Zapatistas.146

146 See section E below.
While the Zapatistas enjoyed a holiday from scrutiny on issues of representativeness, other local-level organizations in Chiapas did not. In the aftermath of the rebellion and the immediately ensuing influx of national and international NGOs, there was a flowering of local organizations claiming to represent indigenous groups, peasants, or subsidiary NGOs in solidarity with the Zapatistas. The formation of each new organization undoubtedly resulted from a variety of motives: emulation of Zapatista tactics; sympathy with Zapatista goals; exploitation of sudden state weakness; or craving for newly available monetary and in-kind support. These local entities presented an opportunity but also a problem for newly-arrived transnational NGOs who sought not just to support the Zapatistas but also to alleviate the presumed causes of their uprising. As the theory of this dissertation would suggest, transnational NGOs such as the UUSC had a variety of questions about these potential clients: Who were these local organizations? What were their goals? Who were their constituents? How reliable and effective would they be? To protect their investment and their good name—to protect their organizational self-interest—transnational NGOs took a variety of understandable and sensible precautions: investigating supplicant groups and their leaders, consulting trusted and knowledgeable sources about group bona fides, initiating support with small grants, and monitoring group activity on an ongoing basis.

E. Substantive Match: Vague Goals
and Strategic Reframing

The theory of this dissertation holds that domestic insurgencies in the developing world will be more likely to win transnational support if insurgent goals match those of outside actors. This proposition has a number of implications whose empirical manifestations I will explore below:

---

147 Lopez, personal interview; Van Cott, Defiant Again, 78-80.

148 Lopez, personal interview.
1. The vague form and expansive content of Zapatista goals helped attract a wide variety of transnational supporters who believed their goals matched those of the Zapatistas; as information about the specifics of Zapatista goals emerged, however, a number of initial supporters withdrew.

2. Changes in the conflict led certain transnational actors to increase their degree of involvement as matches arose between their goals and those of the Zapatistas.

3. The Zapatistas strategically reframed their identity and goals in response to positive reactions to their initial presentations, thereby enhancing their appeal to third parties.

Zapatista Goals and Transnational Support

A central hypothesis of this dissertation is that the likelihood of transnational support increases if there is a match between the substantive goals of an insurgency and those of transnational actors. But the Zapatista case seemingly poses a challenge to this hypothesis: Why did support develop so quickly during the initial 12 days of the uprising when there were so many uncertainties about Zapatista goals, uncertainties which might have been expected to deter third parties from supportive action? The Zapatistas were an unknown group with no record against which to compare their bold statements; many of their goals were vague and broad; their demands included important contradictions, most glaringly between well-publicized calls for socialism and others that appeared to oppose it; and their statements were muddied by government rhetoric attacking the group.

Why did outside actors come to see a substantive fit despite the uncertainties about Zapatista goals discussed above? Part of the reason is the very haziness and expansiveness of Zapatista goals which made it easy for a wide variety of domestic and international audiences to make common cause with the Zapatistas. As discussed below, a number of NGOs provided support in the first twelve days believing that Zapatista goals jibed with their own; later when information about Zapatista goals increased, some of these NGOs backed away.

But vague and expansive goals can be only a permissive condition for outside support; many political movements have similarly vague goals yet generate little resonance among outside audiences. Beyond their generality, Zapatista goals also avoided certain red flag issues--e.g., rabid
ethnic chauvinism or hard core Marxism—that might have deterred support from a broad spectrum of NGOs. In their earliest statements, the Zapatistas emphasized relatively moderate political and economic reforms within the existing Mexican state: that their "voice" be heard in Mexican politics; that they have the basic economic necessities of life; that they be able to live in "dignity." These kinds of demands are difficult to oppose.

Of particular interest as well is the Zapatista treatment of socialism. While top Zapatista leaders came out of a radical background and while some Zapatistas made early and unguarded statements championing socialism, the Zapatistas' more authoritative public declarations since the uprising have consistently downplayed or eschewed socialism as a goal. Instead, the Zapatistas have demonstrated acute awareness of the post-Cold War context, an awareness evident in their aversion to old-style socialist rhetoric, their efforts to differentiate themselves from leftist groups of the past, and their dismissal of statements of solidarity from the EPR. Indeed, many Zapatista communiqués "read almost like a running satire on the grave, dogmatic missives from Latin America's Marxist guerrilla past."149

But avoidance of red flag issues can not be a complete explanation for Zapatista support, nor is it a very satisfactory one. For one thing, such issues are difficult to identify except in retrospect. For another thing, comparison to the EPR indicates that this factor can be no more than a permissive condition for international support. Like the EZLN, the EPR has also adjusted to the 1990s—and probably learned from the Zapatistas. Thus, the EPR does not simply mouth eternal Marxist verities; in fact its vague calls for political change sound much like EZLN rhetoric. Yet the EPR has fallen flat. By itself, therefore avoidance of red flag issues merely establishes a permissive condition for broad international support.


150 Golden, "Voice of Rebels."

151 EPR, "Manifesto of Aguas Blancas."
In sum, it appears that the Zapatistas' substantive goals are no more than a contributing factor to their international resonance. What appears to have generated affirmative support is the dynamic interaction of substantive and organizational factors: The EZLN's vague and expansive goals made it easy for NGOs in a variety of sectors to feel an affinity for and see overlapping goals with the Zapatistas, made it possible in many instances for NGOs and less organized audiences to see in the revolt what they wanted to see. Moreover, through January 12 there was a simple but urgent humanitarian rationale for support, one appropriate to an even wider array of audiences. Simultaneously, the stunning success of the Zapatistas in occupying towns, gravely embarrassing the seemingly powerful PRI, and gaining global media attention exerted a magnet-like pull on many international actors eager to associate themselves with a high-profile cause. And as the Zapatista phenomenon grew, more and more organizations considered it in their interest to latch on. Given this large dose of organizational self-interest, NGOs in a variety of sectors had strong incentive to see an overlap between their own substantive goals and those of the Zapatistas. Given the vague and expansive goals voiced by the Zapatistas, many outside groups could find or impute overlapping goals; if necessary, outside groups, could say to themselves: "Well, these people don't draw from any of the known ideologies, so they must not have one. I will lend them one."

One implication of the foregoing analysis is that if the Zapatistas had expressed their goals more specifically, they might have received less outside support. If Zapatista goals had been clearer and more limited, their content might have deterred support from certain actors in much the same way that the Bougainvilleans' explicit and armed demand for independence from Papua New Guinea appears to have scared off potential international support. While it is impossible to prove this counterfactual, the actual course of Zapatista-NGO interactions makes a closely related point: over time as more information about the Zapatistas became available and as the Zapatistas were forced to make authoritative decisions on certain issues, some early backers withdrew their

152 Marcos, interview by Aguilera, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 300; for an example, see section below on international environmental groups' fleeting support.
support. This dynamic is apparent in the pattern of attention and support from several important sets of international actors, international environmental NGOs and indigenous rights organizations.

*International environmentalists and the Zapatistas*

In the first days of the uprising, some American and international environmentalists "gloated that . . . indigenous indignation was predictable" in the wake of NAFTA.153 Greenpeace sent a mission to Chiapas, and the Sierra Club expressed interest in the Zapatistas as well.

These responses, however, indicate more about the environmental organizations than about the Zapatistas. Specifically, these and other environmental organizations appear to have projected their own interests onto a popular foreign movement despite little evidence of overlapping substantive goals. The primary bases for this projection were the Zapatistas' apparent indigenous roots and their attacks on NAFTA, from both of which the environmental organizations appear to have inferred common goals.

What these organizations quickly found, however—in part from information provided by Mexican environmentalists and in part by sending their own scouts to Chiapas—was conflict between environmentalism's substantive goals and those of the Zapatistas, conflict so severe that environmentalists quickly withdrew their nascent support. While the Zapatista uprising had many causes, an important underlying factor is Chiapas's highly unequal distribution of land—a problem exacerbated by Mexican government policies justified largely on environmental grounds.154 These policies, a 1972 decree granting 645,000 hectares of the Lacandon jungle to 66 families designated "original owners" of the land and a 1978 decree creating the 380,000 hectare, UNESCO-sponsored Montes Azules International Biosphere and Ecological Reserve, called for eviction of much of the Lacandon's population of poor, mostly Indian settlers. The result in the 1970s and 1980s was severe, sometimes bloody conflict as settlers, backed by the Catholic Church and leftist


groups, resisted the government's repeated attempts to remove them. While the basis for the
government decrees was not simply environmental preservation, indeed the 1972 decree resulted in
extensive logging by companies associated with high government officials, the government
portrayed the decrees as environmental measures and there was strong international support for the
international biosphere reserve particularly from UNESCO. Thus, "the first experience many of
the Zapatistas had with the imposition of an outside force upon their lives was the pressure brought
to bear by environmentalists to preserve the forest."155 As a result, in 1994, when international
environmental groups considered substantial involvement in the Zapatista uprising, they found
difficult historical impediments. While the environmentalists and the Zapatistas undoubtedly had
deep common interests in social justice, specifically radical land reform, possibilities of alliance
were reduced by the history of conflict and the Zapatistas' indifference if not open hostility to
environmentalism. As one Zapatista exclaimed: "Ecologists? Why do we need them here? Here,
we need work and land."156 Or as another woman who trained with the Zapatistas complained:
"All they tell us is not to cut trees, not to burn the land--but how can we not do so when we must
eat?"157

 Ironically, however, while Zapatistas in the Chiapan jungles saw no need for ecologists,
the EZLN's U.S. representative has subsequently found one--increasing Zapatista appeal among
potential American supporters. In its advertising flyers, the National Commission for Democracy
in Mexico bows to the popularity and resonance of environmental issues in the U.S., proclaiming
broadly that Zapatista goals include resisting policies which are "devastating the environment, the
economy, and the poor people of Mexico and around the world."158

155 Ross, Unintended Enemies, 46, quoting Xochital Leyva, Ojarasca, n.d. (Jan. 1994?).

156 Ross, Unintended Enemies, 47. See also Subcomandante Marcos, "Two Winds: A Storm and a

157 Juanita Darling, "Under Pressure to Solve Crisis, Mexico Turns to the Land," Los Angeles Times,
Feb. 23, 1994, A4. This woman added that "we are willing to preserve the jungle if they would send us machinery
to work the land we have. . . . If they would help us, we would be the first in taking care of the jungle." Ibid.

158 National Commission for Democracy in Mexico, "Support the Zapatista Centers of Resistance
Against Neoliberalism!," fundraising flyer (photocopy), n.d., in author's files.
The Zapatista relationship with the international indigenous movement is similarly ambiguous, though there is a far deeper base of overlapping identities and interests. Initially, the Zapatistas' apparent Indian identity and their focus on NAFTA attracted strong international indigenous interest, even though early Zapatista declarations made no mention of key indigenous issues such as Indian autonomy or cultural rights. Within the first week of the uprising, many of the most prominent indigenous rights organizations in North America had sent representatives to Chiapas. Canada's Assembly of First Nations, for example, which conceptualized the rebellion as "another Native land rights battle," petitioned the Mexican government to reinstate the original Article 27, and, in an effort to mobilize its Canadian constituency, analogized the revised version to the "Canadian government saying that Indian reservations would be sold without consent of Indian people." In addition, the North American Indian media provided extensive coverage of the uprising. As one Indian editor stated: "Chiapas was very important to us. We gave it priority as a major Indian story and our readers have been very interested in it."

But almost from the beginning, there were also important questions raised about the identity and goals of the Zapatistas. For some of the Zapatistas' international indigenous supporters, these questions led to strained attempts to package the Zapatistas as heroes in a hallowed history of indigenous resistance. For others, however, there was suspicion rooted in the history of "mestizo socialists who have used Indians as ideological capital, as well as military cannon fodder." After investigating the Zapatistas closely, some in this latter camp urged caution,

---

159 In addition, as discussed below, the Zapatistas have reframed their goals to further accentuate common interests with indigenous groups.

160 Barreiro, "Native Response to Chiapas," 78.

161 Ibid.

holding that "Indians have good reason to be wary of all who pretend to serve their interests while pressing them for participation in other agendas."\(^{163}\)

**Changes in the Conflict and Transnational Support**

This dissertation takes into account the dynamics of interaction between an insurgency, its opponents, and its potential or actual third party supporters. While the likelihood of support increases if an insurgency's substantive goals match those of a movement, lack of a match at one time is not fatal to support at a later time (conversely, an initial match may not prevent later contradiction and withdrawal of support). One source of variation in support is change in the conflict, often due to actions of movement opponents. If such changes alter the immediate, or long term goals of an insurgent group, they may create (or destroy) a match between the substantive goals of insurgents and transnational actors.

In this case study, I have already discussed one example of such change and its impact on third parties, and I will therefore simply cross-reference it here: the shift by international human rights organizations toward greater attention to and involvement in the conflict after January 3, 1994 when the Mexican government began intensive counterattacks and the Zapatistas appeared likely to suffer major human rights abuses.

**Zapatista Reframing and Transnational Support**

While change in a conflict is sometimes beyond the control of insurgent groups--indeed is often a product of shifting state reactions--an insurgency can increase its appeal to outside audiences by affirmatively reframeing a conflict. This dissertation suggests that rhetoric stressing internationally resonant issues or identities can have a galvanizing impact on support. Moreover, transnational support is more likely to arise if an insurgency reframes its demands to create an apparent match with the goals of transnational actors. But finding resonant issues and creating plausible matches is difficult and uncertain. Along with strategic calculations about the resonance

\(^{163}\) "Self-Determination and Maya Rebellion in Chiapas," *Fourth World Bulletin* 3, no. 2 (1994): 5. However, if Mexico's more pragmatic indigenous organizations had heeded purist international criticisms, substantial advances in Mexican indigenous interests might not have occurred.
of particular issues must come facility at adjusting one's presentation to audience reactions. This is a matter of maneuver rather than position; of observing and responding to one's audience rather than blindly presenting one's case; of emphasis, stress, and form as much as content; of deftly seizing opportunities and capitalizing on accidental successes as much as preplanning.

Even years before the uprising, the Zapatista leadership showed its facility at reframing issues—and itself. With the collapse of communism in Europe in 1989, dramatic shifts in ideology and goals became essential to maintaining a following in the Lacandon.164 Since the start of the uprising, the Zapatistas have also shown facility at these arts—and keen awareness of domestic and international, not just local, resonance. At strategic moments, they have deployed resonant issues to gain outside support and skillfully maneuvered to take advantage of audience interest. As a result, certain issues have gained prominence beyond what might be expected within the narrow bounds of the conflict. Providing proof of this argument requires two steps: first, showing that the Zapatistas have stressed issues peripheral to the conflict's core; second, showing that they have done so strategically, with the intent of gaining support from outside audiences. Neither step is easy or unambiguous: there are substantial difficulties in pinpointing the core of the Zapatistas' protean movement and in uncovering the intent of Zapatista actions and rhetoric. Notwithstanding this caveat, however, there are several examples providing strong circumstantial evidence for the argument. Moreover, this inductive argument gains further support from its deductive logic: it is rational and predictable that an insurgency faced with hostile opponents and fence-sitting third parties would reframe its demands to increase its attraction to those third parties.

Reframing women's issues

One important example of Zapatista reframing concerns the role of women and women's rights. Though women hold important posts within the Zapatista movement and though the Zapatistas' "revolutionary laws" included important provisions for Mexico's women, it is clear that women's rights were not central to the uprising itself.

164 Golden, "How a Revolution Survived."
Yet the Zapatistas have highlighted the role of women in their movement. One of the earliest Zapatista communiqués for example provides an amusing, but pointed description of the Zapatistas' "first revolution"--of women seeking rights against their men in the years before the uprising. National Commission for Democracy in Mexico publications in the US also place great stress on the role of Zapatista women, on the Mexican government's "low-intensity war" of rape and sexual assault against Zapatista women, and on the U.S. government's "facilitat[ion]" of this war. In addition, the Zapatistas have made a point of having their female leadership interviewed and seen by the media, which has responded with fascination and hagiographic reporting despite the fact that key women in the Zapatista leadership speak poor Spanish or none at all and often serve merely as silent props for Subcomandante Marcos's performances. While this deployment of the feminine is probably not mere tokenism--women appear to hold positions of real authority in the EZLN--it seems equally unlikely that the Zapatista stress on women is accidental or merely reflective of the role of women in the movement. Rather, the patterns outlined above indicate that the Zapatistas, like many other contemporary political actors, are keenly aware of the advantages of showing a female face on the international (and national) stage and have strategically used women to increase media interest and outside support. The process is illustrated in this passage describing the apotheosis of Comandante Ramona during the San Cristóbal negotiations:

Days later, Ramona became a legend. During the negotiations in the cathedral, due to her high rank, she always appeared directly to the left of the mediator, Samuel Ruiz, bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas. She wore a ski mask and her brilliant San Andrés huipil. She never spoke, but her silence was strident, punctuated by the flickering of her black eyes. Because of her small stature, a journalist named her "llaverito" [little key chain]. When she sat at the negotiations table, her feet didn't reach the ground.


166 Cecilia Rodriguez, "I Ask For Justice from the People of Mexico and the United States," Letter, in National Commission for Democracy in Mexico, Celebrating the Struggles of Women!

167 Petrich, "Voices from the Mask," 44.
Ramona's public stature has remained high despite her seldom appearing in public since the negotiations. In late 1996, when she revealed that she was terminally ill, the government granted her "dying wish" to attend the National Indian Congress, the first time a Zapatista leader was permitted to leave the territory under EZLN control in Chiapas. She received a hero's welcome before 20,000 in Mexico City's central square, arriving on Columbus Day aboard a "giant float depicting a masked and rifle-bearing Zapatista guerrilla."\(^{168}\)

This highlighting of women has elicited considerable outside interest, with journalists expressing strong interest in Zapatista women and gender relations, interest going well beyond Marcos's original description of the "first Zapatista revolution."\(^{169}\) Thus, while there is no direct and unequivocal evidence to show that the Zapatistas used women's issues to gain international awareness and support, that appears to have been the (probably intended) result.

By contrast, the EPR has done little to promote interest in its movement by pushing resonant issues, despite the fact that it has clear opportunities to do so. Women appear to be prominent in the EPR, but this fact has gone largely unexploited in EPR dealings with the press.

Refining indigenous rights

As discussed previously, one of the earliest and most enduring interpretations of the Zapatista rebellion was as a revolt of Mexico's Indians. Initial Zapatista statements and media stories promoted this view, and audiences outside the zone of conflict responded favorably, expressing sympathy and support for the Zapatistas in part it seems simply because of their identity as indigenous. Nonetheless, it was clear from the beginning that the Zapatista uprising—with its panoply of national and international goals—was not simply an indigenous revolt even if Indian fighters were a convenient and resonant vehicle for achieving broader aims. Indeed, while the Zapatistas promoted their indigenous identity, their initial goals differed substantially from those of


\(^{169}\) One interview, for example, provides lengthy discussion of the EZLN's policies on sexual relations (both heterosexual and homosexual) among a fighting force striving to maintain military readiness. Marcos, interview by Aguilera, in \textit{jZapatistas! Documents}, 302-9; Hull, "Cecilia Rodriguez: Zapatista, Feminista."
Mexico's existing indigenous organizations and they have continued to consider themselves the representatives of a movement for Mexican political reform far broader than one focused only on indigenous rights. Subcomandante Marcos himself has openly acknowledged:

The revolution that we are proposing isn't an indigenous revolution. The EZLN was born with indigenous demands due to how it developed, but it aspires to organize the workers, non-indigenous campesinos, students, teachers, and all of the other social sectors in order to carry out a broader revolution, not just an indigenous revolution.170

For domestic and international indigenous organizations, however, the Zapatista revolt was far too important to ignore simply because of uncertainties and ambiguities concerning the "true" identity of the movement. And for the Zapatistas as well, support from well-known indigenous organizations could only solidify its credentials as a representative, inter alia, of indigenous interests.

In a recent paper, Donna Lee Van Cott discusses the relationship between the Zapatistas and Mexico's pre-existing indigenous organizations.171 While the paper does not focus on mechanisms, processes, or theories of reframing, Van Cott's thorough analysis strongly supports an argument that the Zapatistas reframed their identity and goals to maintain the support of Mexican indigenous organizations attracted to the Zapatista cause by its initial success. This analysis applies equally to international indigenous organizations, and therefore, rather than repeating Van Cott's analysis, I will briefly summarize it in the paragraph below.

According to Van Cott, the Zapatistas and Mexico's existing Indian organizations entered a mutually beneficial "marriage of convenience" shortly after the start of the uprising. In January 1994, Indian organizations which had never previously achieved such a high profile for their cause, proclaimed their support for the Zapatistas though they carefully rejected the EZLN's violent means and expanded upon their vague and general goals. In response by February 1994, the Zapatistas began promoting proposals for indigenous autonomy and rights, goals they had not previously articulated in specific form. This marriage was sometimes rocky, with Indian

170 Marcos, interview by Aguilera, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 298.

171 Van Cott, Defiant Again.
organizations rejecting the proposed peace plan of March 2, 1994 (as the Zapatistas' own constituents did several months later) and objecting to the National Democratic Convention's lack of focus on indigenous issues, but it held substantial mutual benefits: for the Zapatistas, a sympathetic image; and for the indigenous organizations, a powerful, high profile vehicle for articulation of many issues that had previously been obscure.

Reframing NAFTA: Appeals to international self-interest and responsibility

Another prominent example of Zapatista reframing is NAFTA. There can be little doubt, of course, that NAFTA was an important issue for the Zapatistas, in their eyes placing the poor campesinos of Mexico in direct competition with sophisticated American and Canadian farmers. But the Zapatistas also stressed NAFTA for purely strategic reasons, to gain international attention and support particularly in North America. Even absent NAFTA, the Zapatistas would probably have attacked, though perhaps on a different date: "The despair was so acute that we didn't want to take it anymore, so international or national conditions didn't matter."172 Moreover, the history of Zapatista activism in Chiapas extending back to the early 1980s and the Zapatistas' long standing focus on other issues show that concern over NAFTA came late to the Zapatistas. Nor does the fact that the EZLN attacked on the date of NAFTA's implementation indicate that NAFTA was the central cause of the uprising. If NAFTA had been the critical issue, the Zapatistas could have revolted several months earlier at a strategic moment before the November 1993 Congressional vote, perhaps sabotaging or delaying NAFTA's approval. Moreover, while the attention-getting benefits of revolting on the date of NAFTA's implementation were important, they were subordinate to purely military considerations: the EZLN's readiness to attack and the Mexican authority's expected lack of readiness. In sum, NAFTA was not central to the Zapatista uprising--at least until its international resonance was so resoundingly proven in the earliest days of the revolt. Even then, it has remained more crucial to international than domestic audiences.

172 Marcos, interview by Petrich and Henríquez, ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 144. Marcos, interview by Benjamin, in First World, Ha Ha Hal!, 66.
It is more difficult to prove the second half of the argument—that the Zapatistas purposefully promoted the NAFTA threat to enhance their uprising's international relevance—because the issue's resonance was so immediate and so great that it took little more than good timing and a few provocative words for NAFTA to be perceived as a key reason for the uprising. As of January 1, however, NAFTA was only one of many grievances. The Zapatistas appeared unaware of its particularly potent resonance for international audiences and initially gave the NAFTA threat no greater prominence than many other issues floated on January 1. Thus, as Zapatista supporter Noam Chomsky acknowledges, "The NAFTA connection is partly symbolic; the problems are far deeper."\textsuperscript{173} When NAFTA's resonance became clear, however—both through key international supporters' stress on the issue and through U.S. government denials of NAFTA's relevance—the Zapatistas quickly adjusted their rhetoric to conform to audience preferences.\textsuperscript{174} Particularly in their pitches to international audiences, attacks on NAFTA, "neoliberal" economic policy, and globalization soared high, while such trial balloons as socialism were cut loose. And since 1994, the Zapatistas have become leaders and symbols of a loose international movement against "neoliberalism."\textsuperscript{175}

Why did NAFTA and neoliberalism have such international, particularly North American, resonance? Part of the reason is a simple matter of matching between Zapatista goals and those of the many NGOS that had recently worked to oppose NAFTA's passage. Moreover, the Zapatistas' broader attacks on neo-liberal policies fit well with an important new theme for the post-Cold War left—opposition to economic globalization and support for small-scale, local

\textsuperscript{173} Noam Chomsky, "Time Bombs," in First World, Ha, Ha, Ha!, 176.

\textsuperscript{174} Jim Cason and David Brooks, "Chomsky: la rebelión en Chiapas, efecto de la polarización generada por el neoliberalismo" (Chomsky: The Chiapas rebellion, result of polarization generated by neoliberalism), La Jornada, Jan. 14, 1994, 1; Alexander F. Watson, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Testimony and statement, Feb. 2, 1994, in Committee on Foreign Affairs, Mexico: The Uprising in Chiapas, 20.

\textsuperscript{175} National Commission for Democracy in Mexico, Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity; Preston, "For Zapatistas, Talk Turns to Unarmed Struggle"; Saul Landau, "In the Jungle with Marcos," Progressive, Mar. 1996, 28.
economies and societies. The Zapatistas' fashionable rhetoric attracted supporters who might have remained unmoved before tired pitches for socialism.

But Zapatista resonance involves more than just this simple matching of goals. Through their attacks on NAFTA and neo-liberalism, the Zapatistas gave the uprising direct relevance to international, particularly North American audiences. Moreover, the NAFTA connection made the controversy more understandable to non-Mexican audiences; NAFTA could symbolize the threat of massive indigenous impoverishment in a way that Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution could never do. In the U.S., key media reports about the uprising prominently focused on Marcos's condemnation of NAFTA, the Clinton administration addressed the issue in press conferences if only to deny any connection between the uprising and NAFTA, and U.S. Congressional hearings in early February 1994 explored possible transborder impacts of the revolt and the extent to which government officials knew of but suppressed information about the Zapatistas during debate about NAFTA's passage in 1993. By providing an international hook for their rebellion, the Zapatistas helped transform what might have appeared a localized land dispute or at most a national political upheaval into a conflict directly linked to American interests. (Similarly but less successfully, the Zapatistas appealed to American self-interest by warning of overwhelming migration flows if Mexico's problems were not solved. This issue, however, never caught on, perhaps because the linkage between supporting the Zapatistas and preventing migration was unclear given migration's apparent permanence.)

Beyond its appeal to North American self-interest, Zapatista stress on the NAFTA connection also raised issues of international responsibility and guilt, responsibility for the future impoverishment of Mexico's indigenous populations, guilt over their current plight. While the NAFTA connection has been the primary means of spreading responsibility to international, particularly North American audiences, another important means is also worth noting: From the

---

176 Petras and Vieux, "Myths and Realities of the Chiapas Uprising;" Chomsky, "Time Bombs."

177 Marcos, interview by Benjamin, in First World, Ha Ha Ha!, 59; Landau, "In the Jungle," 27-8.
beginning of the army counter-attack, the Zapatistas have sought to link leased American military hardware to attacks on them. From early January 1994, the EZLN charged that the army had attacked them with U.S. helicopters designated for drug interdiction. Since then, the NCDM's U.S. presentation of the issues has also stressed alleged U.S. military involvement as much as the NAFTA threat. Similarly, allegations that the Mexican military used Swiss Pilatus PC-7 aircraft to bomb Zapatista targets provoked outrage in Switzerland. Absent this concrete linkage between Mexican events and Swiss interests, it seems unlikely that a major controversy would have erupted in Switzerland, a controversy in which Zapatista sympathizers drew attention to the uprising and probably generated sympathy if not support for the Zapatistas.  

One implication of the foregoing analysis is worth brief discussion. The Zapatistas and their supporters, like other political movements, adjust their rhetoric and action to different audiences and contexts; reciprocally different audiences, particularly different national audiences, may find unique issues of particular relevance. The PC-7 controversy, for instance, was unknown in the U.S. and undoubtedly drew less attention even in Germany than in Switzerland. More broadly, within Mexico indigenous rights and democratic reform have been the dominant themes of Zapatista rhetoric, while neo-liberalism has loomed large internationally where the Zapatistas often portray themselves as valiant Davids fighting the Goliaths of globalization and American militarism.

**Conclusion**

The theory proposed in this dissertation gains substantial support from the Zapatista case and EPR comparison. When political movements so close in time, location, goals, and tactics obtain such strikingly different amounts of international attention and support, easy nods to

---

technology, geography, international civil society, or other "constants" clearly cannot provide an explanation. This dissertation's empirical account of these two Mexican movements also demonstrates that there are few differences in relative need between the populations on whose behalf the two groups rebelled; a straightforward "meritocracy of suffering" is therefore an unlikely reason for relative success and failure. While one might be tempted to assign chance a primary role in the contrasting outcomes, detailed comparison of the EZLN and EPR makes clear that there are systematic differences between the two cases. These empirical differences are brought out by this dissertation's theory, and the theory in turn helps order the varying facts in a way that explains the cases.

As the theory would suggest, the critical initial step in Zapatista transnationalization was raising international awareness of this previously unknown group. The Zapatistas made their international "pitch" in a way quite different from the Ogoni, yet the theory proposed in this dissertation is sufficiently abstract and broad to explain both processes. Where Ogoni leaders actively (and at first unsuccessfully) lobbied for the support of key transnational NGOs in Europe and North America, the Zapatistas never left Chiapas and, particularly in the first twelve days of the uprising, depended on the international media to promote their cause. Media promotion, while not managed by the Zapatistas, resulted from carefully-orchestrated Zapatista actions; the Zapatista uprising was clearly not a case of spontaneous rebellion receiving unexpected or undesired media coverage. Rather, through good timing, violent conquest, and resonant rhetoric, the Zapatistas immediately attracted the media to Chiapas where relatively easy access to the conflict zone facilitated reporting. After January 12, 1994, Zapatista communications skills as well as continuing access to leaders came to the fore, attracting audiences outside Mexico. Quite clearly, given the EPR's relative failure to attract support, a simple geographic or strategic explanation hinging on Mexico's relationship to the U.S., cannot explain these outcomes.

While the Zapatista "pitch" conforms to theoretical expectations, other aspects of the case appear to present a serious challenge to the theory's second step--matching characteristics of the movement with those of transnational supporters: Why did transnational actors imbued with
nonviolent tenets support a movement whose actions were marked by spectacular violence? Superficially, at least, this fact contradicts the hypothesis that support hinges on a match between a movement's tactics and its supporters' ethical tenets; more broadly, this contradiction might be seen as a challenge to the entire concept of explaining support by "matching" the characteristics of political movements and international supporters. Yet close examination of the case shows that the contradiction is only apparent, that the Zapatistas limited and legitimated their military actions, that they provoked disproportionate state reactions which overshadowed initial Zapatista violence, and that they evoked both sympathy as victims and admiration as victors. Because the dissertation's theory and particularly the tactical-match hypothesis survive this serious challenge--indeed explain the apparent contradiction between Zapatista violence and outside support--they gain added credibility.

This dissertation's organizational hypothesis also helps explain the growth of outside backing for the Zapatistas and the local Chiapan NGOs that sprang up in their wake, as well as lack of support for the EPR. In sharp contrast to the difficulties of attracting support normally faced by an unknown political movement, the Zapatistas attracted support from a position of existing if newfound international (and domestic) prominence. For potential transnational supporters, the benefits of supporting an insurgent group that had humbled the Mexican state were high; conversely, the costs of doing so were low since Zapatista representativeness and claims were never in serious doubt among international NGOs. In helping to explain the case, the organizational hypothesis also throws light on the behavior of transnational actors. This again confirms an often overlooked fact, that transnational actors are moved as much by organizational self-interest as by principle and that they are therefore highly selective in their support for potential political clients from the developing world.

Finally, the behavior of key actors in the Zapatista case also becomes more understandable if one accepts the hypothesis that transnational support becomes more likely if there is a match between the goals of a local political movement and those of transnational actors. For some initial transnational supporters, the Zapatistas' vague goals and great initial success proved highly
attractive, but, as Zapatista goals became better defined over time and assumed matches did not pan out, early supporters sometimes withdrew. For their part, the Zapatistas adeptly reframed their movement, particularly around issues of indigenous rights and neoliberal economic policy, attracting support from sources that might otherwise not have given it.

The combination of these four factors provides a sound and systematic basis for an explanation of the 'Zapatistas' successful transnationalization. This success sharply distinguishes the Zapatistas from the EPR and a mass of other insurgencies in Mexico and much of the rest of the world. A mere two thousand soldiers involved in little more than a day of offensive activity on the fringes of Mexico, became international (and domestic) causes célèbres. As some have pointed out, however, the Zapatista case might also be seen as a colossal failure: while gaining substantial outside support, the Zapatistas failed to ignite the general revolt against PRI rule that they had hoped for, and many recent changes in Mexican politics cannot be attributed solely or unequivocally to the Zapatistas.\footnote{Guillermprieto, "The Unmasking"; Van Cott, \textit{Defiant Again}, 85.} While criticizing a small political movement for failing to achieve massive and fundamental political change is perhaps unfair especially when the movement clearly contributed to important domestic reforms, the impacts, if any, of transnationalization are worth brief consideration.

Of course, this dissertation was not specifically designed to illuminate the issue of transnationalization's impacts and any "conclusions" drawn from the following brief discussion will require systematic examination and testing. Moreover, it must be stressed that in this case, even more than in the Ogoni case, it is difficult to distinguish the impact of international and domestic factors. Since Mexican support for the Zapatistas was so much stronger than the Nigerian response to the Ogoni movement, in most cases it is impossible to state with confidence that international rather than domestic factors had a particular impact. Finally and again in contrast to the Ogoni, the Zapatistas remain a viable if weakened political force; the final impacts of the movement and its transnational support network remain to be seen.
Despite these difficulties in assessing consequences, a few tentative assessments can be made. In the Ogoni case, I divided my discussion of possible consequences into three categories; with slight amendment, these categories are also useful in the following discussion. Accordingly, I will examine the effects of transnationalization on the Zapatistas themselves (feedback effects), on the state (target effects), and on domestic and international society (spillover effects).

One important feedback effect has already been discussed, the Zapatistas' reframing their conflict, goals, and identity to increase support from international audiences. In the Ogoni case, there was another feedback effect, increased Ogoni mobilization attributable to international "recognition" of the movement. A precise analogue of this effect is not present in the Zapatista case; there was no increase in EZLN membership or mobilization after the uprising gained international prominence or the cease-fire came into place. Indeed, if anything, after the cease-fire the Zapatistas demobilized their irregular forces. But clearly, domestic sympathy and support for the movement increased in late January and February 1994 as shown by rampant land invasions in Mexico's rural south and popular fascination and support in other parts of Mexico. These supportive actions might be classified as domestic spillover effects, but it is difficult if not impossible to prove that these effects resulted from the Zapatistas' international rather than domestic success. Undoubtedly, much of the increase in domestic sympathy and support stemmed from the Mexican state's recognition of the Zapatistas as a legitimate political force on January 12, recognition itself forced by growing popular support. Similarly, while Zapatista success may have encouraged the formation, activities, and characteristics of the EPR as well as other recent guerrilla movements in Mexico, it is difficult to show that it was the Zapatistas' international rather than domestic resonance which had such an impact.

There is evidence to show, however, that in regions of Chiapas near the Zapatista zone, local organizations and individuals responded to the post-uprising flood of transnational NGOs seeking to support rural development and nonviolent political change. The growth of local-level Chiapan organizations seeking support--and the precautions exercised by NGOs in providing
support to these organizations—indicates that there was an important if localized feedback effect resulting primarily from the jump in international interest in Chiapas.

Many observers and participants in the conflict also believe that international interest, action, and support exercised a restraining impact on state responses to the Zapatistas, believe in other words that international action had target effects.\textsuperscript{180} An important rationale for reporting on the government's human rights record, for instance, is that international observation may, either by itself or by creating broader international pressure, influence state action. In many cases, this assumption may well be valid but actually proving it is difficult. As discussed previously, the strong domestic support for the uprising makes it difficult to determine the impacts of international actions. In some cases, it is clear that international action went well beyond domestic action; the international investigation and reporting about human rights violations for instance was far faster and more painstaking than Mexican reporting even by ostensibly independent government agencies. It is unclear, however, whether these thorough reports rather than domestic pressures affected government policy, though the reports certainly provided important information about alleged human rights violations to both international and domestic actors.

Finally, the international spillover effects of the uprising have also been discussed to some extent. The Zapatistas have emerged as leaders and symbols of an international movement against neoliberal economic policies and the "sacrifice" of indigenous peoples and local cultures to this new economic regime. While this movement predated the Zapatista uprising and while the precise impacts of the Zapatistas on the movement are difficult to determine, the fact that the Zapatistas have assumed a prominent role indicates their impact as political models and spokespersons.

\textsuperscript{180} Rodriguez, answer to author's query; Collier, answer to author's query; CCRI-CG, "Letter from the CCRI-CG," Feb. 20, 1994, in ¡Zapatistas! Documents, 234-5.
CHAPTER FIVE
EVALUATING THE HYPOTHESES AND THE THEORY

Introduction

The Ogoni and Zapatista cases are two of the most prominent recent instances in which small-scale insurgencies from the developing world have become objects of substantial and sustained transnational support. The cases are unusual, but only because of their success; at the same time, they are also representative of a large universe of insurgent groups with a wide array of concerns who strive less successfully for outside support to increase their leverage against recalcitrant states. The core empirical chapters of this dissertation, with their inter-temporal and cross-case comparisons, decisively prove that successful transnationalization in these cases was neither a fluke nor the predictable result of a meritocracy of suffering. Instead, these transnational successes were complex, eminently political processes, marked by strategic maneuver and resonant reframing on the part of insurgents and by dispassionate assessment of mutual interests and concerns on the part of transnational actors. The growth of transnational support in these cases involved two steps. First, insurgent organizations made a calculated if fluid marketing "pitch" aimed at raising awareness of the insurgency among distant parties with no obvious need to "buy," i.e., to support the insurgents. Where lack of resources and contacts made direct marketing impossible, insurgents engineered or set in motion a less-controlled public spectacle aimed at increasing public awareness through reporting and promotion by media surrogates. These efforts succeeded when and to the extent that they created a "match" or apparent match between insurgent goals and tactics and the interests and concerns of transnational actors. Throughout, the actions and reactions of these principals were strongly affected by the insurgent group's relations with its
home state (and other opponents), whose policies sometimes hindered sometimes helped the establishment of transnational linkages.

In this chapter, I move away from the case explanation function of the previous chapters and return to the main purpose of the dissertation, theory development. To do this, I evaluate the hypotheses proposed in Chapter Two in light of the empirical findings in the comparative case studies. This chapter does not aim to compare the two success cases on a point by point basis; given the fact that these are both highly successful instances of transnationalization, such a mechanistic comparison would do little to further theory development. Instead, the chapter synthesizes earlier empirical and theoretical chapters with the aim of refining and developing the dissertation's theory. In doing so, I pay particular attention to the degree of empirical support for the hypotheses and to the importance of the variables they capture in conditioning the transnationalization process. In making assessments on these issues, I use qualitative rather than quantitative language, for example "strong" or "weak" support for particular hypotheses and "large" or "small" impact on the transnationalization process. ¹

Before evaluating the hypotheses, two caveats are in order. First, the theory developed in this dissertation is multi-causal and probabilistic. I do not claim that any single factor will by itself lead to support, only that certain factors may increase its likelihood. Second, since there have been few previous studies proposing broad theory concerning transnational support processes, the theory proposed here cannot be considered the final word; two detailed cases studies and two limited comparisons are insufficient to draw definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, Chapters Three and Four demonstrate the theory's utility in analyzing particular instances of transnationalization. Further refinement of the theory in this section of the dissertation should therefore be useful in its own right and should also help illuminate areas for further research.

¹ For others who have taken such a qualitative approach to hypothesis evaluation, see Walt, Origins of Alliances; Martin, Coercive Cooperation, 241-7.
Hypothesis Evaluation

The "Pitch": Raising International Awareness

Prime Hypothesis A. The greater the awareness of a political insurgency among transnational actors, the greater the likelihood that the movement will gain support from those actors.

Prime Hypothesis A is in one sense tautological: if transnational actors are unaware of an insurgency, they cannot support it. But the hypothesis also has a less obvious aspect: the breadth of awareness about an insurgency will condition the development of transnational support for it. There is substantial evidence confirming this aspect of Hypothesis A.

As the case studies show, both the Ogonis and the Zapatistas raised international awareness as a prelude to gaining support. The two success cases suggest different pathways to increased international awareness, NGO-centered in the Ogoni case and media-centered in the Zapatista case, but the end result is quite similar. The Zapatistas leaped to international attention through armed revolt followed by the threat of government annihilation of retreating indigenous fighters and civilians. While the "match" factors discussed below explain the reasons for support among particular transnational actors, wide international awareness of the insurgency increased the likelihood that broad transnational support would develop rapidly. In the Ogoni case, the slow build-up of awareness, largely among individual staff at a few key NGOs, also provided a basis for support once the Ogoni were able to demonstrate a match between their goals and tactics and the interests and needs of these transnational actors. And Ken Saro-Wiwa, in his assiduous cultivation of domestic and international media, was quite explicit about his underlying promotional strategy of "leav[ing] the [Ogoni] name indelibly in [the] minds" of key audiences.²

In contrast to the Ogonis and the Zapatistas, the Bougainvilleans and the EPR have had lower international profiles despite following a variety of attention-getting strategies. While there are other reasons that these insurgencies have failed to gain transnational support, their inability to garner sustained attention from NGOs or the media has played some role. Thus, BIG has recently

² Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 65, 138-40.
sought to build general international interest and knowledge about Bougainville as a long term strategy for gaining transnational support.³

Factors Conditioning the Pitch

**Hypothesis A1.** The greater an insurgency's ability to lobby and promote its cause, the greater the likelihood of gaining transnational attention.

There is substantial evidence supporting Hypothesis A1, but it is best discussed through analysis of the derivative hypotheses.

Material Resources

**Hypothesis A2.** The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater its ability to lobby potential supporters in their home states.

There is some evidence confirming Hypothesis A2, but an insurgency's material resources appear to have only a moderate impact on its ability to lobby.

Hypothesis A2, which relates to the NGO-centered pathway to transnational attention, received mixed support in the case studies. With respect to insurgent lobbying in the developed world, the Ogoni-Bougainville comparison provides some support for the proposition that superior material resources increase lobbying capacity. Thanks to Ken Saro-Wiwa's personal resources and willingness to use them in the Ogoni cause, Ogoni leaders were able to visit European NGOs and international conferences repeatedly in 1990-93, raising awareness of the Ogonis even if NGOs did not initially give their support. Saro-Wiwa's resources gave him and MOSOP the freedom to make lobbying trips at will and without being constrained by the restrictions of outside funders. By contrast, BIG leaders had to rely primarily on outside funding. As a result, their lobbying in the developed world has been more limited and conducted within constraints imposed by funders.

It should be noted, however, that even the Bougainvilleans have traveled and lobbied abroad, indicating that an insurgency's material resources may not be a major constraint on

³ Informant 11; Informant 15.
overseas lobbying. The costs of international travel while high are not prohibitive, and there are a variety of transnational NGOs that may act as patrons for insurgent groups seeking to attract transnational support. Of course, an insurgency must first attract the support of these patrons, but the fact that many other seemingly unlikely and resource-poor insurgencies, for example the Huaorani Indians of Ecuador and the rubber tappers of Brazil, have become regular visitors to the developed world also suggests that material resources may not be a major constraint on overseas lobbying.\footnote{For the Huaorani, see, Joe Kane, Savages (New York: Vintage Books, 1996). For the rubber tappers, see Andrew Revkin, The Burning Season : The Murder of Chico Mendes and the Fight for the Amazon Rain Forest (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1990); Sikkink, “Lessons from the Rubber Tappers of Acre.”} Similarly, scores of organizations representing obscure indigenous peoples from around the world regularly attend various international conferences such as the yearly meetings of the U.N. Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP) in Geneva.

Moreover, the Ogoni case illustrates an alternative mechanism by which lobbying might occur even without an insurgent group having resources substantial enough to permit frequent overseas lobbying trips by insurgent leaders: direct lobbying of transnational actors having personnel temporarily or permanently based in the developing world. Saro-Wiwa's critical, initial meetings with The Heat of the Moment's producers occurred in Nigeria, demonstrating that productive transnational relations may originate through contacts made in the developing world. In the Zapatista case as well, representatives of transnational NGOs came to Chiapas, albeit after the Zapatistas had won great international attention.

**Hypothesis A3.** The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater its ability to create spectacle and gain media attention.

There is little evidence to confirm Hypothesis A3.

Hypothesis A3, which relates to the media-centered pathway to transnational attention, received little support in the case studies. In the EZLN-EPR comparison, differences in material resources appeared to play little role in explaining variation in international attention to the two insurgencies and their violent actions. While my research did not focus on this issue and while further research would be necessary to draw a definitive conclusion, it appears that there were few
meaningful differences in material resources between the EZLN and EPR. It may be that there is some minimal amount of material resources necessary to underwrite a spectacular event, but this threshold is likely to be quite low, and the EZLN case indicates that great international attention can be won even by an event financed with limited resources. Similarly, material resources appear to have played only a small role in the Zapatistas' important successes at media relations following their spectacular armed attacks.  

Access

**Hypothesis A4.** The fewer a state's restrictions on an insurgency's overseas lobbying, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby potential supporters in their home states.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis A4. This evidence shows that state policies concerning exit by representatives of an insurgency strongly condition overseas lobbying.

The Ogoni-Bougainville comparison provides support for Hypothesis A4. Until May 1993, Nigeria placed no restrictions on MOSOP's overseas lobbying. As a result, Saro-Wiwa was able to make several lobbying trips to Western Europe where he contacted a number of potential supporters among transnational NGOs and pleaded the Ogoni cause before the UNWGIP. While initial contacts did not lead to support, they did raise awareness of the Ogoni among transnational actors. Subsequently as transnational support developed, Saro-Wiwa's continuing ability to establish and maintain personal contacts appears to have helped gain the loyalty of key staff at several transnational NGOs in the environmental sector. Most important, the MOSOP leadership's ability to move and communicate with relative ease between Nigeria, Europe, and to a lesser extent North America through early 1994, helped the Ogoni gain and keep support; leaders such as Saro-Wiwa could maintain contacts with their base even as they lobbied transnationally, thereby helping to prove their continuing representativeness of the insurgency to transnational actors (organizational factor).

\[5\] More important factors were the ease of media access to the Zapatistas and the Zapatistas' knowledge of media and publicity techniques. See below.
By contrast, in the Bougainville case PNG's blockade has made travel to and from Bougainville dangerous, sharply limiting the amount of overseas lobbying by insurgents based on the island. The slack has been taken up by the expatriate leaders of BIG, but their limited contacts with their base of support make their claims to represent this constituency suspect and may increase factionalism at home. Recognizing this problem, BIG leaders attempt to include Bougainvilleans who have recently escaped from the island among delegations they send to international conferences, but this sporadic contact is a far cry from MOSOP's regular interactions with its base of support.

**Hypothesis A5.** The fewer a state's restrictions on entry by transnational NGOs and foreign journalists, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby transnational actors in the insurgency's home state and to gain publicity from the international media.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis A5. This evidence shows that state policies concerning entry by journalists and representatives of transnational NGOs strongly condition media reporting and NGO lobbying in the insurgency's home state.

The EZLN-EPR comparison provides support for this hypothesis. At the beginning of the uprising, the Mexican government placed no restrictions on the international media. Within hours, journalists rushed to Chiapas, providing a media platform for top Zapatista leaders and enabling detailed coverage of the government's increasingly bloody counterattack on the retreating rebels. Both kinds of reporting were important to the growth of international awareness and transnational support in the first twelve days of the uprising. And in the months and years following the uprising, the Mexican government's tacit recognition of Zapatista control over a swathe of territory in Chiapas permitted relatively easy access by journalists and NGOs. The result, particularly in early 1994, was a glut of interviews and media reporting critical to rapid growth of transnational NGO support. Similarly, in a number of important instances in the Ogoni case, key transnational NGOs and journalists traveled to Nigeria and produced first-hand reports which bolstered the Ogoni case and led to increased transnational support. In the EPR case, by contrast, the Mexican government has been far stricter and more successful in preventing media and NGO contacts since the attacks in 1996. While Mexico's formal entry policies for journalists and NGO representatives
are constant across the two cases, in the EPR case the government has not recognized a region of insurgent control, and access to EPR leaders is therefore far more difficult and dangerous than in the EZLN case.

To summarize my findings concerning Hypotheses A4 and A5, the issue of access, which hinges to a large extent on the exit and entry policies of the insurgency's home state, has a critical impact on the growth of international awareness about an insurgency.⁶

_Spectacle_

**Hypothesis A6.** The greater the spectacle created by an insurgency, the more likely it is to gain media attention.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis A6. This evidence shows that media attention is strongly conditioned by an insurgency's creation of or involvement in spectacle, but the evidence also shows that this effect of spectacle itself hinges to a substantial extent on media access and to a lesser extent on insurgent skill at media promotion.

This hypothesis is supported by comparison of the Zapatista case with the other cases. The Zapatistas, with their unexpected and seemingly effortless capture of substantial territory in southern Chiapas, instantly became objects of intense international attention. This spectacle was rapidly followed by the spectacle of their apparent victimization by the Mexican government under the eyes of journalists already attracted to Chiapas. As a result, worldwide awareness of and sympathy for their insurgency ballooned literally overnight, and international press coverage remained strong for a considerable period. As the case study makes clear, however, awareness did not translate into immediate support. Nonetheless without the explosion in awareness about the Zapatistas, support would undoubtedly have been far slower to develop and probably less widespread.

---

⁶ This finding corresponds with Steven Livingston's conclusion that ease of media access to regions of famine strongly influences the amount of reporting about and international awareness of such humanitarian disasters. Livingston, "Suffering in Silence."
None of the other insurgencies examined in this study attained international attention with the speed or breadth of the Zapatistas, but brief comparison with other cases indicates that spectacle alone is probably not sufficient to gain sustained international attention. The EPR gained some media attention after their attacks in 1996, but in part because of the nature of the attacks--hit and run rather than territorial capture--and in part because they did not engage in immediate, assiduous, and skillful cultivation of the media, this attention was limited and fleeting. With the trial and execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Ogoni also gained great international attention; spectacle--in this case created by Nigerian state violence--created a peak in international attention and support, but the frenzied activity of MOSOP and its international support network in late fall 1995 appear to have been important factors in sustaining this international media interest as well. These comparisons suggest that spectacle alone does not account for transnational attention. Instead, the extent to which spectacle leads to sustained attention is itself conditioned by the possibility of media access to the spectacle. In addition, insurgent skill not only at seizing and creating opportunities that attract attention but also at media relations and publicity once initial attention develops plays an important role. As the Zapatista case study makes clear, however, in the initial days of the uprising, Zapatista promotional skills were less important factors in media reporting than ease of access to Chiapas.

While the cases support Hypothesis A6, a problem remains: How does one define "spectacle"? Is it possible to know in advance that one set of events will create great media and public attention while another will not? This dissertation has not directly tackled these issues; rather I have left the definition of spectacle loose and general: a major, highly visible, often novel event. Future research seeking to define the elements that create spectacle is critical to making this hypothesis more useful in analyzing and especially in predicting international attention to an issue or event. Of particular interest is the relationship between spectacle and violence: Under what circumstances does nonviolent action generate substantial international attention? How necessary is violence--either by or against an insurgent group--to gaining substantial and sustained international attention? Are certain forms of violence more likely to create international interest than
others? On this matter, large-scale violence seems more likely to create media interest than small-scale violence, but in some circumstances even nonviolent action or violence directed against only a single individual can create a spectacle that captures substantial attention, while in other instances large-scale violence and death can go relatively unremarked. For this dissertation, however, the critical issue is under what circumstances does the international attention created by spectacle develop into substantial and sustained transnational support for an insurgency? On this matter, the "match" factors discussed below go far to explaining the development of support.

Knowledge

**Hypothesis A7.** The greater an insurgency's knowledge of the identity and operation of potentially supportive transnational actors, the greater the effectiveness of its lobbying and promotion.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis A7. This evidence shows that insurgent knowledge strongly conditions the effectiveness of lobbying and promotion.

Support for Hypothesis A7 comes from comparison of the two success cases against their matched failure cases. Subcomandante Marcos's articulateness and knowledge of the media has been much remarked, but just as important has been his canny ability to create spectacular events and reframe Zapatista demands to make them internationally appealing. Close observers of the EPR have given few if any similar appraisals of that insurgency or its shadowy leadership. Similarly, Ken Saro-Wiwa's pre-existing international connections served him well, easing his initial access to several important transnational NGOs and issue networks. In addition, he and other MOSOP leaders had extensive knowledge of public relations and the media, and he repeatedly emphasized the importance of his marketing and publicity techniques in MOSOP's gaining transnational attention and support. BIG leaders, while they appear educated and generally knowledgeable about the international scene, appear to have had none of these advantages.
Hypothesis A7a. The greater the proportion of an insurgency's leadership educated in an urban center or in the developed world, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby and promote itself effectively.

There is insufficient evidence in the case studies to evaluate Hypothesis A7a.

Hypothesis A7a would appear to follow from Hypothesis A7, but my research has not examined the issue sufficiently to evaluate it. In addition, it seems likely that the cases I have selected will not provide leverage to evaluate the hypothesis since leaders of all the insurgencies appear to be relatively well-educated. On the other hand, in other cases not examined in this dissertation, less educated insurgent, and particularly indigenous, leaders appear to have gained international attention in part because of assistance from patrons but also because of the appeal of their apparent unsophistication. Further research on this issue is in order.

Hypothesis A7b. The closer the linkage of an insurgency's leadership to educated diaspora communities in the developed world, the greater the insurgency's ability to lobby and promote itself effectively.

There is insufficient evidence in the case studies to evaluate Hypothesis A7b.

This hypothesis relates partly to the issue of knowledge and partly to that of access: one would expect that an educated diaspora community in the developed world might have special knowledge about who to contact among transnational NGOs and how to make such contacts; one might also expect that a diaspora community located in certain key cities in the developed world might make it easier for insurgent leaders to establish a beach-head from which to mount lobbying expeditions. Despite the intuitive appeal of this proposition, however, the research in this dissertation, which focused little attention on diaspora communities, is insufficient to evaluate the hypothesis.

A few remarks can be made, however. First, it seems likely that a diaspora community will have greatest impact on the transnationalization process in cases in which insurgencies choose

---

an NGO lobbying strategy in the developed world; where they choose a media-centered strategy marked by the use of spectacle, the diaspora community is likely to play a smaller role at least as an initial matter. In the Zapatista case, for instance, expatriate communities of indigenous Mexicans appear to have played no role in generating international attention for the EZLN. Second, even in the NGO-centered pathway, conclusions about the impact of diaspora communities on an insurgency's lobbying capability require further testing. In the Ogoni case, Saro-Wiwa made considerable use of the Ogoni expatriate community in the U.S. and Europe, most importantly in London. MOSOP branches were formed in several developed states and took actions to aid Saro-Wiwa's promotional strategy. But given that other Niger Delta minorities have also sought, far less successfully, to use their expatriate communities to leverage international pressure against the Nigerian state, further testing is necessary to draw any conclusions about the circumstances under which diaspora communities will facilitate transnational support.8

The "Match": Gaining Transnational Support

**Prime Hypothesis B.** The greater the match between key characteristics of a political insurgency and those of a transnational actor, the greater the likelihood of substantial and sustained transnational support ("adoption").

As in the case of Hypothesis A1, the support for this general hypothesis is best discussed through evaluation of the more specific hypotheses that derive from and condition it.

**Factors Conditioning the "Match"**

**Substantive Factors**

**Hypothesis B1.** The greater the match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis B1. This evidence shows that the existence of a match between an insurgency's goals and those of a transnational actor strongly conditions the likelihood of substantial and sustained support for the insurgency ("adoption").

---

8 See e.g., Eguruze, "Federation of Ijaw Communities."
There is direct evidence to confirm Hypothesis B1 in both the Ogoni and Zapatista case studies. Transnational actors whose substantive goals most closely matched those of the Ogoni were the earliest to support them. Thus, UNPO, whose goals of "giving voice" to unrepresented nations and peoples closely matched MOSOP's original set of demands, was one of the first NGOs to support the Ogoni; similarly, UNPO has been one of BIG's few transnational supporters. By contrast, transnational environmental advocacy and human rights organizations rejected MOSOP's initial appeals for support in part because MOSOP's framing of the conflict in 1991 and 1992 failed to match their substantive concerns. Other factors also played a role, but correspondence in substantive goals was clearly a threshold criterion for adoption.

Hypothesis B1 gains further corroboration from transnational NGOs' actions after adopting the Ogoni. After adoption, NGOs' substantive goals strongly influenced their presentations of the conflict to their own constituencies and audiences. For the NGOs, adoption was not simply a means of helping MOSOP in its particular conflict in Nigeria; instead, adoption was a single step in a distinct and broader strategy. Many of the environmental NGOs, for instance, adopted the Ogoni in part because they saw the case as a good way of drawing attention to broader issues of alleged environmental degradation and multinational corporate abuse in the developing and developed worlds. Similarly, Survival International sought to broaden public attention from the particular problems of the Ogoni to the wider plight of Niger Delta minorities, an issue that fit in well with Survival's interest in "tribal peoples" worldwide.

The malleability of Ogoni goals echoes one of the findings in the Zapatista case, that the Zapatistas' espousal of relatively vague goals helped them attract NGO support in the early days of the uprising. Further research is necessary in this area, but this line of analysis suggests the hypothesis that in attempting to attract support from a broad array of transnational actors, vagueness and generality of insurgent goals can be an important asset.

**Hypothesis B1a.** If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the transnational actor's goals change creating a match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

There is insufficient evidence to evaluate Hypothesis B1a.
Although Hypothesis B1a would seem to follow from Hypothesis B1, my research cannot confirm it, in part because I did not focus on whether the goals of transnational NGOs in the conflicts changed. Further testing is therefore needed to evaluate the hypothesis, but it is worth flagging several facts that cast doubt on the proposition. First, in the Ogoni case, it appears that transnational NGOs focused on a pre-existing set of substantive goals, "forcing" the Ogoni to reframe the conflict. Thus, although environmental NGOs have used the Ogoni as symbols of broader environmental issues, the NGOs maintained their primary focus on issues of ecological impacts and corporate environmental malfeasance in the developing world; they sought to avoid entanglement in the intertwined issues of political rights and oil revenue reallocation, rather than expanding their goals to encompass the latter issues. Moreover, environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace deferred to the expertise of the human rights NGOs, for the most part criticizing human rights abuses after they had been certified by such groups as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, or, less reliably, UNPO. Similarly in the Zapatista case, transnational environmental NGOs' apparent interest in, but ultimate rejection of, close ties to the Zapatistas indicates that NGO goal evolution did not occur. If this largely anecdotal evidence were confirmed it would mean that Hypothesis B1a should be rejected.9

Before ending this discussion, however, it is worthwhile noting that the goals of some transnational environmental advocacy and human rights NGOs may be evolving and expanding in response to the mixed nature of many conflicts in the developing world. Emblematic of this shift is a recent Worldwatch Institute paper which discusses the Ogoni case and other recent cases of "environmental injustice," and calls for human rights and environmental NGOs to link their agendas.10 Such expansion or linkage in NGO agendas would seem likely to increase the

---

9 Although the hypothesis should perhaps be rejected, one can save the overall theory by referring to one of its underlying assumptions, asymmetries in power between transnational NGOs and insurgencies from the developing world. If insurgencies need transnational NGO support more than NGOs need insurgent clients, then one would expect insurgents to reframe goals more frequently than NGOs do.

probability of NGO support for insurgent groups such as the Ogoni and Zapatistas, but my research suggests that this did not occur in the cases I examined.

**Hypothesis B1b.** If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the conflict and the insurgency's associated demands change creating a match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis B1b.

Clear support for Hypothesis B1b comes from the behavior of Amnesty International in the Ogoni case. In 1991, Amnesty rejected Ogoni appeals for support when the conflict did not involve the individual human rights abuses on which Amnesty focuses; in 1993, when the conflict changed and Nigerian violations of conventional human rights mounted, Amnesty issued urgent actions and other documents and made Saro-Wiwa an international prisoner of conscience. Similarly, in the first days of the Zapatista conflict, Human Rights Watch/Americas expressed satisfaction with the "measured form" of the Mexican government response to the uprising.\(^\text{11}\) As evidence of actual or potential government rights abuses mounted, however, Human Rights Watch took an active role in monitoring the conflict and reporting violations.

**Hypothesis B1c.** If at Time T1 there is no match between a transnational actor's substantive goals and an insurgency's demands, the more the insurgency reframes the original conflict and its associated demands creating an apparent match, the greater the likelihood of adoption at Time T2.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis B1c. This evidence shows that insurgent groups strategically reframe their demands and conflicts to enhance appeal to transnational actors and that reframing plays an important role in attracting support.

MOSOP's reframing of the conflict, from one involving primarily "political" disputes with the Nigerian state to one also raising environmental and multinational corporate issues, played an important role in prompting environmental groups such as Greenpeace and FOE to support MOSOP after earlier rejecting it. Similarly, Zapatista emphasis on indigenous rights and NAFTA's

impacts on indigenous peoples also represented a successful effort to widen support among domestic and international audiences. The case comparisons, however, indicate that this largely rhetorical strategy is conditioned by a number of concrete factors: The underlying nature of a conflict places boundaries on the degree of reframing possible in a case; while elastic, these boundaries are nonetheless real, making particular instances of conflict-reframing more or less plausible. In the Bougainville case, for instance, the insurgents' declaration of independence and war against PNG seem likely to have complicated efforts to reframe the conflict as one over the alleged environmental havoc wreaked by a multinational mining company. Moreover, both the Ogoni-Bougainville and EZLN-EPR comparisons suggest that an insurgent organization's skills at repackaging and marketing affect the plausibility and appeal of particular conflict reframings.

While the case studies confirm that reframing occurs and sometimes leads to support, they do not provide definitive explanations about the mechanisms by which insurgent groups go about reframing their conflicts. Because this important underlying issue is not central to the theory, questions remain about the extent to which particular framings represent deliberate and planned strategic choices or the serendipitous result of a blunderbuss approach to gaining transnational support. Closely related to this question is the precise role of insurgents, the media, and transnational supporters in reframing processes. While insurgents initiate reframing processes (often in response to cues from the international realm), they may not have a clear idea of the international resonance of particular issues ab initio. Thus, they may adopt a blunderbuss approach, hoping that one of a number of framings may hit its mark. Initial responses by the media and gatekeeper NGOs may then highlight particular framings, providing critical indications to insurgent groups about the most productive ways of reframing the movement. In the Ogoni case, for instance, MOSOP's reframing of the conflict for international audiences involved two primary components, claims that the Ogoni were victims of genocide and attacks on Shell's environmental devastation of Ogoniland. Only the latter had broad international resonance. Similarly in the Zapatista case, the EZLN's emphasis on NAFTA and indigenous issues appears in part a response to initially positive media and NGO reactions to those rather than other framings of
the uprising. The empirical cases examined in the dissertation do not resolve these important but ultimately tangential issues suggesting the need for additional, detailed analysis of these and other cases--with explanation of the reframing process as the central research question.

*Tactical Factors*

**Hypothesis B2.** The greater the match between a transnational actor's ethical principles and the tactics used by an insurgency to achieve its goals, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

Hypothesis B2 is confirmed chiefly through confirmation of Hypothesis B2a.

**Hypothesis B2a.** The more violence used by an insurgency, the less likely that the insurgency will be adopted by transnational actors imbued with an ethos of nonviolent conflict.

There is substantial evidence directly confirming Hypothesis B2a and derivatively confirming Hypothesis B2. This evidence shows that the existence of a match between insurgent tactics and NGO ethical principles has a strong influence on the development of transnational support.

These hypotheses gain support from several sources. There is testimony from NGO staff in the Ogoni support network that MOSOP's actual and proclaimed nonviolence and its repeated, public efforts to prevent violence among its constituency increased the group's chances of gaining transnational support. Several of MOSOP's closest transnational allies also stressed to MOSOP the need for continued nonviolence to maintain transnational support. The Zapatista case presents contrasting preconditions but a similar outcome. The EZLN's initial violence deterred direct support from certain NGOs, while other NGOs provided support only because of certain exceptional characteristics of the violence. Among these characteristics were the limited and relatively disciplined nature of Zapatista attacks, the quick and reliable confirmation that Chiapas's indigenous peoples had suffered lengthy and severe abuse from the government and local landowners, and the rapid onset of vigorous and seemingly disproportionate government counter-attacks.

By contrast, the violence or perceived violence of BRA/BIG and the EPR reduced the likelihood of transnational NGO support for these insurgencies. Of course, for international actors
with no compunctions regarding the use of violence to achieve political ends, these insurgencies might still have been objects of support. But for transnational NGOs imbued with an ethos of nonviolence, support was unlikely absent a change in insurgent tactics or the existence of exceptional circumstances comparable to those in the Zapatista case.

**Hypothesis B2b.** The more violence used by a state to victimize an insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption by transnational actors.

There is insufficient evidence to evaluate Hypothesis B2b.

The cases studies did not directly focus on the issue raised by Hypothesis B2b, but there is suggestive evidence that argues for the hypothesis's further testing. In both the Zapatista and Ogoni cases, the onset of severe state violence led to increases in reporting by international media, monitoring by transnational human rights organizations, and support by other transnational actors. Yet in the EPR and Bougainville cases this spike in international attention and support does not appear to have occurred after state violence mounted. While there are probably several reasons for this apparent paradox, contrasting insurgent tactics probably played a central role: Because MOSOP followed largely nonviolent tactics, state violence turned the Ogoni into highly sympathetic victims. In the Zapatista case, this transformation occurred as well though it was more difficult and transitory given the EZLN's initiation of the conflict and the rapid cessation of fighting. By contrast, reconceptualizing the BRA or EPR as victims would have been far more difficult given their violence or perceived violence.

**Organizational Factors**

**Hypothesis B3.** The more likely that adoption of an insurgent group will meet the organizational needs of a transnational actor, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B3a.** The higher the benefits and lower the costs of adoption, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B3b.** The better the proof that an insurgency's demands are valid, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B3c.** The better the proof that an organization claiming to represent an insurgency is in fact a legitimate representative of the insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption.
**Hypothesis B3d.** The lower the transaction costs incurred in deciding whether to adopt an insurgency, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is substantial evidence to confirm Hypotheses B3-B3d. The evidence shows that calculations of organizational self-interest strongly condition NGO decisions about providing support to insurgent groups.

This closely related set of hypotheses, unlike those discussed above, focuses primary attention on the transnational actors, rather than the insurgent groups, involved in the transnationalization process. The hypotheses hinge on the idea that transnational NGOs are moved as much by their organizational needs for maintenance and survival as by their substantive goals. These important organizational requirements mandate that transnational NGOs carefully weigh the costs and benefits of adopting particular insurgent groups from among the many that seek their support. The behavior of certain NGOs, particularly the environmental advocacy NGOs in the Ogoni case and the indigenous rights and social change organizations in the Zapatista case, strongly confirms the propositions.

Cost considerations revolve chiefly around the risks to NGO credibility, reputation, and in some cases constituent support resulting from adoption of unknown insurgent groups from the developing world. In the Ogoni case, an important reason for the environmental NGOs' initial rejections was MOSOP's failure to provide proof of its grievances and representativeness. When MOSOP provided such proof, particularly through videotapes of the Ogoni Day march and through repeated mass actions in Spring 1993, NGO concerns declined and support developed. The Bougainville comparison also indicates that the absence of overt and substantial factionalism among MOSOP leaders in the critical period leading to transnational support in mid-1993 probably played a role in convincing transnational NGOs to support MOSOP.

The Zapatista case presents contrasting initial conditions but a similar process leading to early support by transnational indigenous rights and social change organizations. Unlike the Ogonis, the Zapatistas burst on the international scene in an explosion of media coverage which helped prove the legitimacy of their grievances and the breadth of their support thereby easing NGO cost worries. Media attention to the uprising also created strong incentives for transnational
NGOs with a general concern about the issues to take actions supportive of the Zapatistas. This combination of low costs and high benefits played a major role in convincing transnational NGOs to enter Chiapas and in some cases provide support to the Zapatistas.

While the cases show that the likelihood of support increases if adoption meets a transnational actor's organizational interests, several cautionary statements are in order. First, in any case where an NGO provides transnational support to a particular insurgency, it is often difficult to distinguish whether these actions are based on organizational calculation or on altruism, sympathy, and principles. Undoubtedly in most cases, the reasons and motives for support are mixed. This dissertation, however, with its focus on insurgencies having unusually high levels of transnational support and its comparison of strikingly different transnational support levels for seemingly comparable insurgencies, underlines the key role of organizational issues. It indicates, in other words, that while sympathy may be unbounded, organizational factors will largely determine the few cases in which sympathy is followed by substantial and sustained support.

There is a second, closely related point: while organizational self-interest probably plays the major role in initial decisions about providing support to new insurgent clients, its role may change in the ensuing relationship. To the extent that a close, ongoing relationship develops after an NGO initially provides support to an insurgent group, affective bonds between individuals in the two entities may develop. Thus, one would expect the role of interested calculation to recede somewhat over time as a support relationship endures.

A final caveat about the findings related to these hypotheses is particularly important. Most of the evidence supporting the hypotheses on organizational factors concerns transnational environmental NGOs in the Ogoni case and indigenous rights and social change NGOs in the Zapatista case. By contrast, the activities of human rights monitoring NGOs such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch appear to hinge primarily on the existence or not of human rights abuses in a case. In this dissertation's terms, substantive rather than organizational (or tactical) issues appear to be the primary determinants of action by transnational human rights NGOs. This point has an important theoretical implication: Further research and hypothesis
development should more carefully distinguish between the behavior of different categories of NGOs. This dissertation, which represents a first cut at the issues, has not sought to do this; while I examined the relationships between insurgents and particular NGOs in the cases studies, I opted for a high level of abstraction in developing the theory. Further work in this area should aim for more nuanced, mid-level theory.\textsuperscript{12}

**Hypothesis B3e.** The more support an insurgency wins from transnational actors, the greater the likelihood of adoption by other transnational actors.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis B3e. This evidence shows that bandwagoning is an important factor in the growth of transnational support.

There were transnational bandwagon effects in both the Ogoni and Zapatista cases. As the cases gained international prominence because of actions by initial NGO supporters (Ogoni case), reporting by the international media (Zapatista case), or repression by home states (both cases), greater numbers of transnational actors leaped to the support of the insurgents. Evidence for this is strongest in the Ogoni case where the growth of support was slow at first, then rapidly increased as Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution neared. Of course, there were "principled" reasons that NGOs provided support in this case, but there is behavioral as well as testimonial evidence that transnational actors were also pushed by their constituencies or pulled by competitive pressures into joining an accelerating bandwagon. Bandwagoning behavior is more difficult to see in the Zapatista case because support developed explosively, but the abortive interest of Greenpeace and the Sierra Club in supporting the Zapatistas can probably be seen as an example of bandwagoning.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Such theory might also distinguish more carefully between different types of transnational activity and different forms of support.

\textsuperscript{13} These NGOs' rapid decisions not to support the Zapatistas, however, indicate the importance of a substantive match in decisions about providing support.
Perceptual Factors

**Hypothesis B4.** The more an insurgency conveys its identity, demands, and conflict in a form appealing to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4a.** The more an insurgency portrays its conflict as complex or obscure, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays its conflict as simple and familiar to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4b.** The more an insurgency portrays its conflict as narrow or particularistic, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays its conflict as universal or symbolic of broader issues important to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

**Hypothesis B4c.** The more an insurgency portrays itself as confronting a local opponent unknown to foreign audiences, the lower the likelihood of adoption. Conversely, the more an insurgency portrays itself as confronting an opponent familiar to foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is substantial evidence to confirm Hypothesis B4 and related Hypotheses B4a-B4c. The variables embodied in these hypotheses, related largely to the effectiveness of various conflict framings, have a moderate impact on the development of transnational support.

The most direct evidence supporting these hypotheses involves changes in the Ogonis’ portrayal of their conflict before and after summer 1992. Before then, MOSOP presented a laundry list of demands aimed primarily at the Nigerian state and domestic audiences. Staff at most of the transnational NGOs to which Saro-Wiwa unsuccessfully appealed in this period saw MOSOP’s portrayal of Ogoni demands as muddy and parochial. Saro-Wiwa learned from the rejections and sharpened his focus, with accusations of genocide and Shell’s environmental devastation becoming prominent after summer 1992. The accusations of genocide were generally seen as rhetorical exaggeration by transnational actors, but those against Shell were given greater credence. While other factors were clearly involved, supporters particularly among transnational environmental NGOs, found MOSOP’s highlighting of Shell’s role far more relevant to their own interests than MOSOP’s earlier portrayal of the issues, giving the Ogoni conflict an international resonance it had not had before. Had the conflict not involved these resonant issues and had MOSOP and its transnational supporters not highlighted them, it is doubtful that the Ogoni case would have received such broad international attention and transnational support. Nonviolent
conflict over whether an obscure ethnic group from southeastern Nigeria should have its own state or over the amount of oil revenue it should receive from federal authorities does not have great international resonance and would seem unlikely to attract global attention. MOSOP and its trasnational supporters were aware of these facts and developed effective strategies to overcome them. Similarly, had the Zapatistas portrayed their conflict as a local land dispute or even a national political conflict, it seems unlikely that they would have won the world attention and transnational support that they did by making NAFTA and neo-liberalism primary "opponents."

These hypotheses gain additional support from transnational actors' post-adoption behavior. Environmental NGOs were explicit about the usefulness of the Ogoni case as a resonant symbol of corporate environmental malfeasance that might leverage change in a wide array of environmental conflicts around the world. And they saw the case, at least in part, as a way of "having a go at Shell." Similarly, in their international presentations, the Zapatistas have converted themselves into symbols of popular resistance against the juggernaut of "neo-liberalism." Specific issues of indigenous rights within Mexico, which the Zapatistas have negotiated with the Mexican state, take a distinctly secondary position in the Zapatistas' international self-portrayal.

Why did these reframings elicit support? In the Ogoni and Zapatista cases, the Shell and NAFTA connections helped make otherwise obscure conflicts in the developing world relevant to international audiences. These connections were not of course mere inventions; instead they corresponded to real though secondary aspects of the underlying conflicts. For transnational NGOs, however, these were the primary aspects because they evoked feelings of sympathy, responsibility, and familiarity among certain transnational audiences.

Skeptics might argue that the Bougainvillian insurgents have sought to reframe their conflict along lines similar to those used by the Ogoni and that the EPR has embraced some of the same rhetoric as the EZLN, yet in both cases widespread transnational support has not developed. As discussed in the case studies, however, the effects of Bougainvillian and EPR reframing have been overwhelmed by other aspects of the cases, particularly the BRA's war of national liberation against PNG and the EPR's unshakable reputation as a violent, terrorist cell--as well as both
insurgencies' failures at public relations. Nonetheless, the skeptics' points underline two important caveats. First, reframing is only one among several factors that contribute to successful transnationalization. It is clearly not a sufficient condition for transnationalization and whether it is a necessary condition is difficult to determine from the small number of cases I examine in this thesis.\textsuperscript{14} Second, the effectiveness of reframing is conditioned by a number of factors, and merely finding the "right" frame is insufficient. As the Bougainville and EPR cases indicate, such factors as the insurgencies' tactics and public relations skills play an important conditioning role.

**Hypothesis B4d.** The more an insurgency portrays its demands as implicating the direct material interests of foreign audiences, the greater the likelihood that transnational NGOs will adopt the insurgency.

There is insufficient evidence to evaluate Hypothesis B4d.

The EZLN's occasional references to the threat of Mexican migration to the U.S. if Mexico's problems were not solved comes closest to a framing that implicates an international audience's direct material interests. The impact of this isolated example is unclear, however.

**Hypothesis B4e.** The more an insurgency portrays its demands as enhancing important international public goods, the greater the likelihood that transnational NGOs will adopt the insurgency.

There is insufficient evidence to evaluate Hypotheses B4e.

The Ogonis and Zapatistas framed their conflicts as relevant to the preservation of such international public goods as cultural diversity and, in the Ogoni case, global environmental quality. It is unclear, however, whether these framings helped the insurgents gain transnational support beyond that which would have resulted merely from matching their substantive goals with those of transnational actors.

\textsuperscript{14} Determining whether the kinds of reframing suggested in the B4 hypotheses are necessary or merely contributing factors might be done by examining whether a large sample of cases that have received moderate to substantial transnational support have included such framings.
Underlying Factors

Hypothesis B5. The greater the ability of an insurgency to present its conflict in a manner conforming to the substantive interests, ethical principles, and organizational needs of transnational NGOs, the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is substantial evidence supporting this hypothesis, but it is best discussed through analysis of the derivative hypotheses.

Hypothesis B5a. The greater an insurgent leadership's knowledge of transnational actors' substantive goals, ethical principles, and organizational needs, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

Hypothesis B5b. The greater an insurgent leadership's knowledge of public relations and marketing techniques, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypotheses B5a-B5b. This evidence shows that insurgent knowledge strongly conditions the likelihood of adoption.

Much of the evidence supporting Hypotheses B5a-B5b has been discussed above in my evaluation of Hypothesis A7. There is one additional piece of evidence from within the Ogoni case: Ken Saro-Wiwa's testimony that he was "receiving a much valued education" from transnational NGOs' initial rejections of his appeals in 1991 and 1992.\textsuperscript{15} Several of these rejections were highly informative, enabling Saro-Wiwa to learn about the particular substantive interests of transnational NGOs, the deficiencies in his original presentations, and the "proofs" of MOSOP claims and representativeness required to meet NGO organizational needs.\textsuperscript{16}

Hypothesis B5c. The more articulate the insurgency's leadership in a world language such as English, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is insufficient evidence to evaluate Hypothesis B5c.

In the cases I compared, there was no variation in language capability, preventing evaluation of Hypothesis B5c.

\textsuperscript{15} Saro-Wiwa, Month and a Day, 93.

\textsuperscript{16} Informant 2; Informant 10, July 22, 1996.
Hypothesis B5d. The greater an insurgency's material resources, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is some evidence confirming Hypothesis B5d, but an insurgency's material resources appear to have only a moderate impact on its likelihood of adoption. (See discussion of Hypothesis A2 above.)

Hypothesis B5e. The closer the linkage of the insurgency's leadership to educated diaspora communities in the developed world, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is insufficient evidence in the case studies to evaluate Hypothesis B5e. (See discussion of Hypothesis A7b above.)

Hypothesis B5f. The easier an insurgent leadership's exit from and re-entry to its home state, the greater the leadership's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is substantial evidence confirming Hypothesis B5f and showing that state policies concerning exit and entry strongly condition the likelihood of adoption. (See discussion of Hypotheses A4 and A5 above.)

Hypothesis B5g. The greater the assistance from a "patron" supplying needed knowledge and resources, the greater the insurgency's ability to present its conflict effectively and the greater the likelihood of adoption.

There is weak but suggestive evidence to confirm Hypothesis B5g and justify further research in other cases.

The successful insurgencies on which I focused had leaderships with many of the attributes "patrons" might otherwise have supplied. Both leaderships were well-educated, media-savvy, and knowledgeable about the developed world. In the Ogoni case, Ken Saro-Wiwa also had considerable material resources for pursuit of a transnational lobbying strategy. Thus, it is not
surprising that evidence about the role of patrons would be slim in these case studies. Two suggestive incidents are worthy of brief discussion, however. In the Ogoni case, Ken Saro-Wiwa's network of friends among authors, journalists, and academics in the developed world played a role in informing MOSOP about NGOs that might be interested in supporting the Ogoni cause. In the Bougainville case, patrons went beyond supplying information; in some cases, they also provided grant money which made it possible for the BIG leadership to travel to international conferences and engage in limited international lobbying. The fact that the Bougainville case has evoked little international support, however, suggests caution about the weight one should assign to patrons, particularly those that supply only material resources.

Conclusion

This chapter indicates the strengths and weaknesses of the hypotheses proposed in Chapter Two as well as areas in which further research aimed at evaluating particular hypotheses might help clarify causal relationships. Contrary to expectations, several variables and causal processes that appeared to be important factors based on Chapter Two's theory extrapolation appear in retrospect to have reduced relevance. In addition, review of the hypotheses in light of the empirical findings suggests a number of broader amendments that should be incorporated in future research. One example was discussed earlier, differentiating between types of NGOs and varieties of support provided by them. Another amendment along these lines--comparing the states or regions in which support for foreign insurgencies is most (and least) active--might also improve the theory. In the dissertation, I sought to explain the development of "transnational support" in general terms. Accordingly, I selected cases that stood out because of their exceptional levels of transnationalization, but in these cases transnational attention and support were far from uniform among different countries and even among different audiences within the same country. My broad approach was useful because this dissertation sought to develop new theory and because my

---

17 For further investigation of the role of patrons, one should analyze cases in which insurgencies with less sophisticated and prosperous leaderships have gained international attention and support, perhaps cases involving certain South American Indian groups.
primary focus was the behavior of insurgents rather than transnational supporters, but comparing support levels between countries and between audiences in particular countries could generate further insights.

Notwithstanding these caveats, amendments, and research suggestions, the theory's overall logic and most of its subsidiary explanations received strong endorsement. The growth of transnational support can be effectively explained by viewing it as a highly strategic, two-step process involving first a "pitch" through which the insurgency raises its international profile, and second a "match" through which the insurgency gains support as transnational actors recognize overlapping goals, tactics, and interests. The theory proposed in the dissertation combines an abstract overview of this process with concrete explanations of included causal linkages. Only such comprehensive theory can convincingly explain transnationalization in a few successful cases and the dynamics of transnational interaction in many other "failed" cases.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

This dissertation was motivated by an important empirical puzzle and by existing theory's failure to solve it. In neither the international politics literature on transnational relations nor the comparative politics literature on social movements is there a convincing explanation for why some domestic political insurgencies receive substantial and sustained international attention and support while most similarly-situated groups do not. Chapter Two therefore proposed new theory concerning the growth of transnational support for small-scale insurgencies from the developing world. Chapters Three and Four closely examined two recent insurgencies whose signal success at attracting transnational attention and support exemplify the puzzle; analyzing the Ogoni and Zapatista insurgencies over time and contrasting them with matched failure cases led to detailed explanation of their transnational success. Chapter Five evaluated the theory and derivative hypotheses in light of the case studies, suggesting a number of areas in which future research could extend and refine the theory.

Two tasks remain: examining the implications of the proposed theory for the political science literature; and suggesting broader implications of the transnational interactions which the theory elucidates.

Implications for International and Comparative Politics

This dissertation has sought to fill gaps in the international politics and social movements literatures. Before discussing the theoretical implications of the thesis for these literatures, it is worth making one point concerning the methodology by which I have compared the dissertation's cases. One recurrent criticism of case studies is that they suffer from selection bias as researchers
focus only on a single case in which the dependent variable is present in large amounts or compare two or more such cases. In this dissertation, I have reduced problems of selection bias by comparing matched pairs of cases having high and low values on the dependent variable--cases of highly successful transnationalization against seemingly similar cases in which attempts at transnationalization have failed.\(^1\) In many qualitative works in political science, this method, Mill's method of difference, is referred to but seldom implemented in a sustained and serious way. Typically, null cases are examined as limited add-ons after lengthy analysis of a single primary case. In this dissertation, however, I have made rigorous and sustained comparison of success and failure cases a central part of each "case" study. Of course for some research questions, identification of null cases may be difficult, but this dissertation demonstrates the method's utility particularly when cross-case comparison is combined with intra-case historical comparison: in the dissertation's empirical chapters, comparison over time within each success case revealed internal changes that helped explain transnationalization but failed to reveal antecedent conditions that strongly influenced the operation of the theory; comparing the successful cases against the null cases threw these antecedent conditions into sharp relief. While this double comparison is not appropriate for answering all questions, it has particular utility in studies aimed at theory development.

Beyond its methodological import, the dissertation has implications for substantive issues in the two literatures. In international politics, despite much recent interest in transnational relations, there has been little research on the origins and internal dynamics of cross-border alliances between non-state actors. For much of the international politics literature, transnational relations and alliances are assumed, not explained. The dissertation has sought to shake this assumption by showing that the establishment of transnational linkages is just as political as the impact of these linkages on states. Similarly, the thesis has provided a strategic view of

\(^1\) Suggesting such an approach for similar questions in international relations is Lisa Martin. Martin, *Coercive Cooperation*, 248.
international agenda-setting, illuminating the important impacts of globalized media and insurgent lobbying in this process.

In addition, the thesis directly challenges work that focuses on the "principled" bases for interactions between domestic insurgents and transnational NGOs. Instead, the thesis stresses that in a context where there are many needy insurgent groups but limited transnational support capacity, principles can be only a permissive condition for the growth of transnational networks in some but not other cases. The dissertation's theory discloses the multiple, interacting factors--substantive, tactical, organizational, and perceptual--that go into the development of transnational support and places these factors into a framework facilitating analysis in a variety of cases. Of particular importance, the theory emphasizes the role of domestic organizations seeking transnational support as much as the transnational NGOs who bestow it. Both sets of actors appear in the theory as fundamentally self-interested as well as principled, painting a less sanguine picture of the workings of an emergent transnational civil society than one finds in many recent works. In this revised view, transnational civil society is less a realm of altruistic behavior offering a benign alternative to state-based institutions, than an arena of stiff competition between various weak groups vying for the recognition and support of powerful gatekeepers among transnational NGOs and the international media.

In comparative politics, the dissertation supports and extends theories concerning the social construction of political conflict and identity. A major theme in the dissertation is insurgencies' reframing of their goals, conflicts, and even identities to enhance their appeal to powerful third parties. While these processes have been examined before, such analyses are usually confined to the domestic sphere. This dissertation moves the analysis from within to across national boundaries, demonstrating the role of international political opportunity structures and the res\textsuperscript{7}ponsiveness of insurgent groups even in distant reaches of the developing world to issues and actors with resonance in the developed world. Moreover, while the research places substantial emphasis on transnational reframing, this is by no means its exclusive emphasis. Instead, the dissertation places the concept of reframing in a broader context, as one of a number of factors
which can enhance (or reduce) an insurgencies' chances of gaining outside attention and support. Thus the dissertation combines attentiveness to identity, rhetoric and symbolism with grounding in the concrete, often self-interested calculations of the different actors in the transnational support process. As such, the dissertation exemplifies both a synthesis of disparate strands of the social movements literature and a new focus for that literature, the transnationalization of political conflict by domestic insurgencies.

While the thesis adds important new insights to existing theory, it focuses on only one aspect of transnational processes leaving several closely related issues for future research:

- Which groups are most likely to attempt to transnationalize their domestic conflicts, and under what circumstances? This thesis examines a logically subsequent question--once a group decides to seek transnational support, what factors will help it succeed? But examining the threshold question would also be useful. More broadly one might ask how and why insurgent groups choose their strategies, in particular why violent tactics dominate in some cases and nonviolent tactics in others.

- What are the consequences of transnational support? Does success in gaining transnational support have an impact on a movement's overall success within its home state? Given the mixed or negative outcomes of the Ogoni and Zapatista insurgencies, this question is of particular interest and importance both for insurgents themselves and for the transnational NGOs that assist them.

- Do transnational linkages have any impact on the peacefulness or violence of an insurgency or a domestic conflict? While principals in the Ogoni and Zapatista movements and in their transnational support networks generally believed that international NGOs helped keep their insurgent allies relatively nonviolent, questions remain, particularly about effective ways of gaining sustained international media attention without resort to violence (and without the presence of state violence).
Policy Implications

Beyond its theoretical implications, the thesis also has practical implications both for the "marketers" of local-level conflict and for the "consumers," particularly among transnational NGOs. For leaders of local-level insurgencies, one message comes through clearly: Expanding the scope of a conflict from local, regional, or even national arenas to the international level will seldom succeed if it involves the unmediated transfer of existing rhetoric, appeals, tactics, and strategy to the new level; such a simple and straightforward transfer invites misunderstanding, indifference, or rejection from actors and audiences unfamiliar with the specifics of distant conflicts. Instead at a minimum, successful transnationalization is likely to require insurgents to universalize and popularize their conflicts--and themselves. To the extent that insurgent groups seek transnational support, they will most probably have to trim and reframe their appeals to fit the mores and expectations of the new setting. Some insurgent groups have clearly learned these lessons while others have not. Similar lessons might well be learned by policymakers attempting to bring early international attention and intervention to potentially deadly conflict and emerging humanitarian crises in the developing world.

For those to whom appeals for transnational support are made, chiefly staff at transnational NGOs in the developed world, one implication is equally clear: caveat emptor. NGOs would also do well to consider the impacts of their support as well: To what extent will support of an insurgency help the group--or perhaps hurt it? Is moral or material support likely to lead to false expectations about the likelihood of future support, expectations that might lead an insurgent group to take risky actions it might not otherwise take? If the theory of this dissertation is correct--that transnational NGOs are motivated by self-interest as much as by principles--then this issue will be difficult for NGOs to deal with--but just as clearly it may be a life or death issue for insurgencies themselves.
APPENDIX ONE
OGONI TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITIES
AND NGO SUPPORT

This Appendix provides a broad overview of MOSOP's international activities and the support activities of transnational NGOs. For the most part, I concentrate on the period from summer 1991 through summer 1993 though I provide limited information concerning activities after that date. Table A1 lists MOSOP's principal international activities in 1991-93, including their dates or approximate dates. In this Table, I include both actions taken by MOSOP leaders in international arenas and actions taken within Nigeria but directed to international, rather than domestic audiences, i.e., press releases directed to an international audience. Table A2 lists principal support activities by key transnational actors in 1991-93, indicating the wide variety of actions taken by important transnational actors and by the Ogoni support network as a whole. Table A3 lists some of the NGOs involved in Ogoni support activities in various countries, concentrating primarily on those that became involved early in the conflict.

The information in these tables comes from a variety of sources including reports from Nigerian, European, and North American periodicals; documents produced by MOSOP and the various NGOs involved in Ogoni support activities; and interviews with journalists, academics, and principals. Because the information in the tables derives from many sources and because Chapter Three extensively documents the behavior and motivations of principals involved in the earliest, most important stages of the transnationalization process, I do not include citations in the tables. As indicated above, the tables are designed primarily to provide a general overview of transnational activity surrounding the Ogoni conflict, not a comprehensive or exact picture. Since there is no central repository of relevant information about NGOs in the developed world, gaining
a complete view of NGO support activities presents almost insurmountable difficulties. Since the organizations are private, there are also significant problems in gaining access to records, even from a limited number of the most important NGOs. Finally, precisely dating "support" is also difficult. In some cases, the decision to provide support occurred over a lengthy period of time in which there was a gradual deepening of involvement or in which different branches of the same, decentralized organization took different views on support. While documenting a specific form of support, e.g. a public protest, is possible particularly if it received media attention, documenting the far lengthier planning, organizational, and follow-up stages is more difficult.

Moreover, my definition of "support" is quite broad; while this is useful for my theoretical purposes of understanding strategic interactions between domestic and transnational actors, it creates problems in attempting to precisely document support. As Chapter One indicated, support takes many, incommensurable forms, from direct monetary grants to a particular insurgent group to indirect pressure on a group's home state. Even within a particular category of support, the "same" form of support may vary greatly in its impact, depending on the identity and power of the transnational entity wielding it; thus, press releases by Greenpeace International undoubtedly have greater weight than similar press releases from a small, localized environmental organization.
Table A1. MOSOP's Principal Transnational Activities, 1990-93

1990
*Ogoni Bill of Rights* issued (Aug.).
Series of meetings held ending in formation of MOSOP (Sept.-Dec.?).
Saro-Wiwa visits U.S. as USIA visiting fellow; contacts Ogoni expatriates and academics in U.S.; informational visit to environmental organization in Colorado suggests utility of environmental issue in mobilizing Ogoni masses (Nov./Dec.).

1991
Saro-Wiwa discussion with William Boyd concerning means of gaining international support for Ogoni (summer).
Saro-Wiwa makes personal appeals for support to Greenpeace International and Amnesty International in London; rejected (summer).
*Addendum to Ogoni Bill of Rights* issued; "formal" start of transnational strategy (Aug.).
MOSOP establishes contacts with film-makers Glen Ellis and Kay Bishop during production of Channel Four documentary *The Heat of Moment* (late fall 1991/early 1992(?)).
Saro-Wiwa makes personal appeals for support to Survival International and Friends of the Earth; rejected (late fall 1991/early 1992(?)).

1992
*Addendum* published in Nigerian national newspaper (Jan.).
EMIRON/NISOPEN formed (Mar.).
Ogoni leader's letter in Nigerian national newspaper (*The Guardian*) urging various transnational NGOs to support EMIRON (Apr.).
MOSOP's initial contacts with UNPO (spring).
*Genocide in Nigeria* published; includes direct appeals to international community to save Ogoni from "extinction" (May).
MOSOP meets with Association of Threatened Peoples of Germany (late spring).
MOSOP attends UNPO-sponsored training sessions concerning testimony before UN bodies (July).
MOSOP attends UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP) and establishes contacts with various UN organizations dealing with human rights and minority rights in Geneva; Saro-Wiwa speech making direct appeal to international community emphasizing environmental issues and Shell's responsibility (July).
Saro-Wiwa meets members of London Rainforest Action Group, Earth First (UK), and other environmental activist organizations in UK; Saro-Wiwa helps establish contacts between UK activists and Ogoni expatriates in London (Oct.).
In aftermath of UK screening of *The Heat of the Moment*, Saro-Wiwa develops plan for Ogoni Day march at start of UN International Year of Indigenous Peoples (Oct.).
MOSOP gains Ogoni community consent to $10 billion Demand Notice against oil companies; Demand notice issued (Nov.).
Saro-Wiwa trip to Europe; attempts to visit New York for UN's inauguration of International Year of Indigenous Peoples; persuades Rainforest Action Group and Greenpeace to send observers to document Ogoni Day March (Dec.).

1993
Ogoni Day march; coincides with start of International Year of Indigenous Peoples (Jan.).
MOSOP produces film of Ogoni Day march (Jan.).
MOSOP attends UNPO General Assembly, the Hague; admitted to UNPO membership; Saro-Wiwa elected vice-president of General Assembly (Jan.).
MOSOP discussions with Shell officials and staff of Greenpeace and FOE in Europe (Jan.).
Appeal to Nigeria on behalf of Ogoni by three Nobel laureates (Feb.).
Frequent MOSOP/EMIROAF press releases relayed to UNPO concerning MOSOP's domestic mobilizations and growing Nigerian repression, i.e., detentions, Biara incident (spring/summer/fall).

Saro-Wiwa trip to Europe to lobby NGOs, foreign ministries against Treason and Treasonable Offenses Act (May).

MOSOP presentations at UN Human Rights Conference; presentations and press releases concerning Shell's role and Saro-Wiwa's detention (June).

MOSOP representatives meet Anita Roddick; relationship with Body Shop established (June).

Saro-Wiwa letters from detention appealing to John Major and UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group to "save Ogoni" (July).

MOSOP Briefing Note refers those seeking further information on Ogoni issue to Greenpeace International's communications office (Aug.).

MOSOP attends/addresses UN Sub-Committee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; Ogoni conflict recognized as "development racism" by Committee on Eradication of Racial Discrimination (Aug).

EMIROAF attends Second Conference of the International Alliance of the Indigenous-Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest, Iquitos, Peru (Aug).

MOSOP sends letters to British High Commission, Red Cross appealing to international community concerning refugee crisis created by inter-ethnic fighting allegedly instigated by Shell/Nigerian state (summer/fall).

Saro-Wiwa trip to Europe; meets with European Community representatives; appeals for aid for Ogoni refugees (fall).
Table A2. Principal Support Provided by Key Transnational NGOs

**Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO)**
Advice on promoting Ogoni cause in international forums; helps MOSOP obtain credentials for attendance at UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP) (spring 1992). Training program on working with UN entities to achieve goals; networking assistance at UNWGIP (summer 1992).
Admission to UNPO membership; training programs in diplomacy, media relations, international human rights, nonviolent struggle; facilitation of media, NGO, and diplomatic contacts internationally; revising MOSOP press releases for international audiences; distribution of MOSOP press releases to NGOs and media (Jan. 1993+).
Introduction to The Body Shop (June 1993).
Unauthorized investigative trip to Ogoniland (1995).

**Greenpeace International**
(Rejection of MOSOP appeal for support (Aug. 1991??))
"Oil campaign" workers/consultants support MOSOP "on own time" in Greenpeace offices; work closely with Saro-Wiwa on *Shell-Shocked* report; provide health and safety information to Saro-Wiwa for use in debate in Nigeria (1992+).
Photographer sent to document Ogoni Day march (Jan. 1993).
Ogoni Day video released (May (?)) 1993.
Press releases on Ogoni and Shell (June 1993+).
Direct actions dramatizing Shell's role (1993+).
*Shell-Shocked* issued (July 1994).
Sponsorship and planning of U.S. "tour;" visits to media, NGO, and government officials; protest at American Petroleum Institute (Jan./Feb. 1994).
Organizing consumer boycott of Shell service stations (Nov. 1995).

**Friends of the Earth**
(Rejection of MOSOP appeal for support (1991(?)).
Advice on strategy re Shell and raising international awareness/support (1993+).
Press releases re Shell role (June 1993+).
Direct actions dramatizing Shell's role (1993+).
"Earth Alarm" letter-writing campaign to Shell (June 1993+).
Lobbying Dutch legislators to question Shell re activities in Nigeria (1993+).
Organizing consumer boycott of Shell service stations and return of Shell credit cards (1995?).
Coordinating Ogoni Platform negotiations with Shell (1994+).

**Amnesty International**
(Rejection of Saro-Wiwa's appeal for investigation of Ogoni deaths from environmental degradation and "genocide" (1991)).
Fact-finding mission (1994).
Report *Nigeria: Military Government Clampdown on Opposition* highlighting Ogoni situation (1994??).
The Body Shop
Letter-writing campaign to Shell, British government, Nigerian government (June/July 1993; 1994+).
Technical assessment of Shell's environmental impact assessments in Niger Delta; found "dramatically inadequate" (Mar. 1994).
Advertisements and "lorry caravan" promoting documentary The Drilling Fields highly critical of Shell operations in Ogoniland (May 1994).
Protest/lobbying at international petroleum conferences, Norway (May, Nov. 1994).
Nomination of Saro-Wiwa for Goldman Grassroots Environmental Prize (1995).
Replacement of Shell grants rejected by local NGOs (1996).
Table A3. Principal NGOs Supporting Ogoni by Country

International
- Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
- Greenpeace
- Friends of the Earth
- Amnesty International
- The Body Shop
- Human Rights Watch/Africa
- International Commission of Jurists
- International PEN
- Article 19
- Survival International
- International Foundation for Freedom of Expression
- International Federation for the Rights of Ethnic, Linguistic, Religious, and Other Minorities
- Right Livelihood Award Committee
- Goldman Grassroots Environmental Award Committee
- Association of Concerned African Scholars
- One World Broadcasting

Austria
- Stiftung Bruno Kreisky Archiv
  (Bruno Kreisky Archive Foundation)

Brazil
- ProNatura

France
- ProNatura

Germany
- Association of Threatened Peoples
- Civil Liberties Group

Republic of Ireland
- Ogoni Solidarity Ireland

Netherlands
- Pax Christi
- Ogoni Platform (coordinating forum)

New Zealand
- ECO, Christchurch

United Kingdom
- Ogoni Community Association
- UK Law Society/Bar Human Rights Committee
- Parliamentary Human Rights Commission
- Rainforest Action Group
- Earth First

---

1 Denotes NGOs with activities directed principally to international audiences or transnational NGOs with major support activities in several national branches.
Reclaim the Streets
Gaia Foundation
Green Net

United States
Cultural Survival
Environmental Defense Fund
Sierra Club
Project Underground
TransAfrica
Service Employees International
APPENDIX TWO
INFORMANTS FOR OGONI CASE STUDY

For the Ogoni case study, I interviewed approximately 40 informants from MOSOP and key transnational NGOs in North America and particularly in Europe, where MOSOP won its earliest and most crucial support. My interviews--conducted in-person, by telephone, or by both means--generally lasted from one to three hours. In most of my in-person interviews, informants agreed to my use of a pocket tape recorder; where this was not the case or in telephone interviews, I transcribed interviewees' responses.

Because the Ogoni and Bougainville conflicts continue today in both domestic and international forums and because some of the information I collected is sensitive, I have assigned Informant Numbers for interviewees who provided information cited in the chapter. The list below gives a brief description of the primary informants' affiliations or activities by Informant Number.

Informant 12. Personal Interview, July 23, 1996: member, MOSOP.
Informant 12a Personal Interview, July 23, 1996: member, MOSOP-UK.
Informant 13. Personal Interview, July 11, 1996: staffperson, UNPO.
Informant 15. Personal Interview, July 12, 1996: staffperson, UNPO.
Informant 16. Personal Interview, July 21, 1996: member, MOSOP.
Informant 17. Personal Interview, July 21, 1996: member, MOSOP-UK.
Informant 18. Personal Interview, July 21, 1996: member, MOSOP.
APPENDIX THREE
SELECTED DOCUMENTS FOR Ogoni CASE STUDY

This Appendix reprints several key documents discussed in the Ogoni case study. The first five documents are reproduced, by permission, from Fourth World Bulletin, Spring/Summer 1996 which in turn reprinted the contents of a June 1992 MOSOP pamphlet that contained both new and previously published materials. The list below indicates the order of presentation in this Appendix and includes the documents' original dates of promulgation.

Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Foreword" to Ogoni Bill of Rights, Dec. 24, 1991


Ogoni Bill of Rights, Aug. 26, 1990

Addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights, Aug. 26, 1991

MOSOP, "An Appeal to the International Community," December 1991


---


2 As originally published in Nigeria, this document was signed by G. B. Leton and Ken Saro-Wiwa and was printed under the title "Ogoni Appeal to the International Community." National Concord, Jan. 27, 1992, 15.
The Ogoni Bill of Rights
Presented to the Government and People of Nigeria
with an Appeal to the International Community

Foreword
BY KEN SARO-WIWA
PORT HARCOURT, 24 DECEMBER 1991

In August 1990, the Chiefs and people of Ogoni in Nigeria met to sign one of the most important declarations to come out of Africa in recent times: the Ogoni Bill of Rights. By the Bill, the Ogoni people, while underlining their loyalty to the Nigerian nation, laid claim as a people to their independence which British colonialism had first violated and then handed over to some other Nigerian ethnic groups in October 1960.

The Bill of Rights presented to the Government and people of Nigeria called for political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, control and use of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni Development, adequate and direct representation as of right for Ogoni people in all Nigerian national institutions and the right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

These rights which should have reverted to the Ogoni after the termination of British rule, have been usurped in the past thirty years by the majority ethnic groups of Nigeria. They have not only been usurped; they have been misused and abused, turning Nigeria into a hell on earth for the Ogoni and similar ethnic minorities. Thirty years of Nigerian independence has done no more than outline the wretched quality of the leadership of the Nigerian majority ethnic groups and their cruelty as they have plunged the nation into ethnic strife, carnage, war, dictatorship, retrogression and the greatest waste of national resources ever witnessed in world history, turning generations of Nigerians, born and unborn into perpetual debtors.

The Ogoni Bill of Rights rejects once and for all this incompetent indigenous colonialism and calls for a new order in Nigeria, an order in which each ethnic group will have full responsibility for its own affairs and competition between the various peoples of Nigeria will be fair, thus ushering in a new era of peaceful co-existence, co-operation and national progress.

This is the path which has been chosen by the European tribes in the European Community, and by the Russians and their neighbors in the new Commonwealth which they are now fashioning. The Yugoslav tribes are being forced into similar ways. The lesson is that high fences make good neighbors. The Ogoni people are therefore in the mainstream of international thought.

It is well-known that since the issuance of the Bill of Rights the Babangida administration has continued in the reactionary ways of all the military rulers of Nigeria from Igbobi through Gowon, Obasanjo and Buhari, seeking to turn Nigeria into a unitary state against the wishes of the Nigerian peoples and trends in world history. The split of the country into 30 states and 600 local governments in 1991 is a waste of resources, a veritable exercise in futility. It is a further attempt to transfer the seized resources of the Ogoni and other minority ethnic groups in the delta to the majority ethnic groups of the country. Without oil, these states and local governments will not exist for one day longer.

The import of the creation of these states is that the Ogoni and other minority groups will continue to be slaves of the majority ethnic groups. It is a gross abuse of human rights, a notably undemocratic act which flies in the face of modern history. The Ogoni people are right to reject it. While they are willing, for the reasons of Africa, to share their resources with other Africans, they insist that it must be on the principles of mutuality, of fairness, of equity and justice.

It has been assumed that because the Ogoni are few in number, they can be abused and denied their rights and that their environment can be destroyed without compunction. This has been the received wisdom of Nigeria according to military dictatorships. 1992 will put paid to this as the Ogoni put their case to the international community (etc.).

It is the intention of the Ogoni people to draw the attention of the American government and people to the fact that the oil which they buy from Nigeria is stolen property and that it is against American law to receive stolen goods.

The Ogoni people will be telling the European Community that their demand of the Yugoslav tribes that they respect human rights, minority rights and democracy should also apply to Nigeria and that they should not wait for Nigeria to burst into ethnic strife and carnage before enjoining these civilized values on a Nigeria which depends on European investment, technology and credit.

The Ogoni people will be appealing the British Government and the leaders of the Commonwealth who have urged on Commonwealth countries the virtues of good government, democracy, human rights and environmental protection that no government can be good if it imposes and operates laws which cheat a section of its peoples; that democracy does not exist where laws do not protect minorities and that the environment of the Ogoni and other delta minorities has been ruined beyond repair by multi-national oil companies under the protection of successive Nigerian administrations run by

Editor's note: To accompany support and explain the material presented in "The Martyrdom of Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Future of Ogoni Self-Determination," the Fourth World Bulletin here reproduces in its entirety the Ogoni Bill of Rights as it was originally published by Saros International Publishers, 24 Aggreg Road, PO Box 191, Port Harcourt, Nigeria in 1992. This document was written by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in 1990, and it was distributed internationally at the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the 1993 meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples and other international forums. Saros International was one of Ken Saro-Wiwa's enterprises. At the time that this document was published, the MOSOP leadership included both Ken Saro-Wiwa and the chiefs of Gokana, whose murders Saro-Wiwa was convicted and executed for having incited over signatures at the end of the document.
Nigerians of the majority ethnic groups.

The Ogoni people will make representation to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to the effect that giving loans and credit to the Nigerian Government on the understanding that oil money will be used to repay such loans is to encourage the Nigerian government to continue to dehumanize the Ogoni people and to devastate the environment and ecology of the Ogoni and other delta minorities among whom oil is found.

The Ogoni people will inform the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity that the Nigerian Constitution and the actions of the power elite in Nigeria flagrantly violate the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights; and that Nigeria in 1992 is no different from Apartheid South Africa. The Ogoni people will ask that Nigeria be duly chastised by both organizations for its inhuman actions and uncivilized behavior. And if Nigeria persists in its perversion, then it should be expelled from both organizations.

These actions of the Ogoni people aim at the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Ogoni people as a distinct ethnic community in Nigeria, and at the establishment of a democratic Nigeria, a progressive multi-ethnic nation, a realistic society of equals, a just nation.

What the Ogoni demand for themselves, namely, autonomy, they also ask for others throughout Nigeria and, indeed, the continent of Africa.

It is their hope that the international community will respond to these just demands as they have done to similar demands in other parts of the world.

Statement

BY DR. G.B. LETON, OON JP.,
PRESIDENT OF THE MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF Ogoni People (MOSOP)

1. The Ogoni case is of genocide being committed in the dying years of the twentieth century by multinational oil companies under the supervision of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is that of a distinct ethnic minority in Nigeria who feel so suffocated by existing political, economic and social conditions in Nigeria that they have no choice but to cry out to the international community for salvation.

2. The Ogoni are a distinct ethnic group inhabiting the coastal plains terraces to the northeast of the Niger delta. On account of the hitherto very rich plateau soil, the people are mainly subsistence farmers but they also engage in migrant and nomadic fishing. They occupy an area of about 400 square miles and number an estimated 500,000. The population density of about 1,250 persons per square mile is among the highest in any rural area of the world and compares with the Nigerian national average of 300. The obvious problem is the pressure on land.

3. Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni at Bomu (Dere) in 1958; since then an estimated SUS100 billion worth of oil has been carted away from Ogoniland. In return for this, the Ogoni have no pipe-borne water, no electricity, very few roads, ill-equipped schools and hospitals and no industry whatsoever.

4. Ogoni has suffered and continues to suffer the degrading effects of oil exploration and exploitation: lands, streams and creeks are totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere is forever charged with hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide; many villages experience the internal quaking of the wrath of gas flares which have been burning 24 hours a day for 33 years; acid rain, oil spillages and blow-outs are common. The results of such unchecked environmental pollution and degradation are that (i) The Ogoni can no longer farm successfully. Once the food basket of the eastern Niger delta, the Ogoni now buy food (when they can afford it); (ii) Fish, once a common source of protein, is now rare. Owing to the constant and continual pollution of our streams and creeks, fish can only be caught in deeper and offshore waters for which the Ogoni are not equipped. (iii) All wildlife is dead. (iv) The ecology is changing fast. The mangrove tree, the aerial roots of which normally provide a natural and welcome habitat for many a sea food - crabs, periwinkles, mudskippers, cockles, mussels, shrimps and all - is now being gradually replaced by unknown and otherwise useless palms. (v) The health hazards generated by an atmosphere charged with hydrocarbon vapor, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide are innumerable.

5. The once beautiful Ogoni countryside is no more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. All one sees and feels around is death. Death is everywhere in Ogoni. Ogoni languages are dying; Ogoni culture is dying; Ogoni people. Ogoni animals. Ogoni fishes are dying because of 33 years of hazardous environmental pollution and resulting food scarcity. In spite of an alarming density of population, American and British oil companies greedily encroach on more and more Ogoni land, depriving the peasants of their only means of livelihood. Mining rents and royalties for Ogoni oil are seized by the Federal Government of Nigeria which offers the Ogoni people NOTHING in return. Ogoni is being killed so that Nigeria can live.

6. Politically, the Ogoni are being ground to the dust under dictatorial decrees imposed by successive military regimes in Nigeria and laws smuggled by military dictatorships into the Nigerian Constitution which Constitution does not protect ethnic minorities and which today bears no resemblance whatsoever to the covenant entered into by the federating Nigerian ethnic groups at Independence.

7. Ethnicity is a fact of Nigerian life. Nigeria is a federation of ethnic groups. In practice, however, ethnocentrism is the order of the day in the country. The rights and resources of the Ogoni have been usurped by the majority ethnic groups and the Ogoni consigned to slavery and possible extinction. The Ogoni people reject the current political and administrative structuring of Nigeria imposed by the Military Government. They believe with Obafemi Awolowo that “in a true federation, each ethnic group, no matter how small is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.”

8. The Ogoni people therefore demand POLITICAL AUTONOMY as a distinct and separate unit of the Nigerian federation - autonomy which will guarantee them certain basic rights essential to their survival as a people. This demand has been spelt out in the Ogoni Bill of Rights. The Ogoni people stand by the Bill and now appeal to the international community, as a last resort, to save them from extinction.
Ogoni Bill of Rights
Presented to the Government and People of Nigeria

We, the people of Ogoni (Babbe, Gokana, Ken Khana, Nyo Khana and Tai) numbering about 500,000 being a separate and distinct ethnic nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, wish to draw the attention of the Governments and people of Nigeria to the mentioned facts:

1. That the Ogoni people, before the advent of British colonialism, were not conquered or colonized by any other ethnic group in present-day Nigeria.

2. That British colonization forced us into the administrative division of Opopo from 1908 to 1947.

3. That we protested against this forced union until the Ogoni Native Authority was created in 1947 and placed under the then Rivers Province.

4. That in 1951 we were forcibly included in the Eastern Region of Nigeria where we suffered utter neglect.

5. That we protested against this neglect by voting against the party in power in the Region in 1957, and against the forced union by testimony before the Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958.

6. That this protest led to the inclusion of our nationality in Rivers State in 1967, which State consists of several ethnic nationalities with differing cultures, languages and aspirations.

7. That oil was struck and produced in commercial quantities on our land in 1958 at K. Dere (Bomu oil field).

8. That oil has been mined on our land since 1958 to this day from the following oil fields: (i) Bomu (ii) Bodo West (iii) Tai (iv) Korokoro (v) Yorla (vi) Luba Creek and (vii) Afam by Shell Petroleum Development Company (Nigeria) Limited.

9. That in over 30 years of oil mining, the Ogoni nationality have provided the Nigerian nation with a total revenue estimated at over 40 billion Naira (N40 billion) or 30 billion dollars.

10. That in return for the above contribution, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.

11. That today, the Ogoni people have:

(i) No representation whatsoever in all institutions of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

(ii) No pipe-borne water.

(iii) No electricity.

(iv) No job opportunities for the citizens in Federal, State, public sector or private sector companies.

(v) No social or economic project of the Federal Government.

12. That the Ogoni languages of Gokana and Khana are undeveloped and are about to disappear, whereas other Nigerian languages are being forced on us.

13. That the ethnic policies of successive Federal and State Governments are gradually pushing the Ogoni people to slavery and possible extinction.

14. That the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited does not employ Ogoni people at a meaningful or any level at all, in defiance of the Federal government’s regulations.

15. That the search for oil has caused severe land and food shortages in Ogoni one of the most densely populated areas of Africa (average: 1,500 per square mile; national average: 300 per square mile).

16. That neglected environmental pollution laws and sub-standard inspection techniques of the Federal authorities have led to the complete degradation of the Ogoni environment, turning our homeland into an ecological disaster.

17. That the Ogoni people lack education, health and other social facilities.

18. That it is intolerable that one of the richest areas of Nigeria should wallow in abject poverty and destitution.

19. That successive Federal administrations have trampled on every minority right enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution to the detriment of the Ogoni and have by administrative structuring and other noxious acts transferred Ogoni wealth exclusively to other parts of the Republic.

20. That the Ogoni people wish to manage their own affairs.

Now, therefore, while reaffirming our right to remain a part of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we make demand upon the Republic as follows:

That the Ogoni people be granted POLITICAL AUTONY to participate in the affairs of the Republic as a distinct and separate unit by whatever name called, provided that this Autonomy guarantees the following:

(a) Political control of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people.

(b) The right to the control and use of a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development.

(c) Adequate and direct representation as of right in all Nigerian national institutions.

(d) The use and development of Ogoni languages in Ogoni territory.

(e) The full development of Ogoni culture.

(f) The right to religious freedom.

(g) The right to protect the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation.

We make the above demand in the knowledge that it does not deny any other ethnic group in the Nigerian Federation of their rights and that it can only conduct to peace, justice and fair play and hence stability and progress in the Nigerian nation.

We make the above demand in the belief that, as Obafemi Awolowo has written: In a true Federation, each ethnic group no matter how small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large.

We demand these rights as equal members of the Nigerian Federation who contribute and have contributed to the growth of the Federation and have a right to expect full returns from that Federation.

Adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people on the 26th day of August, 1990 at Bort, Rivers State and signed by: see under Addendum.
Addendum to the Ogoni Bill of Rights

We, the people of Ogoni, being a separate and distinct ethnic
nationality within the Federal Republic of Nigeria, hereby state
as follows:

A. That on October 2, 1990 we addressed an "Ogoni Bill of
Rights" to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
General Ibrahim Babangida and members of the Armed Forces
Ruling Council:

B. That after a one-year wait, the President has been unable
to grant us the audience which we sought to have with him in
order to discuss the legitimate demands contained in the Ogoni
Bill of Rights:

C. That our demands as outlined in the Ogoni Bill of Rights
are legitimate, just and our inalienable right to in accord with
civilized values worldwide:

D. That the Government of the Federal Republic has contin-
ued, since October 2, 1990, to decree measure and implement
policies which further marginalize the Ogoni people, denying
us political autonomy, our rights to our resources, to the de-
velopment of our languages and culture, to adequate represent-
as of right in all Nigerian national institutions and to the protec-
tion of our environment and ecology from further degradation:

E. That we cannot sit idly by while we are, as a people,
dehumanized and slowly exterminated and driven to extinction
even as our rich resources are siphoned off to the exclusive
comfort and improvement of other Nigerian communities, and
the shareholders of multinational oil companies.

Now, therefore, while reaffirming our wish to remain a part
of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we hereby authorize the
Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) to make
representation, for as long as these injustices continue, to the
United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Common-
wealth Secretariat, the African Commission on Human and
Peoples' Rights, the European Community and all international
bodies which have a role to play in the preservation of our
nationality, as follows:

1. That the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has,
in utter disregard and contempt for human rights, since indepen-
dence in 1960 until date, denied us our political rights to self-
determination, economic rights to our resources, cultural rights
to the development of our languages and culture, and social
rights to education, health and adequate housing and to represen-
tation as of right in national institutions:

2. That, in particular, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has refused
to pay us oil royalties and mining rents amounting to an estimated
20 billion US dollars for petroleum mined from our soil for over
thirty-three years:

3. That the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria does
not protect any of our rights whatsoever as an ethnic minority
of 500,000 in a nation of about 100 million people and that the
voting power and military might of the majority ethnic groups
have been used remorselessly against us at every point in time:

4. That multinational oil companies, namely Shell (Dutch/Black
and Chevron (American) have severally and jointly devastated
our environment and ecology, having spilled gas in our villages
for 33 years and caused oil spills, blow-outs etc., and have
dehumanized our people, denying them employment and those
benefits which industrial organizations in Europe and America
geroutinely contribute to their areas of operation:

5. That the Nigerian state, bureaucratic, military, industrial and
academicians have turned a blind eye to these acts of
dehumanization by the ethnic majority and have colluded with
all the agents of destruction aimed at us:

6. That we cannot seek redress in the courts of law in Nigeria as
the act of expropriation of our rights and resources has been
institutionalized in the 1979 and 1989 Constitutions of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria, which Constitutions were acts of a
Constituent Assembly imposed by a military regime and do not,
in any way, protect minority rights or bear resemblance to the
tacit agreement made at Nigerian independence:

7. That the Ogoni people abjure violence in their just struggle for
their rights within the Federal Republic of Nigeria but will,
through every lawful means, and for as long as it is necessary, fight
for social justice and dignity for themselves and their progeny,
and in particular demand political autonomy as distinct and
separate unit within the Nigerian nation with full right to (i)
control Ogoni political affairs, (ii) use at least fifty per cent of
Ogoni economic resources for Ogoni development; (iii) protect
the Ogoni environment and ecology from further degradation;
(iv) ensure the full restoration of the harm done to the health of
our people by the flaring of gas, oil spillages, oil blow-outs etc.,
by the following oil companies: Shell, Chevron and their Nigerian
accomplices.

8. That without the intervention of the international community,
the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the
ethnic majority will continue these noxious policies until the
Ogoni people are obliterated from the face of the earth.

Adopted by general acclaim of the Ogoni people on the 26th
day of August 1991 at Bon. Rivers State of Nigeria.

Signed on behalf of the Ogoni people by:

BABBE: HRH Mark Tsaro-Igbara. Gbenemene Babbe: HRH
JP: Prince J.S. Sangha: Dr. Israel Kue: Chief A.M.N.
Gua.

GOKANA: HRH James P. Bagia. Gberesako XI, Gbenemene
Gokana: Chief E.M. Kobani, JP Tonsimene Gokana: Dr.

KEN-KHANA: HRH M.H.S. Eguru. Gbenemene Ken-Khana:
HRH C.B.S. Nwikuwa. Emah III. Menepua Bori: Mr. M.C.
Daanwii: Chief T.N. Nwieke: Mr. Ken Saro-Wiwa: Mr.
Simeon Idemoyen.

NYO-KHANA: HRH W.Z. P. Nziide. Gbenemene Baa I of
Nyo-Khana: Dr. G.B. Leron, OON, JP: Mr. Lekwe Loh-
Lolo: Mr. L.E. Nwara: Chief E.A. Apen: Pastor M.P.
Maeba.

Menepua Tua Tua: Chief J.S. Agbara: Chief D.J.K. Kumbe:
An Appeal to the International Community

BY THE MOVEMENT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE OGNI PEOPLE
DECEMBER 1991

The International Community Should

1. Prevail on the American Government to stop buying Nigerian oil. It is stolen property.
2. Prevail on Shell and Chevron to stop flaring gas in Ogoni.
3. Prevail on the Federal Government of Nigeria to honor the rights of the Ogoni people to self-determination and AUTONOMY.
4. Prevail on the federal government of Nigeria to pay all royalties and mining rents collected on oil mined from Ogoni since 1958.
5. Prevail on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to stop giving loans to the Federal Government of Nigeria; all loans which depend for their repayment on the exploitation of Ogoni oil resources.
6. Send urgent medical and other aid to the Ogoni people.
7. Prevail on the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Commonwealth of Nations to either get the Federal Government of Nigeria to obey the rules and mores of these organizations, face sanctions or be expelled from them.
8. Prevail on European and American Governments to stop giving aid and credit to the Federal Government of Nigeria as aid and credit only go to encourage the further dehumanization of the Ogoni people.
9. Prevail on European and American Governments to grant political refugee status to all Ogoni people seeking protection from the political persecution and genocide at the hands of the Federal Government of Nigeria.
10. Prevail on Shell and Chevron to pay compensation to the Ogoni people for ruining the Ogoni environment and the health of Ogoni men, women and children.

1. I wish to thank you for offering me the opportunity of addressing the tenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. I congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your re-election.

2. I speak on behalf of the Ogoni people, a distinct ethnic nation within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. You will forgive me if I am somewhat emotional about this matter. I am an Ogoni.

3. Ogoni territory lies on 404 square miles of the coastal plains terraces to the north-east of the Niger delta. Inhabited by 500,000 people, its population density of about 1,250 per square mile is among the highest in any rural area of the world and compares with the Nigerian national average of 250.

4. The Ogoni people have settled this area as farmers and fishermen since remembered time and had established a well-organized social system before the British colonialist invaded them in 1901. Within 13 years, the British had destroyed the fabric of Ogoni society. British rule of the area was "haphazard" and no treaties were signed with the Ogoni. By 1960 when colonial rule ended, the British had consigned the Ogoni willy-nilly to a new nation, Nigeria, consisting of 350 or so other peoples previously held together by force, violence and much argument in Britain's commercial and imperial interest.

5. The nation which the British left behind was supposed to be a federal democracy, but the federating ethnic nations were bound by few agreements and the peoples were so disparate, so culturally different, so varied in size that force and violence seemed to be the only way of maintaining the nation. In the circumstance, the interest of the few and weak such as the Ogoni was bound to suffer and has suffered.

6. Petroleum was discovered in Ogoni in 1958 and since then an estimated US 100 billion dollars worth of oil and gas has been carted away from Ogoni land. In return for this, the Ogoni people have received NOTHING.

7. Oil exploration has turned Ogoni into a wasteland: lands, streams, and creeks are totally and continually polluted; the atmosphere has been poisoned, charged as it is with hydrocarbon vapours, methane, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and soot emitted by gas which has been flared 24
hours a day for 33 years in very close proximity to human
habitation. Acid rain, oil spillages and oil blow-outs have
devastated Ogoni territory. High pressure oil pipelines
criss-cross the surface of Ogoni farmlands and villages
dangerously.

3. The results of such unchecked environmental pollution and
degradation include the complete destruction of the
ecosystem. Mangrove forests have fallen to the toxicity of
oil and are being replaced by noxious nypa palms; the rain
forest has fallen to the axe of the multinational oil
companies, Shell and Chevron; all wildlife is dead, marine
life is gone, the farmlands have been rendered infertile by
acid rain and the once-beautiful Ogoni countryside is no
more a source of fresh air and green vegetation. All one
sees and feels around is death. Environmental degradation
has been a lethal weapon in the war against the indigenous
Ogoni people.

3. Incidental to and indeed compounding this ecological
devastation is the political marginalization and complete
oppression of the Ogoni and especially the denial of their
rights, including land rights. At independence, Nigeria
consisted of 3 Regions. Since then, 10 states have been
created, largely for the ethnic majorities who rule the
country. Most of the states so created are unviable and
depend entirely on Ogoni resources for their survival. The
demands of the Ogoni for autonomy and self-determination
even within the Nigerian nation have been ignored. The
Ogoni have been corralled into a multi-ethnic
administrative state in which they remain a minority and
therefore suffer several disabilities. Mining rents and
royalties for Ogoni oil are not being paid to Ogoni people.
In spite of the enormous wealth of their land, the Ogoni
people continue to live in pristine conditions in the
absence of electricity, pipe-borne water, hospitals,
housing and schools. The Ogoni are being consigned to
slavery and extinction.

10. Madam Chairperson, faced by these terrible odds, the Ogoni
people have continued courageously to demand social justice
and equity. In October 1990, the Chiefs and Leaders of
Ogoni submitted a Bill of Rights to the Nigerian President
and his Council. The Bill called for (a) political control
of Ogoni affairs by Ogoni people, (b) the right to control
and use a fair proportion of Ogoni economic resources for
Ogoni development, (c) adequate and direct representation
as of right in all Nigerian national institutions, (d) the
use and development of Ogoni languages in Ogoni territory
and (e) the right to protect the Ogoni environment and
ecology from further degradation. The Ogoni are yet to
receive a reply to this minimum demand.

IN NIGERIA: THE OGNONI TRAGEDY authored by me which explains
the Ogoni case fully have been submitted to the Secretariat
of the Working Group.
12. The extermination of the Ogoni people appears to be policy. The Ogoni have suffered at the hands of the military dictatorships which have ruled Nigeria over the past decades. The new Constitution which is supposed to usher in a democratic government in 1993 does not protect the rights of the Ogoni. Indeed, it institutionalizes the expropriation of their land. A recently-concluded national census omits all references to the ethnic origins of all citizens which in a multi-ethnic State is a violation of community rights.

13. Nigeria has an external debt of over 30 billion dollars. None of that debt was incurred on any project in the Ogoni area or on projects remotely beneficial to the Ogoni. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, keen on the payment of the debt, are encouraging intensified exploitation of oil and gas which constitute 94 per cent of Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product. Such exploitation is against the wishes of the Ogoni people as it only worsens the degradation of the Ogoni environment and the decimation of the Ogoni people. Studies have indicated that more Ogoni people are dying now than are being born. The Ogoni are faced by a powerful combination of titanic forces from far and near, driven by greed and cold statistics. Only the international community acting with compassion and a sense of responsibility to the human race can avert the catastrophe which is about to overtake the Ogoni. The Ogoni people are now appealing to that Community.

14. We regret, Madam Chairperson, that it has not been possible to implement the recommendation of Special Rapporteur José Martínez Cobo that a separate study dealing with the indigenous populations in African countries or regions be undertaken. Notional ideas of national independence, the fact of Africans ruling Africans in nations conceived by and for European economic interests have intensified, not destroyed, the propensity of man to subject weak peoples by force, violence and legal quibbling to slavery and extinction. I respectfully invite you to visit Nigeria, so that you can see for yourself that indigenous peoples abound there and that they suffer incredibly at the hands of rulers and the economic interests of other nations. And I pray you to bear in mind the interests of all threatened peoples in Africa as you conclude your onerous task.

15. Madam Chairperson, on behalf of the Ogoni people, I thank you, your colleagues, distinguished representatives of indigenous peoples, Governments, specialized agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and all who are here for patiently listening to me.

Thank you and God bless you.

Ken Saro-Wiwa
Spokesman of the Ogoni people
President, Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Nigeria (Emiron) 28/2/92
SOURCES CONSULTED


Correa, Guillermo and Julio César López. "El comandante José Arturo analiza al país y explica al EPR: A quién tenemos que pedir perdón por estar dispuestos a impedir que el gobierno siga asesinando?" Proceso, Aug. 11, 1996, 22.

Corro, Salvador. "En una sangrienta noche de terror, las fuerzas del EPR destruyeron el mito de la pantomima" (In a bloody night of terror, the forces of the EPR destroy the myth of the pantomime). Proceso, Sept. 1, 1996, 13-7.


Friends of the Earth-Netherlands, Earth Alarm. Update and sample letter, July 10, 1993 (photocopy). Author's files;


Galarza, Gerardo. "En unos días, el EZLN paso de ser un grupo de '200 transgresores de la ley' a 'una organización profesional y bien enredada" (In a few days, the EZLN shifted from a group of '200 lawbreakers' to 'a professional and well-trained organization). *Proceso*, Jan. 10, 1994, 18-9.


Goodall, Andrea, researcher, International Oil Campaign, Greenpeace International to Peter Holmes, Chairman, Royal Dutch Shell Group. Letter, May 11, 1993 (photocopy). Author's files;


Marín, Carlos. "En las declaraciones y en los hechos, las autoridades cayeron en la trampa de las contradicciones y la manipulación" (In declarations and deeds, the authorities fell into trap of contradictions and manipulation). *Proceso*, Jan. 10, 1994, 17-21.


Mergier, Anne Marie. "5 organismos canadienses reportan crímenes del Ejército Mexicano: Condenar los abusos en Chiapas y condicionar el TLC, piden a Canadá" (Five Canadian

Mergier, Anne Marie. "Condenas en Europa: 'Chiapas descubrió ante el verdadero rostro del PRI y de Salinas" (Condemnations in Europe: "Chiapas shows the world the true face of Salinas and the PRI"). *Proceso*, Jan. 17, 1994, 14-5.


_______. "Shell's Genocide Against Ogoni People." Briefing note, August, 1993 (photocopy). Author's files.


MOSOP to Managing Director, Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria. "Demand Notice." Notice, Nov. 30, 1992 (photocopy). Author's files;


_______. "Support the Zapatista Centers of Resistance Against Neoliberalism!" Fundraising flyer (photocopy), n.d. Author's files.


Olukoya, Sam. "We, Who're About to Die: In a Suicidal Defiance, Ogonis Do Battle with Soldiers to Prevent Laying of Oil Pipelines in Their Land." *Newswatch* (Lagos), May 17, 1993, pp. (?).


Puig, Carlos. "En la mira, el gobierno mexicano; se multiplican en Estados Unidos las denuncias contra el Ejército, por violación de derechos humanos" (In the gunsights, the Mexican government; in the U.S., condemnations multiply against the army for human rights violations). *Proceso*, Jan. 17, 1994, 12.


Celebrating the Resistance of Women Zapatistas! Compilation of communiqués and articles, n.d. Author's files.


_________. "An Appeal to the British Prime Minister, Mr. John Major and the British Public." Letter from detention, July, 9, 1993 (photocopy). Author's files.


__________ "Operations in Nigeria." Information sheet, May 1994. Author's files


__________ "'Tensions in Nigeria.'" Information sheet, n.d. [1993], photocopy. Author's files.


**Newspapers and News Services**

*Guardian* (Lagos)

*Guardian* (London)

*Guardian on Sunday* (Lagos)

*Houston Chronicle*

*Independent* (London)

Inter Press Service

*La Jornada* (Mexico City)

*Los Angeles Times*

*National Concord* (Lagos)

*New York Times*

Reuter Library Report

Reuters

*Vanguard* (Lagos)

*Wall Street Journal*