

From the Text to the Frame: A Frame Analysis of the Collective Action Frames of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, 1980 - 1998

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ABSTRACT

Despite the wealth of interest in South Mexico's Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional (EZLN), few studies have attempted to deconstruct the discourse of the Zapatistas according to its component parts. Most scholars have so far addressed the Zapatistas from the standpoint of political theory, international relations or anthropology, and in so doing have tended to engage primarily with broader polemical agendas. Furthermore, in their determination to typologise the Zapatistas as 'this' or 'that' sort of movement, scholars have overlooked the nuances and shades of meaning that exist within the Zapatista discourse, as well as the evolution of those meanings over time. As a result, the content and ongoing construction of the Zapatistas' message has been eclipsed by a more encompassing, contested, and ultimately chimeric quest to reify the movement's 'essence' or 'truth'. This thesis represents an empirical analysis of the EZLN's collective discourse that focuses on the content and constructed nature of their *collective action frames*. Combining three strands of social movement frame analysis, it avers to draw-out the ever-changing detail of the EZLN's discursive output and so add value to the debates that surround the Zapatistas. It also makes several theoretical contributions to social movement frame analysis.

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