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**LEADERSHIP REPERTOIRES: CONFRONTING CONFLICT
IN MEXICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENT COALITIONS**

A Dissertation Presented

by

José A. Muñoz

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

Stony Brook University

August 2008

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The Graduate School

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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This dissertation studies three social movement organizations in Mexico, each of which is a coalition of other social movement organizations. It was hypothesized that the specific demands of coalitions generated particular repertoires among the leaders of these organizations. The three organizations studied were *Civic Alliance*— a middle-class coalition which primarily monitors elections at the municipal, state, and federal levels. The *Mexican Section*, includes primary school teachers, university unions, and independent researchers who work together to challenge the privatization of the educational system. And the *Collective of Groups of the Assembly of Neighborhoods of Mexico City*, an urban movement made up of residents of dilapidated housing units seeking modern homes and services. Field work in Mexico was conducted from 2004-2006 which included interviews of coalition participants, observation of organizational meetings and actions, and examination of coalition documents.

Coalitions can serve as a remedy for problems with financial, material, or labor needs. However, the same coalitions can generate other problems such as conflicts over resources, organization, identity, and strategy. Such problems may occur on a group or individual level and, sometimes, on both simultaneously. Examples include the possibility that coalitions can draw together populations that have had little previous contact which may lead to some form of cultural or social tension within the group. Coalitions can include individuals or groups that differ significantly in educational experiences or class characteristics, both of which shape their interests. Representatives to coalitions primarily belong to and give their allegiance to groups that have their own interests independent of the coalition's. These multiple interests can be sources of conflict within a coalition. Therefore, the mechanisms that are in place to manage tensions or conflicts are significant factors in the maintenance of coalition cohesion. The mechanism examined here is that of leadership repertoires for conflict management. The principal argument is that coalition leaders have a range of repertoires for managing

conflict, and this range differs from those repertoires that are used by social movement organizations more generally. This research indicates that a range of choices available to leaders included their knowledge of organizational repertoires that could preempt or adapt to conflict. These choices also involved immediate interpretation of situations and the patience to address problems that required more deliberation.

For

Jimena, Andrea, and Gabriela

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I would like to thank my committee members for their guidance in the completion of my dissertation. Thank you to Kiyoo Tsutsui and Jon Shefner for all of their helpful suggestions. Javier Auyero and Ian Roxborough to them I say thanks for all the advice and support they have given to me over the years. Special thanks goes to Ian who apart from serving as my dissertation advisor always took the time throughout my graduate career to shepherd me along. My thanks to the staff in the Sociology program at Stony Brook in particular Wanda Vega for all the advice and help she provided in progressing through the graduate program. Thanks to Carol Lindquist for her patient editing of my dissertation.

My thanks also goes to the W. Burghardt Turner Fellowship program which not only provided several years of funding for research and travel but gave a community of underrepresented scholars a space of their own. In particular Dr. Anthony Hurely, Dr. Olfemi Vaughn, and Nina Maung for all of their help. Also, the Latin American Studies Center in conjunction with the Tinker Foundation provided funding for my preliminary efforts in collecting my dissertation data.

There are several families that played a role in the completion of my dissertation. I would like to acknowledge the Valadez José family from Nezhuacoyotl in the State of Mexico for welcoming me into their home and for looking out for me while I was completing my fieldwork in Mexico City. Special thanks to Guillermina Valadez for her help in managing some of my data collection.

I want to thank all the Del Pozo family and friends for all of the support and goodwill in the completion of my dissertation work. While away in Mexico they were most helpful in keeping the “spirits up” of my own family given my absence. Thanks to my parents and brothers for their words of encouragement throughout my graduate career. My parents, José and Norma, have always worked hard to provide all that I needed throughout my long career as a student. This is a debt I can never repay. Also, I want to thank all of my friends for their words of encouragement over the years.

To Jimena, my wife, who without a doubt has been supportive of my goals every step of the way. Thank you for always “having my back”, especially, in those tough times when getting through this stage of my academic career looked impossible. To her I say thank you for never allowing me to give up on my efforts. I never would have finished my degree without her by my side. Also, thank you for staying strong during those times I was so far away from home. To Andrea Cecilia and Gabriela Noelia who made this accomplishment all the more special.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation studies three social movement organizations in Mexico, each of which is a coalition of other social movement organizations. It was hypothesized that the specific demands of coalitions generated particular repertoires among the leaders of these organizations. Coalitions, defined by Wood (2005) as "...collaborative efforts by individual organizations and participants organized around a common goal," can serve both individuals and groups as a remedy for problems with financial, material, or labor needs. However, the same coalitions can generate other problems such as conflicts over resources, organization, identity, and strategy. Such problems may occur on a group or individual level and, sometimes, on both simultaneously. Some examples include the possibility that coalitions can draw together populations who have had little previous contact which may lead to some form of cultural or social tension within the group. Coalitions can include individuals or groups that differ significantly in educational experiences or class characteristics, both of which shape their interests. Representatives to coalitions primarily belong to and give their allegiance to groups that have their own interests that are independent of the coalition's. These multiple interests can be sources of conflict within a coalition. Tensions may arise from a decision to negotiate with the state, which may be considered to be a legitimate tactic by some coalition members, while others see it as a form of co-optation. Therefore, the mechanisms that are in place

to manage tensions or conflicts are significant factors in the maintenance of coalition cohesion. The mechanism examined here is that of leadership repertoires for conflict management. The principal argument is that coalition leaders have a range of repertoires for managing conflict, and this range differs from those repertoires that are used by social movement organizations (SMOs) more generally. Conflicts within coalitions are managed differently in comparison to how they are handled within SMOs. An SMO can rely on the hierarchical and personal nature of its organization; perhaps the emotional bonds between its members can be manipulated; or non-conforming participants can be ejected from the organization. Coalitions usually are unable to rely on more-intimate methods of conflict management. This has to do with the conditions for collaboration in these organizations which can be defined as more group-oriented, wherein one individual represents not just him/herself but an entire member organization.

Repertoires provide choices for managing conflict. The ability to tap into multiple repertoires can widen the menu of choices and increase the chances for successful adaptation to new situations through this kind of knowledge (Ganz, 2004). These repertoires either are acquired experientially or tend to be widely known techniques for organizing (Clemens, 1993). In Tilly's words, repertoires are "a limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice" (1995: 26). In this study, the range of choices available to leaders included their knowledge of organizational repertoires that could preempt or adapt to strife as well as those in which managing conflict involved an immediate interpretation of situations and the patience to deal with problems that required more deliberation.

Conflicts in social movements themselves are managed differently from the methods we find used in coalitions of social movement organizations (or CSMOs). Some scholars have pointed to the ways in which emotions and relationships among activists may be destructive to SMOs (Klatch, 2004). Klatch (2004: 493) explains how peer relationships within Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) were significant in the genesis of this movement, “creating a sense of ‘we-ness’ and establishing a common frame,” and sustaining activists’ participation. She writes that activist behavior was scrutinized through peer pressure in order to keep participants in line. This was done through group pressure, censure, ostracism, and other “forms of oppression” (Klatch, 2004: 495). Klatch (2004: 496) also explains how the intensification of bonds between activists led to heightened expectations of SDS members which led to the construction of boundaries between those who were viewed as “righteous” and “unrighteous.” The result was that factionalism occurred to such an extreme that splinter groups formed, and many members left SDS in the late 1960s (Klatch, 2004). Here, the decision to split off from SDS was one method for dealing with ideological conflict, and this mechanism has been examined in other movements (Balsler, 1997).

Similarly to the work above, Barkan (1986) showed how “perceived” threats to resource acquisition, political support, and differences over strategy and ideology led to inter-organizational hostility within the Civil Rights Movement. Here, conflict among civil rights organizations was dealt with through condemnation of militant group membership and tactics that were intended to protect the resources the more moderate civil rights organizations viewed as vital to the movement. Within SMOs it was also found that even when personal and collective identities conflicted with a movement’s

organizational and tactical approaches, activists remained in the SMO (Robnett, 2005). Here, activists within movements managed their personal conflicts by modifying their own identities, through highlighting the group's common cause, and by applying their activist identity despite a perceived lack of congruence with the organization's identity (Robnett, 2005).

We can also think of talk or deliberation within meetings as a way to deal with conflict. Polletta (2002) explains how Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) members would spend a large amount of time arguing over decision-making in order to avoid other forms of conflict between members. Also, conflicts between participants were addressed by openly challenging others in meetings. We see in Polletta's (2002) work that calls for a centralized organizational structure in SNCC were used to avoid dealing with other conflicts that were related to financial and labor resources or goals.

In addition, movements will engage in boundary maintenance within an organization in order to deal with members who are deemed to be at the margins of an SMO. The results of many of these interpersonal disputes and boundary maintenance activities often led to expulsion of the problematic, marginal members from the SMOs (Gamson, 1997). However, there have been attempts within movements to provide "spaces" in the form of committees that essentially maintain boundaries between participants without falling into schism (Reger, 2002).

SMOs experience conflicts that are similar to those mentioned previously in coalitions; however, there are differences in how coalitions are set up to manage conflict when compared to an SMO. Coalitions cannot solely rely on a hierarchical structure,

shaming by leaders and fellow participants, modifications of identity to conform to SMO goals, the formation of splinter groups, or expulsion as tactics to deal with difficult people and events. As is explained later in the chapter coalitions form, in part, to mobilize mass action, largely through volunteer efforts with other organizations. Therefore, whether a coalition comes together over short- or long-term interests its leaders cannot rely on the conflict management methods that are commonly used in SMOs because this form of alliance-making produces a somewhat delicate structure in which participants' primary allegiances are given elsewhere. So coalitions must rely on conflict-resolution tactics that are different than those described above.

One reason for this difference is that, although coalitions can include various organizations and participants, not all members fully or constantly participate in coalition activities. In many cases, coalitions are organized and operated by small groups (Rose, 2000). What this means for examining conflict in coalitions is that in many cases it does not engulf an entire constituent organization but rather may only involve a small group of representatives. Therefore, the conflict can be managed by an activist or a small collection of activists. For example, as described earlier, SMO participants will exert pressure on activists' dissent or behavior that is not seen to be consistent with movement goals. However, leaders in coalitions cannot always simply pressure dissenting groups back into line. Although the possibility to strong-arm dissenters does exist, coalition leaders recognize that they usually have to use less aggressive tactics or they will risk alienating their coalition partners. Part of this has to do with the conditions under which coalitions can form.

The formation of a coalition in the face of some threat or opportunity (Staggenborg, 1986) requires that leaders exercise tact and a spirit of camaraderie when trying to pool allies together. The use of pressure or coercion by coalition leaders may not work in a coalition of members who have little obligation to the group apart from a limited collection of shared goals. This has to do with how authority is conceptualized. In a coalition, authority is spread among the membership. This is important, as groups can then decide to leave or become less active in the coalition if they perceive the exertion of misplaced authority. If this happens, then coalitions can lose resources and credibility. Therefore, spreading responsibility across coalition participants can be one attempt to limit some forms of conflict such as those that involve representation or strategizing. Responsibility-sharing also requires that coalition leaders use other mechanisms to deal with conflict, as they cannot rely on management by fiat.

The inner workings of coalitions are an important element in conflict management. The use of less-bureaucratic mechanisms to operate a coalition can serve efforts to control and diminish conflict. This includes the use of flexible forms of participation, a loose decision-making structure, and a willingness to change the coalition in the presence of a particular tension. The first two elements require that leaders make attempts to preempt potential conflict. The last gives some indication that leaders will try to adapt to the conflicts that emerge through the course of the coalition's history. In these flexible mechanisms, coalition partners will often deviate from the ad hoc guidelines or rules that were designed by leaders to organize the inner workings of the group. Coalition members can exercise their voices and resist these very guidelines. Here, the

mechanism used to deal with conflict involves making adjustments within the coalition to placate a specific tension.

Some level of homogeneity in coalitions does contribute to conflict management. This affects conflict management because problems may be managed somewhat informally, as coalitions invite participants who have similar philosophies in organizing (i.e. participatory democracy), previous collaborative relationships, and personal network ties, thus drawing from a network of “known” entities. For example, using network ties ensures selection of collaborators that are deemed to be trustworthy or hardworking. Further, coalitions can avoid conflict through focusing on a coordinated group effort. The understanding is that other issues (i.e. party ties or individual union dynamics) will not be the subject of collaborative work. Coalitions also can offer the inducement that, through coalition participation, many organizations may be doing new forms of social movement work that have not been possible by other means, thus raising their own organization’s profile and the experiences of their activists. This form of incentive can have the effect of motivating participants to tolerate or hold back reactions to certain tensions. Too, coalitions may offer participants settings in which they can have more control over their work. For example, there can be a less-rigid division of labor in which members share coalition tasks. This relatively democratic work structure is likely to be different from participants’ experiences in SMOs or other hierarchically based organizations (i.e. unions) where there is a strict division of labor and/or lack of input from those who rank lower in the hierarchy. In coalitions, attempts are made to level social status and promote all members’ contributions to the collaborative effort at hand.

When conflicts do arise, coalitions may have the capacity to accommodate such tensions and attempt to adapt to those problems that are voiced. A general solution may be to provide a space and time for all members to voice grievances without the requirement to go through superiors or some form of committee. Depending on the seriousness of the conflict or who has voiced it, a coalition may adapt the organization itself in order to address a particular tension. This can involve more attention to distributing resources equitably or providing more leadership opportunities.

Theoretical Framework: Resource Mobilization

Resource mobilization focuses its attention on the impact of economic and organizational resources as factors in an SMO's ability to organize (Zald and McCarthy, 1987). This area of the social movement literature developed in response to theories that explained protest as the result of grievances and deprivation (Zald and McCarthy, 2002; Caniglia and Carmin, 2005). Instead, the resource mobilization perspective argues, participation in a movement has more to do with the use and availability of money, labor, and time to tackle pressing social problems; and groups with few of these resources are not able to work effectively toward a solution to their grievances. Resource mobilization scholars have worked from the assumption that social movement participation is normal behavior that emerged out of "biographical circumstances, social supports, and immediate life situations" (McCarthy and Zald: 535). Additionally, the resources that are potentially available to SMOs are located in the society at large and include activists'

groups, people who sympathize with movement goals, and governmental and nongovernmental institutions (McCarthy and Zald, 2002).

As one part of their inquiry, resource mobilization scholars look at how social movements change or transform over time (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987; Caniglia and Carmin, 2005). This view, of course, reflects Michel's (1962) classic work on organizations in which he suggests that movement goals and the leaders advocating those goals will be replaced by professionals and movement efforts dedicated to organizational survival (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987; Caniglia and Carmin, 2005). As Caniglia and Carmin (2005) state, goal displacement and bureaucratization appear to be among the many outcomes that occur in SMOs, according to their varying levels of development and formalization. Each factor conveys certain advantages and disadvantages, and in order to maximize the best outcome for their group and themselves, leaders will engage in and respond to efforts at movement transformation.

My research also draws from resource mobilization scholarship on the growth, decay, and change in social movements (Zald and Ash Garner; 1987, McCarthy and Zald, 2002). Although these authors focus on external and internal pressures in social movement survivability, my work focuses on the internal processes in SMOs. Specifically, Zald and Ash Garner (1987) highlight the relationship of organizations to their environment and internal processes and goals. Their emphasis on membership requirements, interactions among movements, and internal processes (such as factionalism) in SMOs serves as the model for this dissertation. This area of the social movement literature is also important for this current inquiry in its conceptualization that all SMOs that share general movement goals can be seen as an industry. Furthermore,

SMOs within such an industry may cooperate, compete, and sometimes engage in conflict with one another. They come together for some shared purpose, either to protest or to engage in some form of collective representation; they compete for resources from sympathizers; and they spar over leadership and the direction of the movement as a whole, as well as who should represent the movement to various authorities or the larger public (Zald and McCarthy, 2002).

Membership Requirements

Zald and Ash Garner's (1987: 125) discussion of "inclusive organizations" is useful, as the authors describe these organizations as requiring "minimum levels of initial commitment – a pledge of general support without specific duties, a short indoctrination period, or none at all." This is the context in which social movements seek to collaborate and form coalitions, and it is a fair characterization of the coalitions sampled in this dissertation. An inclusive organization requires from its members minimal participation and maintenance of ties to other organizations. Also, the activities of an inclusive organization do not "permeate" the lives of its members. Although not addressed here, the opposite is true for exclusive organizations (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987).

This form of flexibility with regard to membership and organizational obligations in social movements is well-documented by the literature. Many scholars have stressed that the benefits that a coalition can bring to its participants include such mechanisms as the promotion of communication between constituent groups and individuals, group

decision-making, and alternative strategies for lobbying the state (Barvosa-Carter, 2001; Cullen, 2005; Smith and Bandy, 2005). Others have pointed out that other benefits, such as commitment to coalitions, can be explained by the nature of a coalition's consensus-based, decision-making structures which may be more appealing to participants or other supporters (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2001). Although this is observable in SMOs there are limits given the hierarchical nature of a movement (Polletta, 2002). Others show that coalitions that include these structures allow the organization to grow, as members are given the space to interact and negotiate their differences (Fox and Brown, 1998; Shefner, 1999; Rose, 2000; Bandy, 2004). The benefits of these more-flexible and democratic organizational frameworks contribute to conflict management in coalitions (Bandy and Smith, 2005). This may be due to the fact that the groups make attempts to tolerate multiple issues, constituencies, and tactics within the larger coalition frame.

Interaction Among Movement Organizations

Scholars have pointed out that SMOs “emerge and develop through interactions” (Rucht, 2004). Several scholars stress this idea that social movements are not “homogenous,” “solitary entities,” or “uncomplicated unifications” but are formed by various organizations interacting through linkages, networks, and varying contact between constituencies (Staggenborg, 1986; Polletta, 2002; Rucht, 2004). Put another

way, SMOs emerge from what has been categorized as “multi-organizational fields” (Klandermans, 1990: 135), and these fields can function as an “alliance system.”

Curtis and Zurcher (1973: 53) define multi-organizational fields as the “total possible number of organizations with which the focal organization might establish specific links.” Linkages between organizations are formed “by joint activities, staff, board of directors, target clientele, resources, etc,” and with “multiple affiliations of members” (Curtis and Zurcher, 1973: 53). It is these connections that place organizations “at risk” for creating coalitions. According to Klandermans, linkages between organizations are based on “common interests, ideology, audiences, or other shared characteristics” (1990: 123). Part of what allows coalitions or common groups to emerge is that organizations seeking such an arrangement find a “common denominator” for participants to agree on. This simply means that all parties have come to some consensus on what coalition goals will consist of (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987). That said, to actually reach this level of collaboration is a complex process.

According to Rucht (2004: 203), achieving such a significant degree of cooperation between organizations requires efforts to “create and maintain links, to identify and symbolize common ground, and eventually act together.” He goes on to write that establishing the necessary links may differ based on the organizational type of social movement that is involved. For example, those groups that can be categorized as decentralized or fragmented form coalitions without a coordinated body directing movement actions (Rucht, 2004).

Zald and Ash Garner (1987) were concerned with how inter-movement interaction would impact membership commitment. They focused on three types of

interactions which included cooperation, merger, and coalition. Cooperation was found to be the least likely form of interaction, as organizations tend to cooperate in ways that do not lead to the transformation of any two or more groups that seek to collaborate; the goal is to work together toward an end but to leave each partner intact. However, each group's unique capabilities may be contributed to the joint effort, which results in effective cooperation. This occurs, for example, when one group has a special capability that can be of use to another, such as lobbying or legal expertise.

The formation of coalitions or mergers leads to “new organizational identities, changes in the membership bases, and changes in goals” (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987: 132). Coalitions can offer the advantages of combined resources and coordinated mobilization efforts while allowing members to maintain their own organizational identities. Put another way, Rucht (2004) states that an

...alliance is typically formed by actors who want to keep some of their autonomy and distinctiveness and therefore refrain from merging into a single entity whose prior constituent elements become more or less invisible, or completely dissolve as distinguishable units. Hence an alliance, besides signaling a willingness to cooperate, also implies an insistence on differences between the allied partners. Mergers can take on a different quality altogether.

Finally, scholars have shown that movement actors weigh heavily the costs of participating in coalition organizations. McCammon and Campbell (2002) have shown that potential SMO collaborators only enter coalition organizations when there is a clear benefit from doing so. These choices can have significant advantages and consequences for SMOs. The decision to enter an alliance is, in part, influenced by the organizational form that has been adopted by an SMO. Thus the organizational forms of social

movements impact their capacities for mobilization, their success and failures, and they can potential fuel conflicts with SMOs (Clemens and Minkoff, 2004).

Internal Processes and Social Movements

Although several benefits accrue to coalitions, there is also a down-side. With this form of collaboration, internal organizational conflicts can emerge, despite the efforts by organizers to create organizations that are sensitive to potential sources of tension. This is due to the fact that coalition members may have their own notions as to how an organization should operate based on their own previous experiences (Rose, 2000; Wood, 2005). SMOs have their own culture (habits and customs) for working in larger groups which may clash with the alternative forms of organizing and decision-making that are found in a new organization, such as those that can be experienced in a coalition. A coalition may have a relaxed organizational structure, but this may also generate other problems over time commitments, workloads, and strategies.

Another tension is that not all coalitions may achieve nor seek equality among participating organizations, which can put individual SMOs at a disadvantage if their participation is limited. Or it can result in the dependence of coalition partners on those resources that drew them into the organization (Shefner, 1999; Crocteau and Hicks, 2003), with the implication that coalition dissolution could threaten its members' stability.

Resources are not the only reason why coalitions form, but, as stated earlier, they are one of the fundamental reasons why conflicts arise (Bandy and Smith, 2005).

Tension over resources can cause divisions between resource-rich groups and resource-dependent organizations that are working collaboratively (Zald and McCarthy, 1987; Croteau and Hicks, 2003). This form of tension is given considerable deliberation by SMOs in the process of deciding to join an alliance (Rose, 2000; Jasper, 2004; Meyer and Corrigan-Brown, 2005). The costs of joining coalitions may include having to contribute individual SMO resources and labor to the collaborative effort at the expense of the organization. This relationship can be non-reciprocal.

Other consequences come from how individual SMOs within a coalition may have to adapt to external funders. The extent of support that social movements receive depends, in part, on their effectiveness at establishing relationships with SMOs, other organizations, and institutions. The opportunities for funding of SMOs impact coalition options for mobilizing support (Staggenborg, 1985; Jasper, 2004). For example, support from external organizations for specific kinds of activities may encourage or discourage coalition building; and such programs may foster conflicts between groups over available sources of funding (Zald and McCarthy, 1987). Additionally, scholars (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar, 1998; Edelman 1999; Rose, 2000; Shefner, 1999, 2001) have shown how relationships with government institutions or other organizational forms can have negative impacts on SMO mobilization. Here, the cost to a coalition and its participants may be that in their relationships to governmental, non-governmental, or other funding sources it is necessary for SMOs to “look” more efficient by developing programs and administrative procedures in order to fulfill the requirements of the funding

bodies. Groups that seek funding may need to temper their movement goals or tactics in order to fit mainstream sensibilities (Zald and McCarthy, 1987). There are other costs associated with the sponsorship of alliances that can shape coalition strategies, tactics, and goals. Additionally, the decision to build relationships with government institutions can be a source of conflict within coalitions (Shefner, 2001). Zald and McCarthy (1987) point out that the availability of funding can increase the number of similar SMOs and intensify the competition for funds. This can leave coalitions in a situation where, in order to ensure their own survival, they have to choose money over their mission and, perhaps, sacrifice internal group harmony.

These factors can lead to conflicts with ideology, strategy, tactics, resources, political styles, and rivalries between leaders in social movements (Staggenborg, 1986; Rose, 2000; Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2001; Polletta, 2002; Croteau and Hicks, 2003; Bandy, 2004; Rucht, 2004; Smith and Bandy, 2005). These divisions have to do, in part, with the process of matching disparate groups in a collaborative effort, such as a coalition. That is, these partnerships present opportunities to draw in members from various class backgrounds, ideologies, and experiences, which undoubtedly strengthen their appeal, support, and fund of resources. But the very heterogeneity in coalitions can also be a source of conflict (Staggenborg, 1986; Zald and Ash, 1987). Staggenborg (1986: 384) explained how the ideological conflicts in the groups she sampled had to do, in part, with how the “lack of organizational overlaps in membership among diverse groups exacerbates ideological differences, creating many disagreements and misunderstandings which might be avoided with better communication.” Zald and Ash Garner (1987: 126) explain this process yet another way:

The inclusive MO membership declines and rises faster than that of the exclusive's because competing values and attitudes are more readily mobilized in the inclusive organization. While members of both organizations may have similar goals, the members of inclusive organization are more likely to be subjected to conflicts in the face of threats or in the face of competing social movements that appeal to other values. Their allegiances to other groups and values lead them to switch rather than fight.

In their discussion of internal processes and organizational transformation in social movements Zald and Ash Garner (1987) explore the significance of internal ideological factions and splits and the role played by leadership style. Factions are defined as an "identifiable subgroup opposed to other subgroups; a split occurs when a faction leaves a movement organization" (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987: 134). Although some of the explanation for why factions or splits may occur has to do with the level of heterogeneity in an organization, there are other important factors, including how dedicated a particular group may be to maintaining "ideological" purity versus working to achieve the material needs of movement participants. Although inclusive organizations are more susceptible to conflict, they are also more likely to retain a particular organization and accommodate its factions given the "looser criteria of affiliation and of doctrinal orthodoxy" (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987: 134). This, however, may ultimately constrain the group's reasons for mobilization.

Conflict also occurs between members with different positions in their home organizations such as leaders and staff versus rank-and-file participants. Another example can involve differences between "true believers" in SMO goals and those participants who are viewed as being less-committed to the group cause (Polletta, 2002; Rucht, 2004).

The literature on SMOs has addressed internal conflict in these movements by studying a number of elements, including the expulsion of factions in order to ensure legitimacy with the wider public; another reason for expulsion may be the leadership's inability or unwillingness to deal with militancy within SMOs (Balser, 1997; Gamson, 1997). But, for coalitions, the expulsion of organizations or individuals can be detrimental to both the coalition and splinter groups, as a coalition can lose key leaders and skills, and the action can potentially demoralize other participants. For the SMO, of course, other issues are associated with the survivability of the organization, such as access to adequate financial resources (Shefner, 1999). Scholars have pointed out that SMOs do adapt and potentially can take advantage of member conflicts (Reger, 2002; Schwartz, 2002). However, the problem with such actions is that they can be taken to placate differences over strategy or goals which can then lead to other potential problems such as the loss of a cohesive movement goal.

The reverse situation may occur in which participants in SMOs modify their own positions to enable what they see as the betterment of the larger organization. Thus, the identity of an activist can conflict with an SMO's identity, where an "individual can embrace a movement, but remain in a state of conflict regarding some dimensions of its identity" (Robnett, 2005: 233). Again, coalitions go through a similar process in finding common ground among multiple participants (Bandy and Smith, 2004).

Bystydzienski and Schacht (2001: 6) state that building a coalition "always involves the negotiation of difference so that collective action can take place." Although not always possible, this process can involve "interpersonal-level" interactions that recognize differences in experience and identity, privilege status based on the socio-

economic factors that are found in an alliance, and locate common ground among participants. The process is complemented by creating organizational structures that avoid the exclusion of participants and allow for flexibility and democracy. However, there are multiple barriers to creating such structures, such as group differences, leadership deficits, and power imbalance between participants (Bell and Delaney, 2001).

There is also research that considers the form of coalitions that develop within social movements (Jones, Hutchinson, Van Dyke, Gates, and Companion, 2001). Jones, et al. (2001), found that, within the coalitions they sampled, those that were led by one SMO which pulled together allies for protest events were the most effective at mass mobilization and minimizing internal disputes.

Leadership in Coalitions

Zald and Ash Garner (1987: 135) state that leadership is a significant factor in the study of social movements

...because the situation of the movement organization is unstable, because the organization has few material incentives under its control, and because of the non-routinized nature of its tasks, the success or failure of the MO can be highly dependent on the qualities and commitment of leaders.

Scholars have found that, following the bureaucratization of an organization, its leaders tend to be more focused on organizational maintenance needs versus the pursuit of radical goals. This is especially true when there are resources that are available to the

leaders but not equally accessible to the membership. A primary focus on organizational maintenance also occurs when leaders and followers are jointly committed to organizational goals, and, finally, when the leaders are influenced or “co-opted” by outside players or groups (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987).

Zald and Ash Garner (1987) note that leaders face the difficult task of encouraging and sustaining their members’ commitment to group goals while also pursuing efforts to form networks or alliances with other organizations. In addition, there is almost

...an inherent dualism and conflict between these roles, for mobilization requires a heightening of the ideological uniqueness of the MO and the absolute quality of its goals, while articulation often requires the uniqueness of the organization to be toned down and adoption of the tactics of compromise (137).

Moving beyond mobilization and articulation, the authors state that research should consider that “different kinds of MOs make different demands on leaders” (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987: 138).

Coalitions have access to more leaders than a single organization does, due to the coalitional composition of SMOs and individuals. Therefore, in alliance building, it can be assumed that there are people in place in participating social movements who are interested in “reaching out” to other actors (Jasper, 2005). In Shaffer’s (2000) discussion on coalitions among environmental groups, he found that “professional” leaders were “more likely to engage in coalition participation than amateurs,” based on the fact that they were employed by their organizations. Shaffer (2000) also found that leaders who were “at risk” for engaging in coalition activity had had past political experiences and participated in other social networks (for example, in community organizations). He

wrote that his finding highlighted the importance of experienced leaders in coalition work.

Leaders benefit from these collaborative efforts if they are able to communicate, educate, moderate discussions, and manage differences between participants (Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2001; Smith and Bandy, 2005). Nepstad and Bob (2006) have highlighted other leadership qualities or capital that have significant influence on social movement dynamics. This concept of “leadership capital” is described as having cultural, social, and symbolic elements, and it is an important factor in the leadership creativity that is a significant requisite for building coalitions.

Other researchers have studied how previous movement experience influences leadership style and how those experiences impact activists’ work in later movement participation (Rose, 2000; Voss and Sherman, 2000; Polletta, 2002). For example, some activists in the Civil Rights Movement had been exposed to the training techniques of pacifist organizations (Polletta, 2002). Voss and Sherman (2000) explain that the activists that joined the unions they studied brought a new vision of organizing, models for organizing, and an existing network of allies that stemmed from their previous movement experiences. The suggestion was also made that more research was needed to probe into how an activist’s history of social movement experience influences his/her effectiveness as a leader (Flacks, 2004; Ganz, 2004).

It is logical that activists who can draw upon their own “multiple” or “hybrid” identities would be more successful at drawing in and working with diverse organizations and populations, as this multiplicity provides them with a variety of ways of relating to potential recruits (Barvosa-Carter, 2001; Bandy and Smith, 2005). Making a comparable

point, Ganz (2004) states that leadership groups that encourage heterogeneity in activists' perspectives tend to make better decisions. The source of this heterogeneity comes from activists' experiences, their network contacts, and other forms of organizing. The significance of heterogeneity within leadership and their organizational experiences is that they will be "insiders to some constituencies but outsiders to others, who have strong ties to others, and who have learned diverse collective action repertoires" (Ganz, 2004: 188). These skills also translate into experience at dealing with tension or grievances in organizational settings.

Additionally, leaders have their own interests, and the potential "added value" from participating in coalition work also explains, in part, their commitment to a group. Activists have their own rationales to justify their participation in SMOs and coalitions, such as passion, potential avenues of information, training, employment, prestige, and access to public officials (Davis, 1999; Shefner, 1999; Cullen, 2005). Other factors that attract and keep activists engaged involve the effort and satisfaction that can come from forming alliances (Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2001; Cullen, 2005; Smith and Bandy, 2005), which are signs of progress and contribute to activists' morale.

Coalition Formation in Mexico: 1990s to the Present

There are several potential explanations for a surge in coalition building that has taken place in Mexico from the 1990s to the present. These include Mexico's democratization process, economic change, the political decline of the state, pressure

from human rights advocacy networks, and the location of coalition building. The first explanatory factor notes that during the late 20th century, Mexico went through tremendous democratic reforms in which traditional state-SMO relations were circumvented. Mexican SMOs' and activists' previous experiences with the state and the coalitions that were formed between the political parties have allowed SMOs to contest and negotiate for power in an indirect fashion. There are benefits to be gained from relationships with political parties, such as raising awareness about social problems and their potential solutions, expansion of inter-sectoral alliances, and political learning (Hellman, 1992). However, alliances with political bodies can also carry risks, and SMOs in Mexico are careful in how they form alliances with these institutions (Foweraker, 1990; Munck 1990; Bennett, 1992).

A second important factor was the period of rapid economic reform in Mexico which cut public subsidies, reduced wages, and increased unemployment for the urban poor. The middle classes suffered, as well, as markets for foreign investment were opened with no protection for local industries; and significant reduction of state employment occurred which hurt the middle class (Shefner, 1999, 2001). The impact of these economic changes in Mexico on the “political economy increased the pool of political contenders and helped the poor reshape their political demands” (Shefner, 2001: 599). This process was exacerbated by the loss of confidence in the state and the dominant political party at the time, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolution Party [PRI]) (Shefner, 2001).

Thirdly, one must look at the proliferation of human rights advocacy networks which began during President Salinas de Gotari's administration (1988-1992).

International relations scholars have written extensively on the significance of this wave of human rights organizations that work within and between countries. In the case of Latin America, much of this advocacy began in response to dictatorships in the southern cone (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, 1999). In Mexico, Sikkink (1993) points out that the increase in international attention to human rights violations provided a political space that proved amenable to a significant growth in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which increased from the four that existed in 1984 to 200 in 1993. During President Salinas' time in office, many NGOs were founded, including anti-NAFTA organizations, indigenous groups (Schulz, 1998), and human rights advocacy groups (Sikkink, 1993). Sensitive to the country's human rights record, President Salinas tolerated these changes within Mexican civil society and promoted the creation of a human rights organization (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). This discussion is significant to coalition-building, as human rights networks may have multiplied communication and contacts between potential domestic and international allies. Additionally, many of the domestic human rights networks may have offered alternative models for organizing or organizational repertoires (Clemens, 1993), thus, perhaps, influencing ongoing coalition-formation.

Finally, the least popular explanation may have to do with *where* coalitions have formed in Mexico. Mexico City, in particular, has an extensive social movement sector that is located in an urban zone, together with all of the major state institutions, educational and health services, and party and union headquarters. All of these can be major targets for mobilization. Additionally, one could argue that many of the "new" urban movements that arose in Mexico City between 1985 and 1988 were fed by the

increase in population size and an intensification of urbanization. These factors stemmed from the migration of people from rural areas to the edges of Mexico City (Bennett, 1992), which greatly increased demands by this population for services from the state.

It may also be that organizing coalitions in major urban areas of Mexico is easier than in other, more remote areas. Davis (1999) states that geographic location matters in mobilization, as there are “many more obstacles to scaled-up collective action in rural than urban areas.” This not only has to do with the fact that in an urban area there is a greater concentration of potential institutional targets for contention but also that the social movements sectors overlap, as many activists participate in a variety of SMOs. For example, an activist can be a member of a work-related union and her/his local neighborhood association. At the very least, there is a greater potential for activists to make connections with multiple SMOs and to continue these relationships for long periods of time. As Davis (1999: 604) writes, SMOs in “national and provincial capitals or other large locales with substantial populations seem to be more capable of generating cross-class alliances.” Many of these urban movements can include educated middle-class residents or urban poor, or both (Davis, 1999; Shefner, 2001). She further explains that these urban movements tend to be less radical in their demands and to opt for more conciliatory and moderated tactics in comparison to more-isolated, rural SMOs (Davis, 1999). If Davis is right, then this orientation would lend itself to the use of coalition-building, as urban activists may be more experienced at (and even prefer) reaching the negotiation table with the state or public institutions via a coalition.

Methodology and Data Collection

Two of the main criteria for selecting cases for this dissertation were based on the role of resources in coalitions and their ties to groups and organizations outside of Mexico. The configuration of organizational resources is a primary reason why conflict emerges within social movements, and this was the rationale for choosing it as a major criterion for this inquiry (Rose, 2000; Bandy and Smith, 2005). Organizations with contacts to international financial and cultural resources were chosen for examination because I expected this factor to play some role in the resolution of internal organizational conflict (Zald and McCarthy, 1987; Cullen, 2005).

The social movement coalitions in my sample represented not only different movement goals, such as democratization, education rights, and housing within Mexico, but they also allowed me to consider how conflict resolution functions in coalitions at the local, national, and international levels. I had made preliminary contact with two of my cases—*Alianza Cívica* (Civic Alliance) and *Sección Mexicana de la Coalición Trinacional en Defensa de la Educación Pública* (Mexican Section of the Trinational Coalition in Defense of Public Education [or *Sección Mexicana*])—in the summer of 2003 in Mexico City. These two organizations were selected as they possessed consistent-to-moderate access to material resources for their coalition work.

Diversity is another criterion that was a factor in selecting the groups to be studied. Here, diversity meant that I selected groups that were devoted to three separate issues. I also selected them based on the following factors: how formal the groups were,

their membership composition, and their attention to national versus local interests.

Alianza Cívica and *Sección Mexicana* fit the first set of criteria.

Alianza Cívica was also selected because that coalition had gained some notoriety in Mexico's democratic transition process, it receives domestic financial support from Mexican and international institutions, and it has a number of ties to organizations and institutions outside the country. The coalition's primary goal is electoral reform in Mexico. Although based in Mexico City, *Alianza Cívica* currently has 23 coalition partners made up of organizations and individuals in 20 other Mexican states. These 23 coalition partners include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), cooperatives, SMOs, and independent citizens. *Alianza Cívica's* organizational configuration allowed me to analyze a national coalition structure with a hierarchical format (Olvera, 2000). Finally, throughout its existence, *Alianza Cívica* has received funding from various domestic and international institutions.

The next case, *Sección Mexicana*, is a coalition that represents teachers' unions from six Mexican states and Mexico City. The coalition is formed by K-12 unions, university academic unions, and academics. *Sección Mexicana's* primary goal is to challenge the Mexican government's efforts to privatize the educational system in Mexico. Part of this challenge includes an agreement with educational workers' unions in the U.S. and Canada to join in solidarity campaigns against privatization of the educational system in each of the three countries. For this dissertation, *Sección Mexicana* has been categorized as a national coalition with consistent tri-national ties to unions in the U.S. and Canada. This organization forms part of the Tri-national Coalition in Defense of Public Education (Tri-national) which was formed in Olympia, Washington,

in 1993. *Sección Mexicana* provides another case through which it is possible to examine the relationship between a domestic coalition and its ties to other cross-border and international groups. *Sección Mexicana* can be described as having a horizontally based organizational structure and its funding is obtained from unions in Mexico and Canada.

After these two organizations were selected, it was necessary to choose a grassroots coalition to include in the study. The reason for selecting a grassroots organization was that it allowed me to address how a financially resource-poor organization fares in terms of dealing with internal tensions versus the other two, better-funded coalitions. By selecting the *Colectivo de Grupos de la Asamblea de Barrios de la Ciudad de Mexico* (Collective of Groups of the Assembly of Neighborhoods of Mexico City [or the *Colectivo*]), I was able to analyze the extent to which a resource-poor, grassroots coalition deals with internal organizational conflict. The *Colectivo* is an urban movement, based in Mexico City, with no outside funding. Its main organizational goal is to acquire government-subsidized housing for each of its member groups. The main resource that the *Colectivo* has is its participants. These city residents participate in protest activities, meetings, and they provide nominal financial support. The organization's primary leaders are a significant group resource, as they have had 20 years of experience in dealing with housing issues in Mexico City. One of the *Colectivo*'s leaders, Raymundo Hernandez, is the advisor to a local-level *PRD* official (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*/ Party of the Democratic Revolution) which provides the group with some access to local government institutions. In short, by studying the *Colectivo*, I was able to analyze coalition work that was done primarily in one local setting: Mexico City. This third case has virtually no contact with organizations or institutions outside of

the country. However, it does participate in national-level coalitions in Mexico.

Although this group did not fit my initial criteria for selecting organizations to study, its status as a grassroots coalition seemed likely to provide important and useful information.

These three cases offer some suggestions as to how conflict management in social movement coalitions may be operating in Mexico. One final criterion was that the organizations had to have existed for a similar length of time. At the time they were selected and sampled, all of these groups had been in existence for more than 10 years.

The three coalitions were chosen for several additional reasons. One reason was to increase the study's reliability which comes from examining the same issues in three cases as opposed to only a single instance. At the same time, there was no point in studying three social movement coalitions that were exactly the same (in size, resources, and focus); doing so would have produced results that had only limited meaning in the context of diversity among existing social movement coalitions in Mexico. So, I chose coalitions that were similar enough to make them comparable instances of the same phenomenon, yet different enough in some aspects to provide some generalizability. In other words, my goal was to explore issues of conflict resolution that were crucial for different social movement coalitions, and, by studying three different types of social movement coalitions, the findings that addressed their similarities and differences were certain to have more meaning. In the empirical chapters that follow, I show the usefulness of looking at the pertinent issues within the context of these three coalitions. For example, the role of leadership in dealing with conflict was found to be important in these social movement coalitions regardless of their focus, resources, or size. This is

more meaningful than saying it was only important in three large, well-financed social movement coalitions.

To support my argument I used a triangulated research design. This involves two stages: (1) participant observation and collection of organizational documents; and (2) interviewing informants. Engaging in participant observation and reviewing archived documents allowed me to study how the various leaders intervened in conflictual situations in meetings. This information is not easily accessible through other means. The next stage of my research entailed unstructured interviews with SMO participants. I interviewed all possible participants in order to gain their perspectives on what the conflicts were and how they were addressed.

The starting date for collecting data on all three groups varied, as I had to wait until each group made their internal decision as to whether or not I would be allowed to follow their activities. The data collection that was necessary to answer my research questions proceeded, as follows: fieldwork and data collection were conducted in Mexico from July 2004 to August 2005.¹ Additional fieldwork trips were taken in the spring and summer of 2006. The majority of my fieldwork was based in Mexico City. This dissertation draws on the interviews, observations, and documentary research that were obtained during these trips.

The interviews I collected were informal in structure and nature. These data allow me to analyze the perspectives of leaders, members, and staff on how the coalitions

¹ Fieldwork was conducted during the following periods: July 18-September 2, 2004; September 20-October 11, 2004; October 25-November 15, 2004; November 26-December 10, 2004; January 9-26, 2005; February 4-24, 2005; April-May 9, 2005; May 24-June 1, 2005; July 29-August 19, 2005; February 15-26, 2006; March 29-April 2, 2006; June 10-11, 2006; June 29-July 3, 2006.

under study emerged and operate, and to understand how the leaders and other participants created their coalitions. Additionally, through interviewing, I gathered insight into the conflicts or tensions that developed within these organizations and how they were addressed. Essentially, the interviews provided instances of conflict or tension for analysis. I looked for the “long story” in my interviews, which is to say that I collected expressions of the conflict within the coalitions sampled as well as the processes that were used in dealing with them (Katz, 2001).

For all three organizations, I had a primary set of informants. These respondents were the core cadre of participants in each group who had intimate knowledge of the coalitions under examination. I used informants who had participated in the coalitions since their inception or those who had been present in these organizations for a number of years before I entered the field (Katz, 2001). These individuals also had been consistent contributors to coalition activities, and they were either in charge of a major coalition project (as was the case with my *Alianza Cívica* informants), or they were responsible for much of the organizing (as in both the *Sección Mexicana* and the *Colectivo*). Of the seven *Alianza Cívica* staff members who were interviewed, my main informants were one full-time and one part-time staff member. In *Sección Mexicana*, I interviewed nine members of the coalition, and five of them became my primary informants. The three main leaders of the *Colectivo* provided the bulk of the interview data from their organization; however, I had several interviews with a number of their members. I conducted multiple interviews with my primary informants in order to collect more detailed information. Subjective memories can fade and, therefore, are imperfect, so the multiple interviews served, in part, to corroborate their stories.

To gain some perspective on what participating in each of these coalitions was like I collected interviews from other coalition members. In the case of *Alianza Cívica*, I interviewed coalition participants from organizations in Oaxaca, the Yucatan, and Mexico City, for a total of four interviews. As stated, I interviewed nine members of *Sección Mexicana*, and five were my primary informants. The other four interviews served to address the experiences of these members in the coalition. Finally, the two leaders of the *Colectivo* became my primary informants; although I did interview 10 other members from different housing projects.

When I interviewed my principal informants I asked questions to probe further into such topics as organizational culture and changes within the organization (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland, 2006). These interviews provided information about how the organizations worked from the perspective of the participants. The information gathered in the interviews is set forth in Chapter Three, and it describes the conflicts that occurred in the target organizations and the reasoning behind them. The interviews were one of three sources for details on the nature of discordant events in each coalition, and they offered crucial evidence of the contexts, circumstances, and occurrences of the conflicts. In all three cases, there was not sufficient documentary evidence to provide particulars about the problems that existed in the coalitions. Nor were the expressions of conflict that I observed adequate to describe the nature of the conflict in these groups. So the bulk of my information on conflict within these organizations was derived from the interviews, and it was supplemented by the other forms of data that were collected on conflict emergence and management.

Given that this dissertation is focused primarily on conflict, some discussion of how I gathered data on this issue is warranted. When interviewing people about internal conflict resolutions, I waited until the person I was talking to mentioned the tensions and spats that had emerged in her/his respective organization. It was then that I proceeded to ask questions about how the conflict developed and had been dealt with in these situations. I returned to these examples of internal conflict in later interviews with my informants. The majority of my interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data from these interviews are used later in the dissertation to address the participants' perceptions of organizational structure and culture as well as their roles in managing internal conflict.

Great care was taken to establish a positive researcher-subject relationship with all three coalition organizations (Harper, 1992; Katz, 2001; Venkatesh, 2002). Harper (1992) has stated that there are usually difficulties in establishing cooperative relationships between the researcher and subject. While all three groups welcomed my participation, my relationship with each group varied, which led to different forms of access to each coalition. In the case of *Sección Mexicana*, my status as a student helped in forming my relationship with this coalition of teachers. The group allowed me into many of their internal coalition meetings. Additionally, two participating unions invited me to participate in their organizational activities. With the *Colectivo*, my roles as researcher and university instructor were often highlighted by its leaders, and they played a part in my acceptance by the group. However, the primary reason why I was allowed access to the *Colectivo*'s weekly meetings was that its main leader gave me the "green light" to observe the group. With *Alianza Cívica*, my relationship was collegial, but it

also seemed to be the most formal. This had to do with the fact that *Alianza Cívica*'s main body is an NGO, which means that it is a professional organization, and I had to comply with the norms found in this type of work setting.

All three coalitions had had extensive exposure to people from other countries, which I believe aided my integration into the three groups. However, this fact may have hurt my chances to obtain “full” access to the groups. Organization leaders and participants either certainly or most likely met or communicated outside of the formal meetings that I was able to attend, but I was never given access to these more private interactions (Hunter, 1993). Finally, an important motivation for each “subject” to allow my presence in each coalition was the possibility that my dissertation might prove helpful in drawing attention to the different coalitions' goals, perhaps even serving as a future conduit for resources or services (Venkatesh, 2002); indeed, all three groups asked for a copy of the finished dissertation. Apart from agreeing to distribute my future work to these groups, I volunteered to help the coalitions to the best of my ability during my time in the field. *Sección Mexican* and *Alianza Cívica* specifically requested my help on a few occasions.

A second line of data collection involved participant observation with all three coalitions, which included organizational meetings, protests, conferences, and project implementation. The objective in using participant observation was to aid in establishing long-term relationships with the groups under study through immersion in their natural settings (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland, 2006). The goal was to collect the “richest possible data by achieving intimate familiarity with the setting through engaging in some number of behaviors that are relevant to the setting and in face-to-face

interactions with its participants” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland, 2006: 16).

Participant observation allows for what Burawoy, et al., (1991: 2) state to be the “study of people in their own time and space, in their own everyday lives,” and, in the case of social movements, this method allows for access to the “lived experience of activists and non-activists” (Edelman, 2001). In addition, this type of data collection is ideal for studying decisions that are made within SMOs (Jasper, 2004), as it provides firsthand accounts of internal organizational dynamics (Hathaway and Meyer, 1997).

I attended 19 *Colectivo* weekly meetings, six of *Sección Mexicana*’s monthly meetings, and one national assembly of *Alianza Cívica* and its coalition partners. My observations of the *Colectivo* began in September, 2004, and ended in August, 2005. The *Colectivo*’s organizational weekly meetings were the most accessible. Apart from these meetings I participated as a “distanced” observer of the protest marches (it is illegal for foreigners to participate in domestic Mexican politics) these groups contributed to, as well as sit-ins and other events. *Sección Mexicana* allowed me to attend a number of their internal meetings, at my request or their invitation, except for one instance when I was specifically asked not to attend by the organizer. Apart from these internal meetings, I participated in conferences and a demonstration organized by *Sección Mexicana*. My observations of the group began in November, 2004, and ended in August, 2005, and then they resumed, briefly, in the spring of 2006.

With regard to *Alianza Cívica*, I had the opportunity to observe the preparation and implementation processes of their electoral monitoring project from 2004-2005 and again, briefly, in 2006. I was allowed to observe a national meeting that was held in the spring of 2006, where all of the *Alianza Cívica* coalition partners were present. During

my time in the field, I attempted to gain access to the bi-weekly internal meetings of *Alianza Cívica*'s main organizational body, but the organization's executive secretary did not allow me to attend. My observation of this group began in July, 2004, and ended in August, 2005, with some additional work done in the spring of 2006.

Burawoy, et al., (1991: 2) state that the “advantages of participant observation are assumed to lie not just in direct observation of how people act but also how they understand and experience those acts.” Primary observation at organizational meetings and activities allowed me to “juxtapose what people say they are up to against what they actually do” (Burawoy, 1991: 2). My objective was to study the coalitions in their own settings. As stated, this was one of the purposes behind my participation in the coalition meetings and activities to which I was given access. In each setting I looked for expressions of conflict during these coalition activities which allowed for the collection of data on conflicts and how participants managed these situations. This meant that I looked for exchanges between two or more members that could be categorized as having some degree of tension in the interaction. This provided the opportunity to analyze how participants managed conflicts as they occurred, which could be then contrasted with what was discussed in interviews about conflict management. Here, it is important to note that these organizations were not conflict-ridden. By this, I mean that as coalitions they did not constantly deal with nor was there a constant expression of internal organizational conflict. At least this was true, as mentioned, in the organizational activities I observed.

Burawoy, et al., (1991) discuss the pitfalls of studying a subject at the levels of intensity and depth that are called for in participant observation. These dilemmas include

the “loss of objectivity” or “contamination of the situation²” that can come with direct contact with the subject. The challenges to objectivity are compounded by the problem of validity that can stem from a close focus on particular examples, because, as Burawoy said, “intensive research limits the possibility of generalization” (1991: 2). However, I did compensate for these dilemmas by spreading my research focus and looking at three different social movement coalitions. Importantly, my observations at meetings provided an opportunity to observe patterns in the introduction of issues to be discussed, the allocation of tasks, and deliberation of the various topics (Polletta, 2002). In all three cases, there was some recording of the organizational meetings. This was significant, as it allowed me to check what was discussed in interviews versus what had actually occurred in the meetings. In later chapters of this dissertation, I have used examples from my observations of group activities to present the procedures, tactics, and arguments that were used by participants in the resolution of internal conflicts.

As the third aspect of data collection, documentary material on the groups was explored. This came in the form of organizational and leadership documents. The benefit of these data, apart from their value in describing the organizational structures and histories, is that in some cases they documented an acknowledgement of internal organizational conflicts. For *Alianza Cívica*, I obtained copies of minutes that were taken in strategy meetings of 2005 and national assembly meetings in 1998, 2001, 2004, and

² My role as participant observer may have had some influence on this part of the data collection process. “Contamination” is unavoidable when doing participant observation. As Cunningham (2000) addressed in her work, many activists are aware of what is involved in academic field research. This may have shaped my data, as activists may have chosen to “hold their tongues” during meetings or excluded me from certain activities. For this reason, I collected multiple forms of data over an extended period of time.

2006. On occasion, some of the minutes of these meetings referenced ongoing organizational conflicts and concerns. Further, I collected published accounts of the organizational structure of *Alianza Cívica* which provided some insights into the internal conflicts that existed and how they were managed. In addition to this evidence, I consulted the *Alianza Cívica* website to help reconstruct the history of the organization, its organizational changes, and the projects that the group has developed.

Sección Mexicana provided me with some of its organizational publications and position papers. Through the coordinator for *Sección Mexicana* I obtained internal memos and documents about the organizational history and functions of the coalition. One memo, in particular, written by the coordinator of *Sección Mexicana*, outlined many of the internal problems facing the coalition (de la Luz Arriaga, 2001). This memo was written in preparation for the 2001 *Reunión Nacional de Sección Mexicana* (Mexican Section National Meeting). I did not obtain any other documents that had been written about internal conflicts from any of the other members of the coalition.

Finally, the *Colectivo* had no archived organizational documents. However, they do maintain a webpage that allowed me to reconstruct their history as an organization. The *Colectivo* did not take minutes of their meetings either before or during my time with the group, which might have provided a record of organizational conflicts that had emerged over the course of their existence. However, I recorded the majority of the meetings that I attended.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two provides background on the history, structure, and goals of the coalitions under study. The goal of this chapter is to provide the reader with basic information about each coalition. Additional information on the diverse number of links the coalitions have to other organizations is supplied, as well.

First, *Alianza Cívica* is discussed, and background information on its informal domestic links to SMOs and NGOs is provided. This section details *Alianza Cívica*'s overall organizational structure and discusses *Alianza Cívica*'s projects and the organizations that they work with. Some background is given on domestic and international links to *Alianza Cívica*, which includes underlying information and project goals.

Next, the section on *Sección Mexicana* includes its participating unions and an outline of the basic structures of these organizations. This is followed up with how *Sección Mexicana* fits into the structure of the *Trinational*.

Finally, the structure of the *Colectivo* is discussed: first, their break from the Assembly of Neighborhoods is detailed, and then the organization's basic structure and group goals are considered.

Chapter Three focuses on the conflicts that have surfaced within each coalition. Details are provided from the various aspects of my data collection.

Chapter Four presents the discussion of leadership repertoires for conflict management. In this chapter I address how leaders attempt to address potential conflicts through the structure of their organizations. It is here that we obtain a view of some of the internal processes that occur within coalitions.

Chapter Five focuses on another aspect of the leadership repertoire that has to do with immediate conflict management in organizational and other meetings. Also examined is how, with some ongoing conflicts, leaders take time to deliberate before addressing them.

Chapter Six concludes by summarizing the evidence, discussion, and conclusions that were detailed in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: COALITION HISTORY, STRUCTURE, AND GOALS OF

ALIANZA CÍVICA, SECCIÓN MEXICANA, AND THE COLECTIVO

The coalitions analyzed in this dissertation have different histories, organizational forms, and goals. The focus of this chapter is to provide a description of these coalitions. First, this chapter provides background as to why they formed. I include a description of the structure of each coalition, funding, and alliances. In the sample, structure, strategy, and goals are some of the elements examined for the basis of internal coalition conflict. Taken all together, this description provides the background information necessary to understand the conflicts that occurred within each coalition and that will be discussed at length in the next chapter. I begin by describing *Alianza Cívica*, followed by *Sección Mexicana*, and end with the *Colectivo* (see Appendix C, D, and E for organizational membership lists).

Alianza Cívica/Civic Alliance

In 1991, citizen-based electoral observation was initiated by organizations in the Federal District and the state of *San Luís Potosí* (Aguayo Quezada, 1998; Cavillo Unna, 1999; Icaza, 2002). The *Consejo para la Democracia* (Council for Democracy) and *Fundación Arturo Rosenbluth* (Arturo Rosenblueth Foundation) organized a “quick

count” of the votes in the Federal District elections of 1991 (Aguayo Quezada, 1995). In the state of *San Luis Potosí*, the *Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos* (Mexican Academy of Human Rights [or AMDH]), and the *Centro Potosino de Derechos Humanos* (Human Rights Center of San Luis Potosí) observed the gubernatorial elections of that same year (Aguayo Quezada, 1998).

In December of 1993 representatives from seven NGOs began to meet with the goal of “comprehensive observation” of the elections of 1994 (Aguayo, 1995). These NGOs, all with a history of working on human rights and democratization, met with the objective of coordinating a national electoral observation that would involve other organizations. They created the *Alianza Cívica* on April 15, 1994. Eventually, *Alianza Cívica* incorporated labor unions and social movements into its fold to participate in monitoring the elections of that year. Another result of this mobilization was that in the months leading up to the election 32 state-level *Alianza Cívicas* were formed (Aguayo Quezada, 1995, 1998; McConnell, 1996).

The NGOs that created *Alianza Cívica* were the AMDH, *Acuerdo Nacional para la Democracia* (National Accord for Democracy [or ACUDE]), the *Consejo para la Democracia*, the *Convergencia de Organizaciones Civiles para la Democracia* (Convergence of Civic Organizations for Democracy [or *Convergencia*]), the *Fundación Arturo Rosenbluth*, *Instituto Superior De La Cultura Democrática* (Higher Institute of Democratic Culture [or ISCD]), and *Movimiento Ciudadano Por La Democracia* (Movement for Democracy [or MCD]). These NGOs represented diverse ideological positions within *Alianza Cívica*; for example, the ISCD has been described as a center-right organization, while the *Convergencia* has a center-left orientation. ACUDE’s

membership is drawn from the social sciences, and most of the Rosenblueth Foundation members are natural scientists (Aguayo Quezada, 1995, 1998).

Many of the leaders of *Alianza Cívica* are a product of the growth in Mexican NGOs that occurred in the 1960s. The new NGOs and other organizations that began to work outside and independent of the Mexican government were from diverse sectors of society (Aguayo Quezada, 1998). Several of these organizations were dedicated to finding “different ways to struggle against authoritarianism in Mexico” (Aguayo Quezada, 1998: 169). Aguayo Quezada explains that the growth of these NGOs was attributable to the prior work that had been done by “Christian groups, university professors, and leftist activists disillusioned with political parties” (1998: 169). These pre-existing organizations added the promotion of democracy and social justice to their organizational objectives, and the organizations and the experiences drawn from them by activists fed into the eventual work of *Alianza Cívica* (Aguayo Quezada, 1998).

These NGOs are said to have taken advantage of the spaces for social/political action that were left open by the Mexican regime with the creation of organizations such as the *Social Desarrollo Económico y Social de los Mexicanos Indígenas* (Economic and Social Development for Mexico’s Indigenous Populations, [or DESMI]) and the *Centro de Estudios Ecuménicos* (Center for Ecumenical Studies or [CEE]). Appropriation of these activities by the government allowed room for independent citizens to participate in the political process. Aguayo Quezada (1998) explains that the NGOs became a more attractive way for people to get involved, and their importance was clear after the 1985 Mexico City earthquakes. *Alianza Cívica* stated that before the earthquake there were 10 human rights organizations as compared to the 225 that had formed by 1995 (DePalma,

1995). Additionally, their inability to challenge the evidence of electoral fraud in the 1988 shocked the NGO community in Mexico and resulted in a deeper commitment by the organizations to advocate for electoral transparency (Aguayo Quezada, 1998). Aguayo Quezada (1998) stated that the shift in the agendas of some NGOs from social/economic concerns to electoral observation led to the mobilization of Mexican citizens in the 1990s.

Additionally, we could view the efforts of *Alianza Cívica* at pushing for fair elections as a mobilization effort in opposition to the PRI government. One author points out that the fact that *Alianza Cívica*'s exists testifies to a "deep-rooted mistrust" of the PRI (Shefner, 1997). The other two major political parties are the *PAN* (*Partido Acción Nacional*/National Action Party) and the *PRD* (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*/Party of the Democratic Revolution) have also called for reforms to the electoral process which included the acceptance of international electoral observers (Santa-Cruz, 2005; Peschard, 2006). Chalmers and Piester (1995) state that this entails

holding the PRI to standards it has accepted only reluctantly and partially -- providing a level playing field for all participants, and allowing transparent procedures that would risk a defeat for itself. Insistence on honest elections has long been defined as anti-PRI, and has been a major banner of the opposition parties, the PAN and the PRD.

There were several Mexican legislative changes that contributed to its growth and the consolidation of *Alianza Cívica* before the 1994 elections. These included several constitutional amendments and 41 changes in the Mexican electoral law. One of the more significant was the restructuring of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) which included six "citizen counselors", two representatives from each house of Congress, and

the Interior Minister (Santa-Cruz, 2005; Olvera, 2006). The president could no longer take part in the selection process of the chief directive board of the IFE (Peschard, 2006). Santa-Cruz (2005) writes that these changes can be viewed as the government's need to demonstrate that the "electoral process needed to be presented as the only viable and acceptable way of gaining power." This change also institutionalized the concept that independent monitoring in Mexican elections could be possible. Other legislative changes included allowing the presence of "international observers" or foreign observers for the entire period of an electoral campaign. Additionally, domestic and foreign financing of Mexican NGOs was also made possible (Santa-Cruz, 2005). One can see how changes like these contributed to how the coalition was able to muster financial support for its electoral monitoring project.

In 1996 the Mexican Congress passed an initiative which furthered the country's electoral reform policy. This was the first time in Mexican history that all of the major political parties reached consensus on Electoral reform (Peschard, 2006). One of these amendments barred the executive branch from the IFE and restructured it to include nine "citizen counselors", two representatives from the legislature, and one from each house (Santa-Cruz, 2005; Olvera, 2006; Peschard, 2006). Changes like this may have signaled to international funders and democracy advocacy networks that Mexico had indeed reached a new period in its "democracy." One could argue that Mexico's elections have become a much fairer process. Olvera (2006) states that these changes to the Federal Elections Code of 1996 would put the IFE in charge of organizing elections and the distribution of funds to political parties. The changes included criteria for party financing, definition for "electoral misdemeanors" and the creation of a court system

charged with handling these misdemeanors (Olvera, 2006; Peschard, 2006). Finally, these changes allowed the IFE to monitor the media coverage of elections and federal programs. These were some of the issues *Alianza Cívica* and opposition parties had been clamoring for (Olvera, 2006). For *Alianza Cívica* this meant that the changes to the Elections Code and the new powers given to the IFE essentially institutionalized the goals the coalition had formed over. This meant that the coalition had to expand its goals and work harder at convincing domestic and international supporters that its project continued to be relevant despite these new measures of democratic change.

After the 1994 elections the *Asamblea Nacional de Alianza Cívica* (National Assembly of *Alianza Cívica*) met and decided to continue to work on projects and actions, to continue as a national organization that promotes, favors, and contributes to the democratization of the country, and to advocate for other forms of popular participation (*Alianza Cívica*, 1994, in McConnell, 1996; Aguayo Quezada, 1998).

Alianza Cívica has been classified by researchers as an organization, a network, a space, a project line, and a social movement (McConnell, 1996; Aguayo Quezada, 1998; Olvera, 2000, 2001). McConnell (1996) discusses the debates that occurred within the coalition as to whether *Alianza Cívica* was a formal organization, a social movement, or a group that had elements of both. She explains that the group has the characteristics of a social movement in that the coalition allows for citizens to participate, and that this is one element that would allow it to be categorized as a social movement.² Ultimately, she

² The definition used for social movement here is an organization that mobilizes for social change. There is no attempt made in my dissertation to separate social movements and what Cullen defined as a social NGO (2005). A social NGO is a collection of organizations that are mobilized around a social justice issue. *Alianza Cívica* fits this

places *Alianza Cívica* within the “third sector,” an NGO with new methods for organizing (McConnell, 1996).

McConnell (1996) goes on to write that the coalition has demonstrated its ability to integrate diverse organizations into *Alianza Cívica*'s distinct and clearly defined projects which gives

... individuals and organizations the freedom to enter and exit the organization which has expanded the organization at one point in time and decreased it in another, but it always conserves its organizational identity. For these reasons it is not appropriate to consider it as a network; it is not simply a grouping of organizations. One has to take into consideration that it is an organization with its own character and utilizes new organizational forms (McConnell, 1996: 36).

Alianza Cívica is registered as a civil organization, a private non-profit, it is not part of a government institution, and it uses volunteers in the completion of its projects. This organization has its own office, budget, project lines, professional staff, and equipment. On its website the organization claims that it is an “independent organization, plural, and nonpartisan that looks to contribute to the democratic transition led by citizen participation in the public domain” (*Alianza Cívica*, 2006). However, there is scholarship that has pointed out that this nonpartisan stance may not be entirely accurate (Chalmers and Piester, 1995). Additionally, political parties did not find *Alianza Cívica*'s nonpartisan stance and practices believable, and their methods are viewed as inappropriate for participating in the electoral process (Aguayo Quezada, 1998).

Writing about *Alianza Cívica*'s organizational culture, McConnell (1996: 94) states that many times there are structures and arrangements in an organization that begin

category given that it advocates for social change goals such as democratization, human rights, and popular forms of participation in politics.

as informal ones and became formal over time. As an example, she cites those instances when more than one state coordinator for the *Alianza Cívica* was added from a particular state. In April, 1994, the decision was made to have more one coordinator per state. Due to the differences in policy and geography between various groups and individuals that could be found within the same city, three states began to work informally as state-level *Alianza Cívicas*. McConnell (1996) explains that with time and institutional growth the national office had to recognize these informal arrangements and began to send communications, invitations, reports, and other documents to all of these organizations, which limited the possibility that one state coordinator could dominate another.

McConnell (1996) describes *Alianza Cívica* as highly flexible organization. This suppleness has contributed to the survival of the coalition. However, one problem with *Alianza Cívica's* flexibility is that it has led to a lack of organizational definition. *Alianza Cívica's* integration of various groups involves two processes: the first is the process of building the coalition (which it has done since it emerged), and the second is how the national work of the organization is divided between the state *Alianza Cívicas* and within the regional- and municipal-level *Alianza Cívicas*.

The ability to create alliances through *Alianza Cívica* was a significant factor in establishing the organization's credibility (Aguayo Quezada, 1995, 1998; McConnell, 1996). Coalition formation allowed the *Alianza Cívica* to substantiate its claims and widen its reach in Mexico with the goal of completing its project. The strategy of working within a "network was the reason that allowed the beginning of *Alianza Cívica* and was one of the elements that in the first months of existence gave the credibility necessary to gain international financing and recognition from the government"

(McConnell, 1996: 97). Between April and June, 1994, the United Nations recognized the work of *Alianza Cívica*, and it provided funding for some aspects of electoral observation (Aguayo, 1995).

Alianza Cívica has not retained the same coalition structure since it was initiated. From the 400 organizations that participated in the *Alianza Cívica* in 1994 membership began to diminish, and, in 1996, 29 of 32 state *Alianzas Cívicas* reported having a relationship with a total of 120 organizations. Those that collaborated in coalition activities did not have access to the decision-making process within the organization. And, although the participation of these “outside” groups continued to be important, their incorporation into the coalition was not formalized. Most importantly, they do not have a formal role in the national structure. These NGOs, social movements, and associations were integrated into the *Alianza Cívica* at the state level, and the participation of these groups is limited to the state level which is neither stable nor standardized (McConnell, 1996).

Coalition Structure

The coalition has had one basic “formal” structure from 1994 to 2005; it is composed of the following three elements: the *Asamblea Nacional* (National Assembly), the *Coordinador Nacional* (National Coordinator), and the *Secretaria Ejecutiva* (Executive Secretary). The general functions of the assembly are to define policy and approve the policy initiatives determined by the *Coordinador Nacional*. From within the

membership of the National Assembly representatives are chosen for the *Coordinador Nacional*. The *Asamblea Nacional* links the groups and individuals that participate in the *Alianza Cívica* and that approve and determine the organization's work. The *Secretaria Ejecutiva* is nominated by the *Asamblea Nacional*, and it is in charge of the operations and coordination of tasks that are defined by the *Asamblea Nacional*. Finally, this body monitors and evaluates the plans and programs of the organization.

The *Alianza Cívica's* structure includes participants and organizations at the National Coordinator level, the state, regional, and municipal levels. In May, 2005, *Alianza Cívica* decided to "revise" its organizational structure. The organization has basically retained the same structure, with some reworking at the national coordinator level to include a national policy coordinating body that is in charge of elaborating the policy lines having to do with the political work of *Alianza Cívica*.

At the state level, the *Alianza Cívica's* organizational structure varies according to the state in which it is located. All of the *ACs* have one or more people assigned to be the state-level coordinator. These coordinators represent the "base" of *Alianza Cívica*, and these are the individuals who continue to participate in coalition activities (McConnell, 1996).

There have been several tendencies in the coalition such as those organizations in the Federal District (Mexico City) have mobilized around the solidarity work with indigenous groups in Chiapas. In other cases groups in the Federal District are described as informal networks of citizens with participants that could have affiliations with an NGO. In the neighboring Estado de Mexico there are similar networks of citizens at work, as those of the Federal District due to its large and dispersed population; however

they function in a decentralized manner (Olvera, 2002). In many states *Alianza Cívica* has coalesced around Christian Based Communities, NGOs, professors, and university students (here he points to states like Veracruz, Morelos, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guerrero, Guanajuato, Querétaro, Michoacán, Chihuahua-Juárez City, and Jalisco). In other parts of the country the *Alianza Cívica* includes academics, students, and some citizens organizations (Sonora, Baja California, Tamaulipas, Quintana Roo, and Nayarit). While in another region of the country conservative citizen organization, academic staff, and activists formed part of the coalition (Sinaloa, Nuevo León, Chihuahua (the capitol city, Yucatán, San Luís Potosí, and Durango). Finally, Olvera (2002, 2000) describes how activist on the left formed yet another tendency within *Alianza Cívica* (Coahuila, Guerrero).

An organizational profile of the *Alianza Cívica* (McConnell, 1996) involved a survey of the characteristics of the state-level representatives in the National Assembly: 95 % had completed some college, 42 % were women, the majority of the members were professionals, 34% had participated in another NGO, 21% were investigators, 16% were part of an association, 13% were from religious organizations, 10% were union members, and another 10% were from a political party (McConnell, 1996).

The projects that *Alianza Cívica* engaged in included the monitoring of elections and elected officials, polling, and human rights advocacy.

Funding

In the period when the coalition was first forming, Aguayo Quezada (1995) writes that coordinating a group which had the “know-how” to conduct the observations of the 1994 election was not an issue. Instead, their main limitation was funding. Aguayo Quezada (1995) describes how two events allowed *Alianza Cívica* to draw funding for its major project. These events were the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the *PRI* presidential candidate for the 1994 elections and the *Zapatista* mobilization earlier in the year. These events resulted in the expansion of international interest for the elections of that year.

Alianza Cívica has received diverse sources of funding over the course of its existence. Domestically, funding has come from organizations such as *Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo Social* (National Institute for Social Development [or INDESOL]), *Instituto Federal Electoral* (Federal Electoral Institute or IFE), *Libertad de Información México* (Freedom of Information Mexico), and *Convergencia*. Organizations outside of Mexico that have contributed to the *Alianza Cívica* include the Ford Foundation, National Republican Institute, the MacArthur Foundation, Inter Pares from Canada, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)³, the Friedrich Nauumann Foundation, the University of New Hampshire, and the Consejería en Proyectos y Servicios from Costa Rica.

³ *Alianza Cívica*'s credibility was brought into question due to the financial support by NED. The concern with NED has to do with its links to Washington, DC and the CIA. Sergio Aguayo responded to these concerns by stating that for the year leading up the elections of 2000, 90% of *Alianza Cívica*'s funding was from domestic sources (Aguayo, 2001).

International and Cross Border ties

The *Alianza Cívica* is part of what Sikkink (1993) has labeled as a human rights-principled issue network. Dresser (1996) states that the *Alianza Cívica* is part of Mexico's Democracy Network which includes "domestic and international electoral observer organizations, international NGOs, private foundations, groups of scholar, international secretariats of political parties, and some sectors of the national media." This has resulted in the coalition's ability to mobilize various forms of support.

This support is attributable, in part, to the fact that international visitors traveled to Mexico with the purpose of convincing the Mexican government to allow international observers in the 1994 election. Despite President Salinas' desire to win the election "at all costs," the weight of international scrutiny and the call for clean elections was respected with the motive that it would add some legitimacy to the process. This allowed international agencies and organizations to observe the elections. It is in this context that *Alianza Cívica* drew \$2 million dollars in financial support with \$300,000 from Mexican contributors (Aguayo Quezada, 1995).

Alianza Cívica has several ties to networks and civil society organizations both domestically and internationally, and it participates in other domestic organizations. For example in 1994, the *Alianza Cívica* took part in a coalition of SMOs called *Colectivo por la Democracia* (Democracy Collective) in Oaxaca, Mexico. The group is also a member of *Convergenicia*, which is a coalition of NGOs.

The *Alianza Cívica* has several cross-border ties to organizations in the U.S. and internationally. Aguayo Quezada (1998) states that the *Alianza Cívica's* ties to

organizations with similar goals in other countries were facilitated by its efforts to incorporate the continued presence of international observers during elections, following the 1994 election when several U.S. organizations were mobilized to participate (Icaza, 2002). For example, it has worked closely with Global Exchange to monitor the electoral process in Mexico since 1994. The *Alianza Cívica* participates in “*Las Cumbres de la Americas*” which is a body within the Organization of American States (OAS) and *Red Interamericana para la Democracia* (Interamerican Network for Democracy [or RID]).

Sección Mexicana de la Coalición Trinacional/
Mexican Section of the Trinational Coalition

Eckstein and Wickham-Crowley (2003) state that in the latter part of the 20th century groups began to protest for their right to a free education. These claims were stimulated by Latin American governments’ attempts to privatize education. In Mexico, the effort to restructure the public education system has been tied to NAFTA policies that have had significant societal impacts on the country. According to an author and *Sección Mexicana* activist, NAFTA is the first international trade agreement to include services and education (Arriaga Lemus, 1999).

The NAFTA accord includes a series of regulations that “change the direction and administration of education” (Arriaga Lemus, 1999: 145). Many of these changes were set to target higher education. They included the expansion of private education, the commercialization of services and products related to education, and limits on the

maintenance and expansion of public education. Arriaga Lemus (1999) states that NAFTA's rules have accelerated changes in the Mexican educational sector. These changes include:

(1) decreases in funding for education and the transfer of public funds to the private sector, (2) a reduction of social programs that influence the quality of children's living conditions, (3) limitations on teachers' rights and demands in their collective contracts, and (4) the deliberate opening of educational services to the private sector (Arriaga Lemus, 1999: 147).

To challenge these changes to the educational systems in Mexico, Canada, and the U.S., the Trinational was formed at conference organized by the Labor Center of Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, in 1993. The Trinational seeks to be as broad and inclusive as possible while avoiding a rigid organizational structure. The group is committed to "defending a fundamental social right – the right to an education – which meant defining itself as a democratic project outside the control of the state or a political group" (Arriaga Lemus, 1999: 148).

The maintenance of the Trinational Coalition has allowed for political organizing around the issue of education in Mexico. By participating in the organization,

...an important sector of democratic educational unions, [Mexico] has opened the possibility of international work by building relations, publicity, interchange, learning and joint action principally with Canada. With the U.S. there have been fewer actual joint actions, but [their work] has been amplified [by working] with Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, and Central America. This allowed their organization to advance into the interior of our country. Furthermore, this shows the unions of other countries a distinct face of Mexican Unionism in the educational sector, because the only face that they have known is the union policy direction of the SNTE. Also, participating in the Coalition has permitted the organizational members to have a larger vision of the work, strategy, and study of the local, regional or national

problems that are marked by the international transformations that we live in (Arriaga Lemus, 2003).

The origins of *Sección Mexicana* date back to the work that was done by union activists in anticipation of NAFTA's passage. The 1993 conference at Evergreen State College was titled the "Future of Public Education." The Future of Public Education conference was funded by educational staff unions in the United States, National Education Association (NEA) affiliates in Washington and California, the NEA International office, and provincial education unions in British Columbia and Ontario. The organizational work for securing the 40 delegates from Mexico was carried out by the *Frente Autentico de Trabajadores* (Authentic Labor Front [or FAT]) and the *Centro de Investigación Laboral y Asesoría Sindical* (Resource Center for Labor Advice Organizations [or CILAS]) (Leahy, 2001).

The 200 delegates from the NAFTA countries (including some representatives from the Caribbean and Latin America) issued the "Olympia Declaration" that called for the preservation of public education as a social right, the strengthening of public education systems as the foundation for democratic societies and the implementation of a broad plan of information exchanges, and joint research projects and actions to build cross-border solidarity (Leahy, 2001).

In October, 1994, in Zacatecas, Mexico, the Labor Center called a follow-up conference to implement the conference's work plan. Although the proposal for creating a "stand-alone" North American public schools commission was not accepted, the "Trinational Coalition" was formed. In Mexico City in 1995, Mexican teachers' unions and Academics formally created the *Sección Mexicana* after an additional meeting of the

Trinational. This coalition has sought to educate the public in Mexico and internationally on the state of the educational system since its formation.

Coalition Structure

The coalition is coordinated by a collegial coordinating commission (CCC) composed of member unions and one Academic. The committee does much of the organizing for the *Sección Mexicana*, and they are the members that are responsible for attending domestic and international meetings. Each member is said to have equal weight in the decision-making process.

The coalition is made up of three sectors: university unions, union sections (primary school unions) and democratic delegations, and Academics. The university unions make up one sector of the coalition. The next sector consists of the primary school unions that form the “official” union of the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de Educación* (National Union of Educational Workers [or SNTE]). What is meant by “official” is that this union has had a “pro-government” stance since the 1940s, which means that it has allied itself with the *PRI* since its beginning (Cook, 1996). The *PRI* party dominated Mexican politics since the 1930s and did not lose control of the legislature until 1997 and the presidency in 2000. All of these union sections in this sector are members of the *Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de Educación* (National Network of Educational Workers [or CNTE]). The CNTE is the dissident teachers’ movement within the SNTE that was formed in 1979. This network of unions

that forms the CNTE does not constitute a separate union, but it is a “democratic current” within the SNTE (Cook, 1996). Shortly after forming the CNTE, this network of unions obtained official recognition of the electoral victories, established alternatives to organizing through democratic practices, formed contacts with other popular movements, and challenged the SNTE’s relationship with the *PRI* and their austerity policies which affected teacher salaries and public education coffers. The CNTE has struggled to “democratize” the official union since the early 1980s (Cook, 1990; 1996).

The final sector is made up of Academics at Mexico City-based universities. All have membership in their respective academic unions but are representatives of these unions within the *Sección Mexicana*. These Academics include Maria de la Luz Arriaga, who is an economics professor at *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (National Autonomous University of Mexico [or UNAM]). She has been the coordinator of *Sección Mexicana* since 1995. Hugo Aboites is a professor of education and communication at the *Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana* (Metropolitan Autonomous University [or UAM]), and Teresa Lechuga is a professor of pedagogy at one of the UNAM satellites in the state of Mexico.

Sección Mexicana has helped to organize seven Trinational Conferences in Defense of Public Education. Four of these conferences have been held in Mexico. Most recently, the seventh conference was held in April, 2006, in Oaxaca, hosted by Section 22 of the CNTE; the fifth conference was held in Zacatecas and hosted by SPAUAZ (*Sindicato de Personal Académico de la Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas*) in 2000; the fourth conference was held in Querétaro and hosted by SUPAUAQ (*Sindicato de Personal Académico de La Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro*) in 1998; and the

second conference was held in Morelia, Michoacán, and was hosted by Section Eighteen of the CNTE in 1995.

Sección Mexicana's is involved in educational awareness campaigns around standardized exams, letter writing campaigns in support union strikes in Mexico and Canada, protests and demonstrations, and coordinating Trinational conferences in Mexico.

Funding

Much of the financing of *Sección Mexicana's* activities derives from support by the Canadian unions and *Red Social para la Educación Pública en las Américas* (Social Network for Public Education in the Americas [or RED SEPA]). There is an agreement in the Trinational and RED SEPA that each union must support a collaborative effort if they can, or if there is a union that has more resources that it should support, for example, the publication of *Sección Mexicana's* newsletter, entitled *Coalición*, or air travel for its delegates to international conferences. Another example of this support affected the recent Oaxacan conference in 2006, when Mexican union representatives and Mexican and international students paid no registration fees and received discounted rates for accommodations.

International and Cross Border Ties

Apart from the *Sección Mexicana's* work in the Trinational, it participates in other international organizations and networks. Through its membership in the Trinational, *Sección Mexicana* is also a member of the Democratic Initiatives for Education (IDEA) which was formed in 1999. The motivation for creating IDEA grew out of a conference held in Mexico City in 1998. The purpose of the conference was to bring members of Latin American unions together for discussions with educational ministers during the FTAA (Free Trade of the Americas) negotiations (Leahy, 2002). Leahy (2002: 16) states that with the FTAA

...education ministers are creating a plan for the Americas and are formally asking for comment by civil society. IDEA was set up to provide that comment, especially during FTAA negotiations in Quebec City in April, 2001. The participation of the Mexican Section [*Sección Mexicana*] and the Latin American unions organized by IDEA significantly improved the final statement of this forum.

Sección Mexicana participated in the organization of the IDEA conference in Quito, Ecuador, and they participated in the Alternative Forum of Québec, the Education Forum APEC in Vancouver, and the World Social Forum.

Through the Trinational, the *Sección Mexicana* also participates in RED SEPA. The Trinational Coalition created RED SEPA in November, 1998 (Leahy, 2002). RED SEPA has initiated gatherings such as the Continental Conference of Women in Education Network of RED SEPA in November, 2001. Additionally, the Trinational has sent delegates to the People's Summits that were associated with the FTAA negotiations and to the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where members of *Sección Mexicana* participated.

The Colectivo de Grupos de la ABCM/The Collective of Groups of the ABCM

Many of Mexico's cities began to experience major increases in their populations between 1930 and 1980 (Bennett, 1992; Beasley, 2001). Bennett (1992) states that in 1930 two-thirds of the Mexican population lived in rural zones but by 1980 two thirds were living in cities. The Mexican government did not give urban planning much attention until the 1970s. Despite the government efforts to construct new housing for these new populations, they could not meet the demand (Bennett, 1992; Beasley, 2001). For example, the Federal District doubled in population size from 1950-1970 from 3.3 to 7.3 million people. The government's inability to meet demands for housing allowed for the growth of squatter settlements within and outside Mexico's major cities (Ramírez Saiz, 2006). The inability of the government to meet housing demands is associated with the expansion of the size of major cities but also had to do with the high real estate costs in central urban areas. This pushed the poor into peripheral zones of the city. Low-income workers have made up the majority of the population in these settlements and these areas were part of long standing clientalist relationship with the *PRI* (Shefner, 2006). Residents had to petition a *PRI* party official for housing and other social services. This allowed the government to deal quietly with the challenges of providing citizens with adequate housing and to quell protests. However, one major explanation for the government's inability to provide housing assistance was Mexico's financial setbacks and the economic restructuring of the '80s and '90s. The result was a lack of infrastructure to develop adequate low-income housing developments (Ramirez Saiz, 2006) for the growing population in these marginalized areas (Bennett, 1992). The most

recent growth of urban popular movements (UPMs) is seen as a response to the government's challenges in meeting the housing and social service needs of these residents (Bennett, 1992).

Although there have been several waves of urban movement formation throughout Mexico, all of the "new" urban movements arose in Mexico City between 1985 and 1988 (Bennett, 1992). Movements like these have been responsible for some changes to the civil society sector in Mexico by creating alternative methods for "doing politics," forming or supporting electoral coalitions, protesting federal and local government policy, and mobilizing women and the poor (Bennett, 1992; Hellman, 1994; Tavera-Fenollosa, 1999).

UPMs have been a common feature in Mexican cities; one of the major catalysts for the growth in this organizational form was the earthquake of 1985 (Bennett, 1992). One of the first organizations to form was the *Coordinadora Única de Damnificados* (Earthquake Victims' Coordinating Committee [or CUD]), a coalition of over 40 urban popular movements which formed shortly after the earthquake and petitioned the government for aid in reconstruction of homes. The *Asamblea de Barrios de la Ciudad de México* (The Assembly of Neighborhoods of Mexico City [or ABCM]) was created out of an internal split within the CUD over strategy.

There were leaders within the CUD who believed that all Mexican citizens had a right to demand *vivienda digna* (dignified housing), which differed from the "moderates" within the organization who solely wanted to focus on the reconstruction projects that were funded by the government. These moderates wanted to restrict CUD goals to serving people who were not earthquake victims (Beasley, 2001). In 1987, ABCM

formed out of 4,000 families from 28 *colonias*, just prior to the presidential bid of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. The number of families increased to over 15,000 by the summer of 1987 (Beasley, 2001). The ABCM, described as one of the leading urban popular movements that grew out of the '80s and was a strong supporter of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and the *PRD*, sought to include all renters' issues into the organization's focus (Haber, 2006). Most of the members of this movement came from Mexico City down town area and called on the government to provide new housing credit, protection from illegal evictions, basic services, and credits to repair homes in disrepair (Beasley, 2001).

The *Colectivo's* history began with a group of activists within the ABCM called *Grupo Apaches*. Marco Rascon, founder of the CUD, one of the leaders of ABCM and one of ABCM's *Súper Barrios*⁴, worked out the formation of the *Grupo Apaches* and how it was to be included in the ABCM in 1989 (Sanchez Estevez, 2004). Rascon coordinated with Raymundo Hernandez who led a group from Iztlapalapa, Mexico City, and a few other groups to form the *Grupo Apaches*. The name comes from *Calle de Apaches*, the street where the first property the group wanted to purchase was located.

From 1992-1993 the *Grupo Apaches* began to express their concerns within the ABCM over President Salinas de Gortari's privatization policies (Sanchez Estevez, 2004).

It was argued that President Salinas' policies would modify Article 127 of the

⁴ *Súper Barrio Gomez* is the long-time "masked crusader" of the ABCM who dresses in typical wrestler's garb of red and yellow and wears a cape. He appeared within months of the formation of the ABCM. He served as one of ABCM's spokespersons at their marches and activities. *Super Barrio* ran for president in 1988 and provided the movement with a lot of public attention when presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cardenas casted his vote for masked crusader. It is said that *Super Barrio* is modeled on the Mexican film hero "El Santo" or "The Saint." (For more on Super Barrio see – Beasley, 2001; Cadena-Roa, 2002; Sanchez Estevez, 2004; Haber 2006).

Constitution, change the context of the urban movement struggle, and modify the law of expropriation away from the standardized amounts that had previously determined.

Sánchez Estevez (2004), who is a member of *Grupo Apaches*, states that the failure to analyze and define a strategy that was appropriate to confront the privatization of public institutions for subsidizing housing created many problems within the ABCM. This made it impossible for ABCM to challenge the conversion of bank credits from public financiers which are now held by the World Bank (Sánchez Estevez, 2004).

In 1996, this concern generated a split between the *Grupo Apaches* and the ABCM. The *Grupo Apaches* decided to form another organization to defend the “socio-political project which created the “old” AB [ABCM], with the ability to reform it as a popular organization and amplify the struggle for democracy and confront the privatization of the public institutions of federal and local housing” (Estevez Sanchez, 2004: 150). Hence, the *Grupo Apaches* formed the *Colectivo* with other groups that left the ABCM, including Raymundo and another activist, Rosa Vargas. The ABCM has split a few years before 1996, where the movement could not bridge the differences between those that wanted to focus on social organization issues and other who wanted to be more involved in PRD politics. In 1993, the ABCM split into two separate organizations the “old” ABCM and the “new” ABCM. These divisions had to do with tension between the centralized organization and local level organizations and between leaders and mid-level activists (Greene, 1997; Beasely, 2001).

Coalition Structure

Raymundo and Rosa are the primary leaders and represent the *Grupo Apaches* in the *Colectivo*. There are 15 other groups that participate in the organization; however, some of these groups have spotty attendance. These groups represent the various housing projects included in the organizations that are spread out across Mexico City. Their names are taken from the streets on which the housing projects respectively were started or are located. Aside from its work done on housing, the *Colectivo* has formed the *Brigadas Emiliano Zapata* (BEZ), which is a group that is made up by members who are interested in “political work.” The BEZ was formed to allow for the *Colectivo* to provide its members with an outlet for becoming involved in politics.

The *Colectivo* has an online newsletter; however, it is infrequently updated. The newsletter is titled “The BEZ.” This group runs the newsletter and takes charge of the political aspects of the *Colectivo*. All members are said to volunteer for this work if they choose to, however, in my time in Mexico there was major confusion over this aspect of the activities. The newsletter article, flyers, and press bulletins are primarily written by Raymundo Lemus, Rosa Vargas, and Reyna Sánchez Estévez.

The *Colectivo* meets once a week and the meetings are run by either Raymundo or Rosa. These meetings are held at the *Cine Volador*, which is a community/art center off the *La Viga* metro stop on the city’s green line. This site was chosen long ago as the most central location for participating members. The meetings often ended late, as Raymundo did not arrive until 8:30 or 9:00 pm to begin the proceedings. Frequently, *Colectivo* members would be waiting as long as an hour for Raymundo to arrive. This

was due to the fact that Raymundo's full-time job as advisor to a local-level official kept him in the office until about 7:00 p.m.

These weekly meetings are used to keep tabs on the groups' efforts at managing their housing project. There are several tasks that are left to the individual group members to complete on their own, and the leaders serve as consultants in this process. This arrangement follows the concept of *autogestión*⁵ (self-help) which comes from the work done in the ABCM. The reasoning was that the ABCM wanted to have democratic participation in the process of housing construction. This was done in order to combat members previous experiences with PRI housing organizations which were known for being corrupt and neglectful of the membership (Beasley, 2001). Participants in the ABCM were encouraged to learn how to organize and to negotiate with authorities (Beasley, 2001; Haber, 2006). There are several stages to obtaining all of the relevant paperwork, filing forms, acquisition of finances, purchasing of land, and hiring an architect to illustrate a future project, and negotiations with housing agencies (Beasley, 2001; Sanchez Estevez, 2004). Part of this process also involves requesting the expropriation of properties that have been abandoned and whose owners are in tax arrears. However, making a case for expropriation is a complex process (Hellman, 1994).

These meetings also serve to keep the members up-to-date with the current state of Mexican politics and social issues. In the *Colectivo*, there are no committees to divide up tasks such as those found in the original ABCM (Haber, 2006). Members are asked to

⁵ *Autogestión* is a term used by "groups involved in the urban housing movement as well as the non-governmental organizations with who they work and it refers to self-adminstration and self-governance in the housing process." (Beasley, 2001: 79).

attend events, protests, and meetings with the government. No dues were collected until May, 2005, when the organization began to collect 10 pesos (less than one dollar) per group in the *Colectivo* to cover the costs of travel, photocopies, and other group needs. There is some division of tasks when there is a protest or meeting with the government in which the *Colectivo* will participate. However, this usually involves coordinating who will bring the group's protest banner or arrange carpools.

The *Colectivo* has participated in protests against globalization, changes the Mexico's housing and social security laws. They participated in letter writing campaigns in support of various causes and attended several social movement conferences in Mexico. Also, they will routinely engage in negotiation in INVI over housing projects.

Domestic Ties

The *Colectivo* coordinates many of its activities with an organization called the Central *Unitaria de Trabajadores* (Unity of Workers Exchange [or CUT]), which has around 2,000 members. One of its leaders, Alejandro Nava, is a long-time friend of Raymundo and Rosa. The *Colectivo* is also a member of the *Movimiento Urbano Popular* (MUP) and the *Promotora por la Unidad Nacional Contra el Neoliberalismo* (Movement for National Unity in the Fight Against Neoliberalism [or La Promotora]). They have participated in meetings, conferences, and protests mobilized by these organizations such as the “*Dialogo Nacional*” (National Dialogue) that was held in the state of Querétaro (see La Botz, 2005). Through their work with MUP the *Colectivo* participated in the “day of people without homes” which was sponsored by the MUP and

Habitat International. The *Colectivo* also participated in the sit-in in front of the Mexican Senate that accompanied this event.

Conclusion

Each coalition is structured differently, is composed of diverse sources of participants and organizations, all of which have varying experience with social movement organizing, and contact with allies and/or potential benefactors. This chapter has focused on these elements as they do become sources of conflict within the coalitions sampled. Examples include commitment and follow through to assigned tasks, organizational structures seen as not representative of member organizations, or access and control of decision making processes. These elements are outlined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: COALITION DYNAMICS:

OBSTACLES, TENSIONS, AND DILEMMAS

Conflict motivates the formation of social movements. In this sense, conflict is built into social movements. As Minkoff (2001: 186) writes, “Social movements are often conflict-oriented by design, and tend to organize around existing social cleavages or (worse yet) generate new ones.” Resource mobilization scholars have addressed this previously stating that factions or schisms are due in part to a heterogeneous membership base or the ideological direction of an SMO (Staggenborg, 1986; Zald and Ash Garner, 1987). SMOs set out to respond to a variety of questions that are related to these existing breaks in the fabric of society: “Who are we?” “What do we need?” “How do we target [water pollution and its causes; our constituency; public opinion; the state]?” These questions are further complicated when SMOs collaborate with one or more other groups, and a variety of inter-group and intra-group conflicts ensues, accompanied by a host of mechanisms for coping with the problems.

Before we can discuss how internal conflicts are managed within social movement coalitions, we must understand what conflicts are present in the coalitions sampled. This chapter addresses the conflicts, tensions, and hurdles that were discovered as I followed three coalitions, *Sección Mexicana*, *Alianza Cívica*, and the *Colectivo*, in my fieldwork. Scholars have highlighted the emergence of conflicts within SMO coalitions, particularly those having to do with resources, organization, identity, goals,

strategies, and ideology (Staggenborg, 1986; Rose, 2000; Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2001; Croteau and Hicks, 2003; Bandy, 2004; Smith and Bandy, 2005). Another fertile source of information is found among those who have studied conflict in other forms of movements, organizations, and societies (Morrill, 1991a; Polletta, 2002; Kriesberg, 2007). According to one scholar, conflict is conditioned on “who we are, what we have to complain about, who is responsible, and what we can do about it” (Kriesberg, 2007: 54). This section begins with a review of the various conflicts that emerge in coalitions and SMOs, as described in the scholarly literature. Then, in light of these previous examples, the conflicts in the three cases, *Sección Mexicana*, *Alianza Cívica*, then the *Colectivo*, are examined.

Identity Conflicts

The inability to transcend boundaries can be a barrier to coalition formation (Bell and Delaney, 2001). Problems surface when a coalition brings together members from diverse sectors of society and potentially resulting in an unequal partnership (Shefner, 1999). This diversity can lead to dissension within groups (Kriesberg, 2007; Zald and Ash Garner, 1987; Staggenborg, 1986), and this must be taken into account when an organization is considering forming alliances that include other groups which may challenge the SMO’s ability to maintain a collective identity (Jasper, 2004). Identity conflicts surface over what have been labeled as “embedded” characteristics, or “those that are deeply bound to the patterns of everyday life,” which include nationality, region,

gender, ethnicity, race, class, religion, sex, and language (Bandy and Smith, 2005: 238). As Taylor and Whittier (1995) point out, collective action is influenced by the pre-existing values and understandings of participants. When examining the role of participants in SMOs, these are crucial: “[E]ducation, gender, race, ethnicity, and class background, generally viewed as structural, provide groups with distinct sets of beliefs and skills, or cultural resources, that shape the contours of resistance” (Taylor and Whittier, 1995: 168). These identities are difficult to escape and can be the basis for conflict for which finding a solution is challenging (Kriesberg, 2007). Bandy and Smith (2005) point out that embedded identities are those that are difficult to discuss and analyze openly within coalitions. In addition, they can “inform or be displaced onto other differences over power, organization, or strategy, making them difficult to comprehend and resolve” (Bandy and Smith, 2005: 239).

Resource Conflicts

For conflict to emerge one party must have a grievance which often involves something of value (Kriesberg, 2007). Bandy and Smith (2005: 237) state that conflicts over resources are “...one of the most disruptive conflicts within transnational civil society.” In their work they found that even when resource-rich organizations voluntarily attempted to share resources with poorer ones, they “often inadvertently dominated coalitions” (Bandy and Smith, 2005: 237). Thus, conflicts over power and influence can emerge due to the uneven levels of resources of the groups that join a coalition. For

example, resource-rich organizations in a coalition are likely to have their priorities adopted, as they may be able to commit more time and energy in pushing their agendas (Croteau and Hicks, 2003).

In the case of transnational coalitions, poorer organizations have fewer opportunities to interact and learn from their international partners as compared to resource-rich organizations or even individuals who have access to communication technologies and travel funds, which enable them to dedicate more time to the coalition (Bandy and Smith, 2005). In this way, the advantage goes to resource-rich organizations which can “exercise a disproportionate amount of power in defining international coalitions” (Bandy and Smith, 2005: 237). Resource-poor groups gain from the efforts made by their more powerful coalition partners when considering the organizations’ potentials for gaining media attention, access to public officials, and funding (Croteau and Hicks, 2003; Cullen, 2005). However, in time, resource-poor organizations can grow uncomfortable with these real and perceived imbalances, and one result may be that they begin to view their position in the coalition as inequitable in terms of access to decision-making and their share of pooled organizational resources for their group’s needs.

Finances available to SMOs are not the only kind of resource. Other examples include labor, symbolic capital, and the connections an organization or individual has to other individuals, groups, and institutions. That said, in the cases to be discussed from this research, the major tension seemed to be money (or the lack of it) and how it is distributed. In many cases, this problem “spilled over” or led to the creation of other tensions.

Organizational Conflicts

Scholars have addressed several conflicts that were found within SMO coalitions, which include representation, decision-making, divisions of labor, leadership styles, hierarchy, and centralization (Rose, 2000; Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2001; Bandy and Smith, 2005). The most common conflicts found by Bandy and Smith (2005) were those between large, professionalized and small, grassroots organizations. For example, larger organizations favor creating coalitions that are centralized and bureaucratic and may exclude the participation of community-based organizations. On the other hand, smaller organizations prefer participatory and decentralized organizations that are diverse and flexible but may be less efficient in other areas (Bandy and Smith, 2005). Rose (2000) explained how differences in the coalitions of unions and environmentalist/peace groups had to do with the organizational styles and the types of organizations created by middle-class versus working-class movements (Rose, 2000). Others have studied the failures of SMOs to deal with power imbalances between groups (Bell and Delaney, 2001).

Goals and Strategic Conflicts

Bandy and Smith (2005) state that the difficulties encountered in establishing consensus on strategies and goals often have to do with tactics, the specificity of campaigns, and the integration of diverse organizations with their own organizational styles and demands (Bandy and Smith, 2005). Changes in strategy and goals can create

factionalism between pragmatists and true believers within an SMO (Polletta, 2002; Jasper, 2004). Scholars have written about the dilemmas that are involved in choosing a form of organizational structure (Polletta, 2002; Jasper, 2004).

Polletta (2002) notes that activists must choose to make strategic choices based not only on what is instrumentally efficient and ideologically consistent, but they must also base these decisions on what is familiar. Jasper (2004) discusses the dilemmas that have to do with the decisions to expand an alliance to include other groups and how these can impact the coherence of group goals and actions.

Staggenborg (1986) classic work on coalition formation shows how the heterogeneous membership of the pro-choice coalitions engaged in internal debates over style and tactics. These debates stemmed from the constituencies that these groups served and how groups were accustomed to engaging in collective action. Staggenborg (1986) has shown that conflict over coalition agenda is a frequent tension within coalitions. She states that this tension arises as the group establishes its organizational identity and while constituent groups continue to focus on their own visibility (Staggenborg, 1986). If more powerful members within a coalition can have more control over the agenda highlighted by the organization then they can effectively lock out other members' input (Staggenborg, 1986; Shefner, 1999; Crocteau and Hicks, 2003). This kind of power differential between members may lead to conflict as participants' dissatisfaction with decision-making. These kinds of conflicts are critiques about the direction of the organization, who charged with this task, lack of opportunities to provide input into the decision-making process. These elements can have serious consequences on coalition building as Shefner (1999) shows how sponsorship of Mexican community

organization by a resource rich (expertise, funding) organization led to a drop in participation in the coalition and disaffection other leaders. This had to do with tensions over the degree of influence by the sponsor in terms of decision making and organizational structure.

Other problems associated with this decision include who will be allowed to join, or as Jasper (2004) writes, these are the dilemmas of reaching up or reaching down (ex: mobilizing skilled versus unskilled labor) or the problems of reaching out or reaching in, and which tactics and demands are chosen is based on the audience. Here, the audience is variable: it can be the movement organization or those outside the group (Jasper, 2004).

The Conflicts in *Sección Mexicana*

Identity Conflicts

In interviews with members of *Sección Mexicana* the role of academics in the coalition was discussed. These interviews articulate the perspective of coalition members who did not have a problem with the presence of academics. What was at issue with some members of the coalition was that the academics in *Sección Mexicana* did not formally represent their respective unions in the coalition, although all were members of an academic union. This fact was frequently voiced and, essentially, had to do with which groups or persons should be in charge of the coalition's direction.

On August 18, 2005, I went to interview Mariluz at her UNAM office. She had been the coordinator of *Sección Mexicana* for 11 years (1995-2006). Her many tasks as coordinator included organizing weekly meetings and actions, drawing up position papers, communicating with Trinational members, and participating in conferences as one of the coalition's representatives. Eventually, she was asked to step down as coordinator, and she was replaced by Arturo Ramos, who is a professor of rural sociology and researcher at the *Universidad de Chapingo* and a member of STAUACH (*Sindicato de Trabajadores Académico de la Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo*).

I had several questions that I wanted Mariluz to address. One question, in particular, made me feel uneasy, as I wanted to ask her directly about the tensions that existed in the coalition around the role of Academics, like her, but are not representatives of their unions, which puts them at odds with most of the coalition's membership. This was uncomfortable, as I found it somewhat difficult to ask this university professor, long-time activist, and movement professional who treated me as a colleague basically, "Why people don't want you [her] around?"

I eased into the subject by first asking about the orientation process for new members and why certain union representatives are sent to the monthly *Sección Mexicana* meetings.

JM: Some members of *Sección Mexicana* have mentioned that others in the coalition feel a little uncomfortable with the role of Academics. How do you manage this situation? What are you thinking when these sentiments arise?

As part of her lengthy answer to this "sticky" question, Mariluz explained what she saw as the role of academics.

Mariluz: Your question depends on the conditions present [in *Sección Mexicana*]. This is another of the characteristics of *Sección Mexicana* to which I have referred where at one moment we coexist [as a group] where there are *compañeros* who represent their union and others that come, let's say, through their own personal choice.

She went on to respond to the question about the problem with investigators in a semi-defensive and somewhat annoyed tone (one that might come from having had to address this question for many years). Her response, which is not uncommon among academics in coalitions (see Bell and Delaney, 2001), was as follows:

Mariluz: We do not represent more than our own [perspectives in the coalition]...in the sense that we are academics or investigators or professors, but at the same time we are social activists who have given a lot of time and experience to the [teachers] movement.

We could interpret Mariluz' response to be that she views her professional profile as one that provides her the weight to be involved in the coalition. I got the sense that she felt she had earned her position in the group. She went on to state that other members would ask, "How can we pay attention to Mariluz or Hugo..." as coalition leaders more than the people who represented a union? Other coalition members also discussed this conflict in *Sección Mexicana* between academics and union representatives. In an interview on January 1, 2005 I asked Pedro about the conflicts over the presence of Academics. He stated that "most of us are representatives of section and unions. It was said that it can not be the same to invite this person [an Academic] while including someone else that represents 1000, 2000 teachers, but it was understood that they were helpful."

We could also interpret this problem with investigators as a conflict over scale: that some people had difficulty in accepting the notion that an individual participant can be given the same weight as an organizational member (who represents all the members of her/his labor union) in the coalition. The conflict here can be described as one having to do with a power imbalance. These tensions have to do with which participants “have” or “should” be given more weight in the organization (Croteau and Hicks, 2003), and the conflict has to do with representation. Who “legitimately” represents the group? Who is the “real” activist is the question being asked. This problem with representation in an organization has been an issue in other movements (Edleman, 2000; Polletta, 2002), and it can be viewed as a struggle for who authentically leads a movement.

Additionally, we can look at this tension as a case of class divisions within the coalition. Teachers in Mexico are generally considered to be part of the middle class (Cook, 1996), however, university professors are in a different class of their own, socially and economically speaking. All of the academics in *Sección Mexicana* have had several years of advanced study, traveled to other countries, and have varying competencies in the English language. These experiences facilitate their involvement in cross-border, international, or tri-national work and would seem to be obvious reasons why they would be selected to attend international events. Ganz (2004) and others (Brysk, 1996; Jasper, 2004) have written how leaders’ ties to groups outside their primary constituency group aids in building alliances. Ganz (2004: 189) states that leaders with “weak ties with multiple constituencies are more likely to know how to access a diversity of people, ideas, and routines that facilitate broad alliances.”

Apart from this, I observed that the academics were expressive in the monthly *Sección Mexicana* meetings. The meetings follow a loose agenda that is spelled out at the beginning of the meeting. The only other formality is that someone is assigned to moderate the discussion. In many cases, the academics did a lot of the talking during these meetings. Although it is difficult to make a cross-cultural comparison, Rose's (2000) insights into the general tensions between middle-class and working-class organizations in the U.S. are helpful in that he describes the former as devoted to "process," while the latter focuses more on "formality and hierarchy." The *Sección Mexicana* meetings often allowed for lengthy discussion on the topic at hand (which could be identified as "process") with no formal voting procedure on final decisions (certainly a lack of rule-based structure).

We can also look at the academics as "unburdened" by the same responsibilities as representatives from a union in *Sección Mexicana*. The academics do not have to concern themselves with having to report to superiors in some sort of debriefing process about the coalition's work. They also come from a different organizational setting which may encourage less rigidity in thinking and organizational development. The academics can speak in the coalition as individuals and not concern themselves about the repercussions that their remarks may have on another organization. Union members, on the other hand, represent another group, and it may be difficult for them to act decisively on a coalition decision, as they may be required to consult with their union. Or, based on their previous experience, they may think that some sort of consultation is advisable.

This has created a condition where the investigators in the coalition have had to prove their worth to the group. Mariluz described this experience of having to prove her

worth to the coalition. Her comments were telling, given that she helped to found both the Trinational and the *Sección Mexicana*.

Mariluz: The work that we do has been sufficiently valuable to demonstrate that we can generate authority...in this sense authority is won through work or our contribution, which is not only the work of an activist or continued coordination of meetings, but it is also the formulation of ideas such as opening fronts...[and establishing] international contacts. Now that I think of it, we as researchers or professors have our own prestige.

Mariluz's comments point to the challenges that she has experienced of being given equitable treatment as a member of this coalition. From this quote, it is clear that she sees the contributions of academics as providing them with equal status to others in *Sección Mexicana*.

Later in the same interview, when I asked Mariluz about the organizational structure of the coalition, specifically its use of a collegial coordinating commission, she returned to the problem with academics. She stated that *Sección Mexicana* had discarded this form of organizing in the coordinating committee, and that this led to the resurfacing of tensions with academics. In her description of the problem Mariluz noted, "the reemergence of this preoccupation [over investigators], which was not everyone's in reality." Turning away and under her breath she said, "*Es un poco canyon* (It's a screwed-up situation)." Then, looking back at me, she stated, "I think it is because...they [the union members] do not have too much experience in their work with other [forms of] associations, but they have been more focused on their [union] work and understand the characteristics of international work through their own [union]. I think they value this more."

The tension with academics in *Sección Mexicana* also has to do with leadership style and challenges to the “representativeness” of leaders, which is well-documented in the literature (Edleman, 2000; Polletta, 2002; Croteau and Hicks, 2003). Mariluz’s comment illustrates some of the common conflicts within coalitions that include academics and community/grassroots participants (Bell and Delaney, 2001; Croteau and Hicks, 2003). These conflicts have to do with claims of the privileging of research in terms of funding, conducting analysis of issues versus face-to-face organizing, new organizational forms (horizontal versus hierarchical), and the struggle for authenticity (who actually represents the group).

In her statement, Mariluz seems to understand the conflict between the academics and other members of the coalition. One could interpret this as her view that the source of the problem is bilateral. It lies in the decisions that were made by academics or the failure to understand the coalition on the part of some Mexican unions. However, we can also conclude that Mariluz speaks as an activist with experience in crossing many borders, whether by participating in different forms of social movements or through cultural exchanges between organizations in other countries. Therefore, she speaks from a wealth of experience with and as an advocate for the type of work that *Sección Mexicana* sets out to accomplish.

Apart from all the time and effort that Mariluz is said to put into the organization, she also gains several benefits from her work as coordinator of the group, which include travel to conferences in other countries and opportunities to present her research. To some extent, the skills she has obtained are required in order to travel abroad, interact with non-Spanish speakers, and to attempt to mobilize international support. These

abilities are not necessarily possessed by other members of the organization (see Bob, 2002; Nepstad and Bob, 2006). Mariluz also benefits from an organization that is designed, in part, to educate the public through research such as hers. Clearly, these are benefits she would want to defend.

However, there are other challenges to the organization such as the inclusion of members who are accustomed to a different mode of work, and this can be seen as a “barrier” between the academics and the other union-based members. As mentioned, most union members tend to be accustomed to “frontline activities” with their membership which is not the form of the work in which *Sección Mexicana* typically participates (Bell and Delaney, 2001). It may also explain why they participated less in monthly meetings.

My conversations with two union activists about *Sección Mexicana* illustrate this state of disconnect. One activist, who is a representative in the coalition, stated that the group needs to consult more with *las bases* (the members of the representative unions) in order to find out the needs of teachers. On another occasion, a teacher who is not a representative in the coalition, asked me what the coalition actually does. She said that she knew of *Sección Mexicana*, but, she admitted, “I don’t really know what they do.” She stated that it was possible that the coalition engaged in a lot of work, but, according to this activist, “*No se ve* (It’s not seen).”

The problems described in this section are compounded by the lack of understanding that unions in Mexico may have about participating in an organization like *Sección Mexicana*. In an interview, Pedro Hernandez, of Section 9 of the CNTE, a long-time representative to the coalition, and a *maestro* (teacher) since 1984, spoke of some of

the difficulties involved in communicating the importance of working in *Sección Mexicana* to the teachers in his union.

Pedro spoke of the lack of exposure that many unions and Mexicans, in general, have about how people in the U.S. live. He stated that clarifying these issues “took a lot of work because it was understood that the teachers in the U.S. worked in different conditions, that they made a good living, that they had no problems, that they were of the first world, and that the schools were in good condition.”

Although it is difficult to generalize from these accounts, they give some insight into the challenges that this coalition has when explaining itself to the Mexican educational sector, whether it be focusing on public awareness, doing research, or what others have explained as the painstaking process of trying to explain the experiences of the “other” when building coalitions (Rose, 2000; Bysteydzienski and Schacht, 2001; Brooks and Fox, 2002).

Resource Conflicts

Part of the explanation for why the problems discussed here are so caustic has to do with the resources available in the organization. All of the work done by *Sección Mexicana* is unpaid. Neither union representatives nor Academics are compensated for working in the coalition. This fact explains, in part, the problems over resources and organization deficiencies that exist in the coalition. One explanation was provided by Mariluz who outlined in a memo many of the problems that exist in the coalition (de la

Luz Arriaga, 2001). This memo was written in preparation for the 2001 *Reunión Nacional de Sección Mexicana* (Mexican Section National Meeting). She stated that, in her view, one aspect of the organizational “inefficiencies” had to do with the lack of staff necessary to coordinate the work of *Sección Mexicana*. The coalition had a person on staff from 1999-2001; but, eventually, the organization did not have the funds to pay this individual who was in charge of preparations for meetings, conferences, and communication between coalition participants. Once this staff person left, efforts were made to defray *Sección Mexicana*’s workload by exploring the formation of commissions to deal with the work; however, the result of forming these commissions was that they only functioned for events or specific tasks.

The response to my question about why members of the coalition had not appeared at a particular coalition-sponsored event sparked a line of discussion where Mariluz stated that, in her view, since the union participants know the coalition is a flexible structure, occasionally this affects the possibility that they do not totally complete their commitments to the group. For instance, when a social security conference was held it was agreed that there would be some participation from the group. I observed that only three coalition constituent organizational members and one Academic were present.

I observed another example of these kinds conflict in my observations of the *Sección Mexicana*’s National Conference on February 25, 2006. Pedro of Section Nine gave me a ride back to nearest metro in Nezahuacoyotl. He had asked me what I thought of the meeting. And in our conversation he pointed out that there is not much unity between their union (Section Nine) and the university unions. Pedro provided their lack

of participation from university unions in the meetings leading to the upcoming Trinational conference in Oaxaca. In his view the “unions need to participate and obligate their members” to take part in the meetings. Other evidence of the lack of participation from his perspective was the fact that the university union members that did attend the conference did not participate as well.

The coalition is heavily involved in educating the public domestically and internationally about changes to the Mexican educational system. Some of this work involves attending conferences to present and discuss the nature of these changes. Funding to attend conferences was provided on a case-by-case basis. Apart from whatever money the individual member can scrape together, some funding does come from individual Mexican unions to help support travel and lodging for a *Sección Mexicana* representative. However, the major benefactors of the coalition’s activities are unions and organizations outside of Mexico.

Through the Canadian unions that participate in the Trinational, RED SEPA, and other international events such as the 2004 COCAL (Chicago Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor) conference in Chicago, *Sección Mexicana* has received travel funds. Tension has emerged in *Sección Mexicana* over who has access to travel funds. In one case, COCAL sponsored a conference and had planned to invite and pay for the travel of researchers in Mexico who study *trabajo precario* (casual labor). This led to a dispute over who would be allowed to attend. The dispute was discussed at the December, 2004, meeting, to which I was denied access due to the sensitivity of the topic. *Sección Mexicana* was, I assume, sensitive to the fact that I would have observed what transpired in the meeting (or that perhaps my presence would limit the discussion). I was not the

only person denied access to this meeting; one of the Academics, Teresa Lechuga, a professor at *FES Acatlan*, which is a satellite university of UNAM, was asked by *Sección Mexicana*'s coordinator not to attend. The explanation we were given was that there were old conflicts to discuss during that meeting.

In specific, COCAL had offered to pay for travel expenses to enable some members of *Sección Mexicana* to attend the conference; however, they requested researchers who had studied this topic and attended previous conferences on contingent labor. Additionally, COCAL requested that at least one of the representatives be someone who was experiencing the life of a contingent worker (ex: an adjunct professor). It was agreed that Teresa Lechuga could attend the conference, but problems surfaced when in a meeting of *Sección Mexicana*, Mariluz pushed for Arturo Ramos to attend. As a professor at *Chapingo*, Arturo is a member of STAUAUCH, which agreed to pay for his travel. For reasons that remain unclear, many of the participants objected to Arturo's participation, despite the fact that he had obtained funding from his constituent union. In the end, COCAL provided more money for travel, but it eventually went to researchers who had research to present on contingent labor but were not members of the coalition, which created another series of problems.

Another example comes from the planning for the Seventh Trinational Conference in Defense of Public Education Meeting, entitled, "Working across Borders to Defend Public Education." *Sección Mexicana* held their national conference at the University of Chapingo in the spring of 2006. This conference was held in order to begin to prepare their Section's platform for the Trinational meeting in Oaxaca City. At the end of the meeting a presentation was given about the logistics, costs, and organization of the

Trinational. Mariluz was part of the presentation on the costs of the conference along with two members of Section 22 (Oaxaca). Mariluz began this portion of the conference by discussing how *Sección Mexicana* would finalize the platform and the date that had been set for the meeting of the committee to accomplish this task. The Trinational is a three-day conference which begins, on the first day, with visits to schools to expose participants to working conditions in the local area (in this case, the local Oaxaca city schools). The conference itself would cover topics such as the privatization and commercialization of education (including trade agreements), the education of indigenous students, protecting social security and pensions, democratic alternatives in education, and the rights of education workers and democratic unions. There was a question-and-answer period at the end of the presentation.

One participant raised a concern, which was that he did not understand the need for all 150 delegates allotted to Section 22 to participate in the conference (Section 22 was the host for the Trinational conference). Also, he raised concerns as to why so much money was needed for food, technical, and planned cultural events. At one point, he commented that the cost for the three-day conference was the same amount of money his union could use to support a hypothetical week-long *planton* (sit-in) of 100 people. Here, this problem about the amount of resources in terms of money and labor do not fit this particular union member's view of the useful distribution of funds for activists work.

What also explain these conflicts is that the unions in *Sección Mexicana* have an agenda that does not always include the work of the coalition. In my interviews with a few members of Section Nine of the CNTE many would point me back to Pedro Hernandez to get a full account of *Sección Mexicana*. Pedro stated in interviews that in

most cases *Sección Mexicana* activities are not discussed during Section Nine meetings and that he may brief the Executive committee in Section Nine about the coalition. Additionally, the member organizations have their own internal issues that they have to deal with on a daily basis. For example, members of Section Nine have discussed the lack of participation of their base in their union work. According to Francisco of Section Nine this apathy among the membership may impact their ability to participate in *Sección Mexicana*. I interviewed him because he was one of the five jailed teachers which the Coalition Trinational launched a letter campaign for their release. Francisco stated that “we do support [*Sección Mexicana*] ... but not they way we would want to. But if we had a strong union section, very powerful, our contribution to the coalition would be better.”

In an interview on January 20, 2005, Felicidad Torrecillas elementary school teacher and member of Section Nine provided her perspective into why this lack of participation exists between her union and *Sección Mexicana*.

Felicidad: Many of my colleagues will tell you that maybe the Coalition does not have the necessary background. Why? Because we focus more attention on elementary school system, on the conflicts in the elementary and junior high systems, and the Coalition deal with international cultural-educational exchange, so there is a times a sort or apathy, which is to say, “this is not my problem,” “I will not get involved.

The lack of knowledge about *Sección Mexicana* work was a common theme in my interviews with activists. Many of the reasons for this had to do with the busy work schedule that including teaching demands and “normal” union business. As mentioned above participants provided their observation on membership apathy within individual

union would explain this lack of knowledge. In a most extreme example I learned from a interview with Maria de la Luz who is the Secretary General of APSASUTN (*Asociación de Servidores Públicos Académicos Sindicalizados de la Universidad Tecnológica de Nezahualcóyotl/Academic Public Services Association, Netzahualcoyotl Technological University*) and one of three members of her individual union that were allowed to engage in extra union business. She stated that all academics and administrative workers activities are closely monitored on campus. In Maria de la Luz's own words she stated

Here at the university it is very closed. So the professors don't have the opportunity to leave constantly, our time on campus is clocked, so I am the one that decided to join [*Sección Mexicana*] but here there isn't any interest in responding to the obligations from being a part of the coalition...My participation has been almost, almost at the personal level, because even if I invited my colleagues they can not leave [the campus during work hours].

In the interview with Felicidad of Section Nine she stated that “in the schools those which make up our base received very little information [*Sección Mexicana*], so I had not participated [in the coalition] until I began my work with *Sección Mexicana*. On one occasion I observed her visits to Mexico City schools I noticed that she included one flyer about the coalition among the bundle of documents handed over to teachers during her briefing. Additionally, even when groups are integrated into *Sección Mexicana* information about the coalition's history may be withheld as I discovered in my interview Maria de la Luz of APSASUTN. I had asked what she made of the ongoing conflict with the presence of Academics in the coalition. Maria de la Luz stated that she did not know what I was referring to.

Another example comes from time spent with STAUACH. I was asked to help administer what resulted in a very non scientific survey of delegates at the unions retreat in Morelos. One of the questions asked of the 60 delegates was whether they knew the work of the Trinational Coalition or *Sección Mexicana* and only three of the delegates were aware of the coalition's activity. Additionally, Arturo of STAUACH described in an interview that he himself did not become aware of *Sección Mexicana* until he became secretary general of his union (August 3, 2005).

A final view of the lack of participation in *Sección Mexicana* comes from an April 4, 2006 interview with Georgina Tecla of Politecnico.

Georgina: The coalition needs to disseminate information about the organization. We do not have a method for transmitting information to the teachers in the schools about this organization's activities. We have had many important events, but there are compañeros, that do not, well there are many of these national events, that everyone in the country should be interested in, but they [the union membership] do not go. Because they [the coalition] does not transmit information to the teachers in the schools, there is a lack of resources, a lack of clarity from the leadership that would enable these events [Trinational Conference]. There is a problem in the coalition where what has occurred is that the information has been centralized among a few individuals and they have not amplified the organization in a way to allow for other opinions.

Organizational Conflicts

In my interviews with Mariluz and from her writings I learned a great deal about the tensions in the organization. During one particular interview (a few days after the December, 2004, meeting to which I was denied access) at UNAM I asked about the coalition's work. In her view, she said, each union has its own "tendencies, groups, currents, and existing union policies." From Mariluz's perspective the variation in how unions participate in *Sección Mexicana* seemed to have to do with a specific union's leadership. She stated that if the leadership represents a particular political current within that organization, but it is replaced by one in opposition to the former leadership's position, then the potential risk is that the new leadership "will not understand the importance of the *Sección Mexicana*, of its development and working internationally... Then, instead of supporting the work, they say, 'We do not want to know anything about the work of the Coalition.'"

Mariluz' assumptions about the reasons why new leaders may be less willing to participate in the coalition are probably valid, given her years of experience working in and with these unions since the age of 18. However, they also speak to the preference by activists to work with organizations and people with whom they have collaborated in the past (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986; Hathaway and, Meyer 1997; Van Dyke, 2003; Wood, 2005). Many activists would prefer to reduce the amount of work that is needed to maintain relationships with coalition partners. Having to put more time into "re-convincing" an established coalition partner to maintain its tie to the coalition is less

desirable and even more challenging when the new leadership of a particular union may not be interested in said coalition.

What also seems to have occurred is that when there is a change in leadership, and potentially a change in whether a union participates in *Sección Mexicana*, the knowledge, experience, and skills (Ganz, 2004) that were gained over time by union representatives in the organization can be lost. What is then required is a renewed expenditure of energy and time to reintroduce the unions to the work of *Sección Mexicana*. However, as was described to me, this can be a challenge due to the presence of union leaders who are less inclined to participate and make it difficult to get information. So, what may occur is that the organization must wait until a more “open” leadership takes over or an opportunity arises where *Sección Mexicana*’s international ties would be of use to a lapsed coalition member, and this may encourage them to reestablish their participation in the organization. It also may be that the new leadership within a particular union may view international work as a low-priority activity, or they may wish to control such activities directly through their particular union.

In an interview on May 25, 2005 Pedro Hernandez, member of the Educational Commission within Section Nine of the CNTE spoke about the difficulty within *Sección Mexicana* maintaining contacts between all coalition partners.

Pedro: we’ve had to create, a kind of commission, here, between companeros, between activists in order to maintain this work, so that it does not falter. And with the other unions at times it take a lot of effort the unions have a secretary of external relations, but they understand [educational issues] as a local or national issue and they don’t see creating international relationships as important.

Pedro went further to explain that it is not only a matter of having a union representative interested in the work but also has to do with how relationships to the coalition are defined.

Pedro: We have had participation from one of the larger unions [STUNAM] in coalition by the secretary of external relations. Even this representative did not participate frequently in the coalition, it is not important to them. They are members of the coalition but they are not always at the [monthly] meetings. Every section and union defines within their organizational body that represents them in the coalition.

In an interview with Mariluz she described the significant amount of work that was done by union activists; as she stated it, union activists are "...always at war [with their official union, the state authorities, or perhaps their own internal conflicts]," which makes the process of incorporating new members challenging. Therefore, the difficulty in convincing these new leadership committees of the necessity of participating in *Sección Mexicana* is compounded by the fact that union activists are already inundated with union work.

Indeed, even when there is no disagreement with the continued presence of a union representative in *Sección Mexicana* the problem of continuity in the coalition can still surface, as the experience of a former representative is not transferred to the new union delegate. One result of this is a substantial expenditure of time that must be spent in order to bring new representatives up-to-speed on the coalition's work. This problem provides some insight into the degree of priority that the various unions place on *Sección Mexicana's* agenda. This lack of continuity exists despite the fact that many of the unions in the coalition were either founding members or they have belonged to the

organization for a number of years. However, this also reiterates the finding on coalition work by Rose (2000) where collaborative work was often limited to a few individual leaders. Although this made coalition work easier in its own context, it also came with such problems as a lack of exposure of constituent groups to collaborative work in a particular coalition, the coalition's goals, and any potential challenges to a member's position in the group (Rose, 2000). Given the frequent changes of leadership in many of the participating unions in *Sección Mexicana*, the new representatives often are not aware of the coalition's work or its history until they join the group.

In Mariluz's view the commitment to the coalition by some of the union participants in *Sección Mexicana* has been uneven. In her memo, Mariluz (2001) wrote that there were coalition participants that "enthusiastically" supported the organization with labor and material resources and others that did not. The reasons for this had to do with internal divisions of labor within the unions where individual members' "commitment to *Sección Mexicana*" (in Mariluz's words) was formalized within their respective organizational structure. Other representative unions opted to participate in the organization based on decisions that were made within their executive committees.

To address these problems Mariluz proposed some long-term goals that the organization must address and a plan to execute them. In her memo, she set forth what *Sección Mexicana* should do to deal with the problems as she saw them. She wrote:

We must renovate the commitment of the union organizations to the project. This includes clear definitions for the effective functioning of the organization... We must establish a form of coordination and operation that preserves the virtues that have held together our form of work and overcome our problems. We must eliminate the false argument that the reason there is not more commitment from unions is due to the division of labor between union representatives and union

academics in the coordination of the coalition (de la Luz Arriaga, 2001).

In the first two points Mariluz observed that there were problems with communication, organization, and representation. She went on to suggest a plan to deal with these problems which included an annual congress of *Sección Mexicana* to review and elaborate current projects, implement monthly meetings, and create a coordinating commission and a network of researchers to disseminate the group's work (de la Luz Arriaga, 2001). One result was that the collegial coordinating commission would be formed.

Part of the conflicts within *Sección Mexicana* seem to come from changes in routine or activities that are familiar to activists (Polleta, 2002). These routines stem from coalition members' experiences with union work or participation in other coalitions or alliances where unions only take part in the decision-making process, rather than in the group's substantive interactions. An understanding of how coalitions and alliances work are initiated between unions and the assumptions that are based on prior experiences begin to address why there have been internal critiques of how *Sección Mexicana* functions. Here, Wood's (2005) study on the Peoples' Global Action is helpful, as she argues that prior experience of coalition work impacts an organization's participation and interaction within a new coalition if this previous experience benefited their organization. She states that, if this is the case, then, "[p]articipants will be comfortable with particular levels of formality, style of decision-making, levels of equality and centralization, and types of inter-organizational interaction" (Wood: 2005: 97).

All of the groups that participate in *Sección Mexicana* have several tasks to complete, whether it is their primary union or alliance work, which leaves little time for a

coalition that has an organizational structure that is largely outside of the representatives' experience. It is apparent that *Sección Mexicana* has an organizational culture that makes it difficult to include union representatives who may be more comfortable in their "traditional" union setting, and who find that their project goals are not a priority. What can occur in this instance is a play of conflicts that surface between veterans and novices where the organization favors a loosely formed structure while constantly integrating new members with contrary experiences. Thus, a situation is created where there is an insider-outsider dynamic within *Sección Mexicana* and other coalitions that can be functional or beneficial under certain conditions (Reger, 2002; Ganz, 2004), but in others this can lead to tension and withdrawal of participants (Polletta, 2002).

To some extent, the tensions described in this section seem to be about the lack of contributions made by certain members and, possibly, a lack of understanding of the work that participants are asked to be involved in. These are all legitimate conflicts in any organization. However, we can also look at the conflicts as attempts to voice grievances about process (ex: how decisions are made, and who is making them). Scholars have discussed at length the motivations and source(s) of philosophies that allow for dialogue and consensus in social movements (Rose, 2000; Polletta, 2002), and criticism (of goals, actions, or people) seems to be a key element in most of them. Although disputative, criticism often has a function in group dynamics. In this case, what might occur is that people cannot find ways to contribute other than through criticism, which in itself can be viewed as a contribution by those who have difficulty participating in the coalition. However, this does not exclude other motivations behind this kind of

criticism. It can also be seen to be a struggle to increase one's position in an organization.

Strategy and Goal Conflicts

In an interview, Mariluz pointed out that these problems have to do with what she views as some of the unions' perspectives of the organization's goals as solely having to "do with education and not with politics." In her view, the unions see education and politics as separate issues. She went on to describe that this problem can be seen in the people who are sent from representative unions to participate in the *Sección Mexicana*. For example, some of the unions send representatives who serve on their educational committees to the coalition's regular meetings. However, when there is a national or a Trinational event, some of the unions that infrequently or never attend monthly meetings and events send their secretary general or secretary for external relations, rather than someone at a lower rank who is more familiar with coalition issues. Also, she stated that another "element that I see that should be maintained is that the Coalition [*Sección Mexicana*] is a setting that is more flexible, which is to say that there are networks or union fronts at the national level where it is obligatory that the Secretary of Education [should attend]." However, Mariluz added, at the meetings of these other fronts only representatives are officially allowed to attend.

Part of what explains this conflict is that this coalition is made up of organizations which are hierarchical in nature. The coalition is made up of unions that use some form

of participatory democracy as part of their organizational structure. These “democratized” teachers and academic unions change their leadership structure every two to three years. Groups with this level of hierarchy are likely to take special care of how they contribute to coalition in terms of proposals and resources (Staggenborg, 1986). Also, the level of prestige and power allow for the ability to be selective with contributions to coalition work.

The Conflicts in *Alianza Cívica*

Alianza Cívica mentioned potential influences and weaknesses that were relevant to the organization in a May, 2005, report titled, “Strategic Analysis Exercise, 2005-2006.” Here, I focus on the weaknesses that were identified by *Alianza Cívica*, as they point to several problems that are grouped in four areas: coalition work, structure, public opinion, and the political environment (*Alianza Cívica*, 2005).

Identity Conflicts

As described in Chapter Two, there is a diverse array of organizations that have and continue to participate in *Alianza Cívica*. The coalition has had difficulty dealing with this diversity (Olvera, 2000, 2001). During the coalition’s earlier years, the wide

spread of organizational identities and allegiances made the creation of a national board illogical due to a lack of clarity about which groups would remain committed to coalition work. This goal was further complicated by the unevenness found in the experiences and “know-how” among participants. The group lacked resources, labor, and even a minimal commitment among the participants to take leadership positions which have been consistent problems throughout *Alianza Cívica*’s existence (Olvera, 2000, 2001).

In 1996, Olvera pointed out how some state members were dissatisfied with what they labeled, “excessive centralism in the political leadership of *Alianza Cívica* over the consultation projects.” The consultation process was developed and publicized by the *Coordinador Nacional*. These projects called for participation from state-level *Alianza Cívicas*, but with little advance notice of their involvement. Additionally, the initiatives developed by coalition partners were not given support by *Alianza Cívica* headquarters, nor did these projects receive national media diffusion.

In a 1997, *Alianza Cívica* held a *Coordinador Nacional Taller* (National Coordinator Workshop) where there was discussion about the problems with resources (financial and material), the lack of capability to draw in such resources, the group’s uneven presence in some Mexican states, internal conflicts that were found in participating organizations, a lack of confidence in the National Coordinating structure, questions about the quality of coalition projects, and an incoherent coalition agenda (Olvera, 2000).

After the workshop, *Alianza Cívica* made efforts to look and be more professional, hoping that this would lead to the development of more efficient and visible projects. However, these efforts did not respond to the dynamics within the coalition,

where coalition partners followed social movement logic and focused on local group goals. This included a lack of participation of state-level *Alianza Cívicas* in the training courses that were offered by the main office and problems with taking part in research projects, given their different goals (Olvera, 2000).

Finally, the 2005 report identified some additional difficulties. It said that there was a lack of political drive in *Alianza Cívica* toward group goals and that the organization was directed in an imprecise manner. In addition, the group did not offer options to the Mexican citizenry for popular participation, which was further complicated by deficits in the creativity and imagination that are needed in order to be innovative (*Alianza Cívica*, 2005).

Resource Conflicts

In the report, *Alianza Cívica* declared that there is a chronic shortage of resources available to the organization. This has been a frequent preoccupation in this group (*Alianza Cívica*, 2001), as it is for many NGOs. During my field work I discovered that *Alianza Cívica*, which had relied on federal money since the last national election in 2000, at times faced grace periods where they—along with many civil organizations—had to wait a period of two months to hear whether they would receive funding for the coming year from institutions such as INDESOL.

Bety Camacho, electoral project coordinator for *Alianza Cívica* since 1999, made a point of stating on a couple of occasions that part of the reason they lacked money is

that the international organizations halted funding for their projects after the 2000 elections. Her rationale was that international organizations believed that after the election of 2000, “Mexico has democracy.” This left the Mexican organizations with little option but to look for other sources of funding.

Problems also occurred with how the coalition distributed its financial resources. Alberto Olvera (2000, 2001), former member of the *Coordinador Nacional*, has written about the tensions found within *Alianza Cívica*. He wrote that the outcome of the decision by the national body to avoid allotting funds to state-level *Alianza Cívicas* reinforced the centralization of the organization. The main body of the coalition only transfers money to its partners for the sole purpose of funding upcoming electoral monitoring projects, and “there was no money for offices or personnel, not even for operational costs such as telephone calls and mailings” (Olvera, 2001: 25). Other problems have to do with how groups are reimbursed for their expenses. From my observations at the *Asamblea Nacional* meeting of 2006, I learned that those coalition partners that wanted their costs reimbursed for participating in the electoral monitoring project for July 2, 2006, had to abide by the procedures laid out by INDESOL and United Nations Development Program. The problem had to do with getting documentation on costs signed off by local or state level authorities. These costs consisted of food, gasoline, and other expenditures of coalition partners on Election Day. One problem had to do with access to officials on a Sunday (the day of the Election). The other involved this distance between where a project was implemented and the nearest local or municipal office.

Organizational Conflicts

In the *Alianza Cívica* report, several problems with the organization were discussed. One has to do with the perception that the coalition has a weak structure and that the groups that helped to form it are disarticulated. The report also pointed to a lack of internal communication within *Alianza Cívica* and the need for renewal of the leadership. The weaknesses in the organization's structure that were mentioned in the 2005 report were associated with the group's decrease of presence in regional areas and a lack of continuity in doing coalition work. To solve these problems, recommendations were made that a revitalization of the *Alianza Cívica's* work should involve the incorporation of new members that fit with the organization's profile, and that the coalition should establish links to local groups in all parts of the country (*Alianza Cívica*, 2005).

Also, the report stressed that *Alianza Cívica's* presence in the media is declining which may have to do with the fact that the more high-profile advocates of their work have been absent. This issue dates back to the 2001 coordinating committee meeting where Silvia Alonso, the coalition's executive secretary, stated that the organization has an "identity deficit." At the same meeting it was noted that Sergio Aguayo Quezada, one of the founders of *Alianza Cívica*, was beginning to distance himself from the organization (*Alianza Cívica*, 2001). Other factors were also identified that had had an impact on the coalition. For instance, timing was one element, because the organization was seen to be currently working in a different political context from the one that was in

place in 2000. Furthermore, they saw a crisis in the fact that civil society was less organized and *Alianza Cívica* was perceived to be just another organization to compete with over funding (*Alianza Cívica*, 2005).

Olvera (2000: 12) stated that, in 1994, a “structural problem emerged, given that there was a contradiction between the national dimension of the movement and the centralized direction composed only of Mexico City civic leaders.” He viewed this as a contradiction between

the political and social plurality of the movement and the political homogeneity of the governing board. The latter, as we have seen, was made up of NGOs’ representatives whose trajectory and composition were relatively compatible. They were personalities with great experience in the field of NGOs, and most of them came from progressive groups of the Catholic Church. Contrarily, the groups that made up the *Alianza Cívica* [coalition partners] exhibited a variety of social and political profiles (Olvera, 2000).

Additionally, the lack of resources that were available to coalition partners limited the possibility of creating permanent and institutionalized state-level *Alianza Cívicas*. As mentioned previously, the relationship between the *Alianza Cívica* headquarters and its regional partners was weak, given the distance between them in terms of institutional training and financial resources contacts. Contributing to this flimsy structure was the fact that the executive secretary reinforced the pattern through personal contacts and continued relationships with national networks of NGOs and institutional sponsors (Olvera, 2001).

Strategy and Goal Conflicts

According to Olvera (2000), in 1998, *Alianza Cívica*'s profile reached a new low. At the *Coordinador Nacional Reunión* of 1998 a majority of the participants argued that the organization needed more direction. Olvera states that the contradiction inherent in *Alianza Cívica* between movement and organization had reached its most adverse point and involved the following:

- a) the tension between professional requirements and the impossibility of implementing measures conducive to this;
- b) a criticism of centralism which actually meant opposition to programs designed by executive staff, and with which the local groups did not feel identified (Olvera, 2000).

Alianza Cívica's main organizational body was not in agreement with this analysis and decided instead to aim at reinvigorating civil society in Mexico (Olvera, 2000). Olvera identifies *Alianza Cívica*'s main problem as its "civil vanguardism." This is described as having to do with the organization's

top-down style of political direction that represents the reproduction of party-like traditions, which is not only a problem in *Alianza Cívica*, but is typical of many NGOs. This practice has led to a sort of "self-referentiality" in the political praxis of this sector of the civil society. In other words, activation of the civil society is seen as the activation of the groups of NGOs from which the historical leaders of this movement have emerged, and not as the setting up of an authentic and plural civic front which would actually place itself some distance away from political ties and define a real civic arena (Olvera, 2000).

Here, Olvera (2000) takes issue with the homogenization of the group's leadership structure and the fact that it does not live up to the primary mandate of the

organization's partisanship and goals for citizen empowerment. According to Olvera (2000), these problems persist in the organization and stem from its multiple transitions in organizational structure over the past decade from social movement to a civic organization and its final shift to an NGO. In sum, *Alianza Cívica's* main leadership body has control over the direction and goals of the coalition which generates conflicts between it and the coalition membership.

The Conflicts in the *Colectivo*

Identity Conflicts

During the *Colectivo's* weekly meetings, Raymundo discussed those moments that united them as well as the varying stages of organizational maturity. He described how the *Colectivo* was "born" in 1996 and equated the organization to one made up of children "born in different months," which is why "some of us are younger," pointing out to the membership that some members are more experienced than others. However, Raymundo also stated that they had all been "born during a hunger strike." As described in Chapter Two, the *Colectivo* was formed when activists disagreed with the ABCM's strategy of how to subsidize construction. (Raymundo's explanation of why the group separated from the ABCM was detailed in a previous interview excerpt).

In my time in Mexico, I witnessed a divergence in philosophy within the *Colectivo*, which had to do with how work was conducted within the individual groups.

In the same group interview that was introduced at the beginning of this section, coalition leaders expressed that within the context of all these problems, there were what could be categorized as baseline problems, where they see the need to establish a common ethic for all the constituent groups.

Raymundo: There are some *compañeros* that we are kicking out [of the *Colectivo*]. [W]e are suddenly made aware that they are asking for contributions... So here we have a problem. Also, we have a responsibility because we have dealt with a lot of serious problems inside these groups.

Raymundo described these instances of overcharging in the *Correo Mayor 10* group as a consultation problem. The problems with communication, lack of respect, or disinterest in the rules for negotiating with authorities could be associated with this problem of overcharging for project development costs by representatives of a particular group. However unethical the leaders of the *Colectivo* view these incidents of overcharging to be, this action reflects possible frustrations among group members who have been waiting a long time to construct or reconstruct their future homes. Although these members' actions contradict the organizational philosophy of the coalition, it is similar to other instances that have occurred among other groups when there was partial alignment between activists and organizational goals (Robnett, 2005). Also, like the leaders of the *Colectivo*, these members accused of overcharging may have incurred costs and felt that they should have been compensated for their work. In our August 1, 2005, interview Raymundo provided me with his reasoning for why this was a serious problem.

Raymundo: The case of *Correo Mayor 10*...that will never be completed...This method of staying with an organization and offering your half- hearted activism...while trying to win [housing] negotiations that are irregular, total

irregular... That does not follow all the normal mechanisms and formal paperwork.

Following the “normal mechanism” for negotiating with institutions such as *INVI* comes with its own challenges, as mentioned in the last chapter. Apart from drawing up documents and paying fees, activists have described the laborious process of waiting for paperwork to be processed. Additionally, they have described a serious lack of efficiency on the part of government agencies (Sanchez Estevez, 2004).

In interviews of other members there were mixed sentiments toward this conflict with the overcharging of members. In an interview with Reuben, one of the long-time members of the *Colectivo*, stated the following:

Rueben: There is not other way to described them other than thieves, why because they manipulated the membership and are manipulating them in Raymundo Hernandez’s name and in the name of the *Asamblea de Barrios*.

Miche: I feel sorry for my colleagues, because I do not know how true it is that they asked for more money [from their group], and [if it is true] this is upsetting to the membership because that money did not benefit the leaders on the organization, but benefited them.

Resource Conflicts

Since its inception, the leaders of the *Colectivo* have avoided collecting dues. However, from time to time the leaders have asked the membership to contribute money for photocopying of flyers or travel funding. This decision to forgo dues was later

viewed as an error by the group's primary leaders, Raymundo Hernandez and Rosa Vargas.

On November 1, 2004, I had an interview with Raymundo, Rosa (who is Raymundo's ex-wife and has participated in housing movements since their days in the ABCM), and Reyna Sanchez Estevez (a housing activist and researcher). I interviewed them for a few hours before we had to go to the *Colectivo's* weekly meeting, which was held at the community center, *Cine Volador*. After about two hours Reyna left the discussion to go home. Toward the end of the interview Raymundo stated that it was a mistake to avoid collecting dues for the simple reason that "there are costs in representing ... all these years [of working for the *Colectivo*]. They have been free... We have given of our [own] resources." Here, I am reminded of Jasper's (2004: 7) discussion about the decisions in SMOs where activists must decide "...whether to organize your team around monetary incentives or affective ones." This situation in the *Colectivo* is one in which it was probably difficult to mobilize around monetary incentives, as the constituency might not have had the capacity to provide them. Another reason might have had to do with how the *Colectivo* was organized, as a group that did not collect dues, but instead it used volunteer labor and had a philosophy of self-help as its basis.

Raymundo and Rosa described how the lack of funds has influenced the *Colectivo*. Rosa spoke of the importance of having people participate in the group's operation, and that they needed to contribute their resources or the organization would not survive.

Raymundo: I have always worked independently...without a salary. We did not know what would happen with this thing about maintaining funds. I never asked for dues, but it

got us by the [putting his hands around his neck]...It was an error. It was an error because the members grew accustomed to this, and it was a grave error because you can't maintain an organization [this way].

Rosa: We do this out of conviction, moral obligation, because we believe that people have rights, not only to live but everything in general, to work, to be healthy. Also that is why this [organizational style] lends itself to people that take advantage of the situation and they charge their *compañeros*, but furthermore they do not do it in an open manner and so that generates a lot of *chismorreo* (gossip).

However truthful these statements are in terms of their motives for organizing the group, it is also possible that they could have used less lofty reasoning (for example they may have chosen not to collect dues as a way of convincing people to join). In this interview, Rosa and Raymundo did seem candid about what they viewed to have been errors in organizing the group and the problems that resulted in the *Colectivo* from eliminating dues. Their comments also point to their perception of free-riding and opportunism in the organization. From their perspective, several workload issues were related to the lack of dues. For example, the negotiation process for housing required an elaborate complexity of documents that needed photocopying; these costs were paid from their own pocket. In response to my question as to why the organization would need a secretary, Raymundo stressed that the work that they do involves drawing up multiple reports to deal with all the legal issues. This work sometimes involves late work nights and a constant exchange of emails between Raymundo and one of their other partners in another organization.

The experiences of these activists with the *Grupo Apaches* (the group they represent in the *Colectivo*) may have shaped how they think as well as their organizing

techniques. They have been with the former group since the 1980s, and it seems to be much better organized with more sources of support than the *Colectivo*. For example, one of the reasons this group has more financial resources is that they collect 5-10 pesos (roughly 50¢-\$1) a week in dues. Ray and Rosa were responsible for a weekly meeting of the *Grupo Apaches*, and the group organized their own protests outside of the *Colectivo*.

Part of the reason why the *Colectivo* did not have a centralized office or staff—in addition to and, in part, because of the lack of funds—had to do with what was familiar to them. These activists were used to working through scarcity. Not having had a formal office or other work-related resources was part of their experiences in the ABCM.

Reyna: The lack of resources has always been prevalent since the *Asamblea de Barrios*. A very large part of the *Asamblea de Barrios* was that it was an entire organization that has a defined structure [dedicated] to possession of land...so the *Asamblea de Barrios* never had a headquarters, never had secretaries, never had computers, never had anything. Because some leaders said, “When this all is completed, who is going to keep all these things? ...Then there will be a fight for who will keep the headquarters.”

Raymundo: We have been secretaries...Our own homes have been the offices of the organization...[We have been the groups’] chauffeurs...Our homes are the archives of the *Colectivo*.

In addition to these comments from the main leaders of the *Colectivo* there were other members that spoke of the organization’s funding problems, and a number of them expressed the need to have a dues-paying membership. I had made it a point to try to visit all of the *Colectivo*’s member’s *vivienda/comerci* sites. On April 14, 2005, I

interviewed Christina López about her experience with the coalition. My interview with Christina included a discussion about how she joined the group, what she had learned in terms of organizing in her time with the *Colectivo*, internal group corruption, and *desalojos* (evictions). She also provided a possible rationale for why some members would rather pay dues.

Christina: [T]here is much corruption here in *el Centro* [downtown Mexico City]. ...We are all street merchants and we do not want to waste time... [From the street vendors' view]...I prefer to pay you...for you [the activist] to deal with my affairs [housing or other social service issue]. ...I am not interested, nor will I go [to group meetings, events, activities, etc.], while I have money to eat...and I am without a need for something...

In an interview Ruben of the *Colectivo* on January 12, 2005 he gave his perspective on the level of motivation within the coalition.

Ruben: There are a lot of people that are not interested in politics. They do not know how to live in our country even though we are in a very grave situation. They want a good home but they do not want to spend their efforts in marches, or sit-ins, or come and listen to a talk [at the weekly meeting] every Monday in order to inform themselves about what is going on [in the country]

Analysis of Christina's and Ruben's generalizations about street vendors' and *Colectivo* members wish to pay activists to negotiate for their social services issues or benefit from activist work rather than to participate in an organization helps us to understand the frustrations that *Colectivo* leaders have with the membership. Additionally, this speaks to the experiences of this population with the corruption and lack of progress observed within urban movements in Mexico City.

The problems with scarcities of resources that are available to the coalition can also be viewed as a conflict over routines. Here, the conflict seems to be between activists who have had experience with an organization based on self-help and members who are used to the traditional relationship between citizens and parties like the PRI. Also, there may be some justification for Christina's explanation of why people do not want to participate. One reason could be that the work schedules and daily lives of much of the population that make up the *Colectivo* are obstacles to organizing. This is one reason why meetings are held in the evening after the workday is over, but fatigue and overwork undoubtedly take a toll. But there may be other reasons, such as old habits and conflicting loyalties: in my interview with Raymundo, Rosa, and Reyna, they claimed that the groups in *el Centro* previously "belonged" to the PRI.

There is another reason why there may be a lack of interest apart from those mentioned above, which may have to do with the history of corruption in Mexican governmental institutions and in social movement organizations. The result of this is that participants are hesitant or disinterested in the social movements they participate in based on prior experiences with both forms of organization. Valentine of the *Colectivo* provided his point of view on this topic in an interview on August 12, 2005. Valentine explained the drawn out process of acquiring a property and beginning construction. Most importantly he talked about his efforts in maintaining the motivation among the group held.

Valentine: People don't believe you, they think you are taking advantage of them, that you are going to rob them...the problem is that people continue not to believe me, this can continue for five or six years of dedication [to a project]...People don't believe you up until the point that

it is time to sign a contract and one begins to pay. Also, another contributor is that after four years and nothing happens, one might say to themselves 'this is a lie.'

It seems that within Valentine's group that this lack of trust is made worse by the efforts in finding alternative ways of keeping members accountable. Valentine stated the following later in the interview.

Valentine: I have demonstrated all of this time that I have nothing. Here they'll hit me with a soda and money for the bus... You can see that now that they don't believe you and they [the member] observe that I don't ask for anything, that I will obtain money [for construction], and [based on this] fact they I don't ask for anything [in return] they do not believe you. This is very sad that you need to reach this stage [with the members] and that you have to be the most corrupt [person] so that they will believe you.

Organizational Conflicts

Raymundo: Well, it is very clear that the organization [the *Colectivo*] is a young organization... It has [existed] from 1996 to 2004... it's young... It has a set program and a very broad politic... Then there is a clash between the politic and the set program, in terms of financial resources... The members, the number of members and the experiences that all the members have... this demands a necessary order that is more horizontal, more responsibility between the leadership, the coordination, and in the courses of the organization, no?... [Y]ou need to guide them and give them more responsibility... This part is very necessary, very necessary... We are looking for a moment where we can resolve this, because if not, then there is no future.

Raymundo sums up his perspective of the *Colectivo*, which he sees as lacking maturity, experience, and in need of changes to the organizational structure. This interview was conducted on August 1, 2005, in his office at the *Asamblea Legislativa - Distrito Federal* (Legislative Assembly - Federal District) in downtown Mexico City. Raymundo is the advisor for rural development to the city-level representative for the PRD in Mexico City. He had held a position like this with another city-level representative, but he was said to have been fired after he criticized her publicly. Between that post and this one, Raymundo was also a street vendor in *el Centro*. He has led the *Colectivo* since 1996, when a number of members broke away from the ABCM—which he had also belonged to since its founding.

During this interview I brought up a previous comment that he made after a *Colectivo* weekly meeting where he loudly voiced his frustrations with the membership over their lack of consistency in sharing information with him. After the weekly meeting in question Raymundo, myself, and a couple other members walked to the *La Viga* metro station just outside the *Cine Volador*. He was clearly upset, and he turned to me and said, “Don’t think that this is the only conflict that has emerged in the *Colectivo*, eh.” The conflict he mentioned was an error in some paperwork that had been submitted which put in question how many people were petitioning for a home and in whose name for a particular project. Communication problems such as these were a common theme in my interviews with Raymundo and the subject of much discussion at the *Colectivo*’s weekly meetings. I asked Raymundo about some of the issues that have surfaced in the *Colectivo*.

Raymundo: Well, there have emerged...let's say...from the genesis of the *Colectivo*...the *Colectivo* was born out of conflict in the AB [*Asamblea de Barrios*]...and a conflict of strategic character...of political analysis and political objective...[In this context] the *Colectivo* was born...the *Colectivo* was born disagreeing with an objective that regressed from the principles of the AB.

Further, he voiced his concerns about the *Colectivo*'s internal harmony and communication. Raymundo often lectured the membership about several issues having to do with societal problems or politics. His tone during these lectures was one of disappointment as he explained to the group that, at a minimum, they should be treating each other as *compañeros*, which he went on to define as being about trust and supporting one another. In this same meeting he stated that there is a lot of information held secret by some representatives of the groups in the *Colectivo*. Raymundo stated that these representatives "don't give information, they omit it." Continuing with this theme of how the *Colectivo* works internally, Raymundo stated that the organization does not take care of its unity. He said, again, that there is a problem with "dialogue, the internal organization....missing information....," and that there are "...*compañeros* that maybe didn't want to give it [information], they don't want to give it, and now we got ourselves in a mix." Others of Raymundo's critiques have to do with the organization's lack of consistency in following the rules of negotiation, and his opinion that the weekly meetings should begin with deliberation of individual projects and future negotiations with "el INVI" (*Instituto de Vivienda/Institute for Housing*). Raymundo and Rosa are supposed to be the representatives for the *Colectivo* during the negotiation phase. But there are problems with representation, as group representatives do not meet their commitments or resist in recognizing who actually leads.

There were also conflicts about communication of the roles that the leaders play in the *Colectivo*. This problem had to do with female members of the group who questioned the work that Rosa actually did for the coalition and what was seen as an overly familiar relationship between leaders and the membership. Rosa was often not present at the weekly meetings because, as was explained to me and the membership, she often had attended meetings with the coalition organization they participated in (apparently some of these meetings were all-day events). This seemed to spark a subtle charge of favoritism toward Rosa, where apparently some members questioned Rosa's non-participation in meetings and events as favored treatment, having to do with her relationship with Raymundo.

Strategy and Goal Conflicts

These conflicts have centered on the two types of projects that the *Colectivo* sought for its members. Some of the membership belonged to the *Colectivo* because they wanted a home (*vivienda*), while others wanted a permanent vending site (*comerci6*). Several problems were related to this. Most importantly, many members did not seem to understand the difference nor the idea that every *vivienda* case had its own circumstances that needed to be problematized. For, example members would try to consult each other's work in putting together their own documents to petition for a home, and this was not always appropriate or useful. Guidance for how to write up these documents was to

be given during the weekly meetings, so attending them was important to ensure that the documents were completed accurately.

Also, many of the *Colectivo's* properties had had many problems in the negotiation process, with some having as many as 30 claims against them, involving notices of eviction and many other issues. This had been the experience of Raymundo, Rosa, and Reyna within the *Asamblea de Barrios*, and Reyna went on to describe how this difficult process in acquiring properties leaves its members with a negative view of the organization's work. This fact also complicated long-standing tensions between neighbors. What is evident here is that the *Colectivo* includes conflicts among community members, which may also contribute to some of the motivational and opportunistic problems discussed above.

Reyna: Situations inside the neighborhoods are now very old and held by people for 40 years...[It] has been difficult to end these personal issues that have developed... [Complaints such as,] "Why did you throw water [on my property]?" things like that...This is the daily life of the people.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the diverse array of conflicts and tensions that can surface within social movement coalitions. Conflicts emerge over resources, organizational processes, identity, and strategies and goals. Many of the conflicts over resources that have been discussed here have to do with finances. However, participants

discussed other resource conflicts that had to do with labor or culture. All of these stem, in part, from the inequality that can exist between organizations due to the centralization of power, as in the case of *Alianza Cívica*, the uneven (or perceptibly uneven) distribution found in *Sección Mexicana*, or in the example of the *Colectivo*, which is a coalition without its own financial base.

In this chapter we also learned how in coalitions some of the conflicts that surface have to do with that fact that they are composed of people representing other organizations. This was the case of *Sección Mexicana* where I observed that many union members were unaware of the coalitions efforts. Some of this had to do with the fact that the individual unions have agendas which were of high priority. Also, we saw evidence how this coalition worked to maintain contact with an array individual unions. The questions of individual organizational apathy also was seen as reason for explaining this lack of knowledge of coalition work by *Sección Mexicana* and the *Colectivo*.

Conflicts have also surfaced over the lack of continuity and commitments by member organizations or individuals to the coalitions under study. Representation was another problem that developed in the coalitions. In some cases, member organizations felt that their organizations were not adequately represented within the coalition. In other instances, a participant's qualifications as a leader or their authenticity were put into question. Also, there were tensions that developed over the strategies and goals of the organizations. These tensions included how a group was to negotiate with authorities? How were funds for projects to be allotted and for what purpose? How has a coalition defined its goals, and do all members perceive them in the same way?

Participating in a coalition is in itself a strategy for solving problems. These problems have to do with a lack of access to political officials, other organizations, the media, and financial resources in SMOs. However, the benefits of this strategy come with their own costs as organizations and individuals within a coalition have to adapt to a new organization and decision-making procedures. Joining a coalition does not prevent future scarcity of financial, material, or financial resources. Therefore, how are problems recognized, confronted, and potentially traversed in these coalitions? Such strategies are addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: PREEMPTIVE AND ADAPTIVE

FORMS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

For coalitions, the promotion of a flexible organizational culture that “accommodates members’ autonomy and diversity, while nonetheless uniting them around common goals” facilitates the reconciliation of differences (Bandy and Smith, 2005: 244). Scholars stress the delicate balance that must be achieved when movement coalitions consider the “needs for unity” that include common goals, leadership, and successful actions with the “needs for difference” which involve respect for differences, autonomy, and democratic decision-making (Bandy and Smith, 2005; Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2003). This requires that leaders draw from previous organizing repertoires, be flexible in their implementation, and are open to modification. Despite these qualities leaders face a difficulty task in maintaining coalition alliances. This has to do in part with the nature of how these organizations were formed, the obligations they place on members, and that they are not homogenous organizations but are made up of multiple linkages and contacts between organizations.

The sections that follow show how leaders organize the internal functions of coalition to manage conflict. First, I deal with how leaders organized coalitions in order to reduce conflict. Each coalition has some preemptive mechanisms that are intended to deal with the tensions discussed in the last chapter. Here, preemptive is defined as an established plan for dealing with conflict. Then I move on to how leaders rework internal

mechanisms to adapt to internal conflict. Here, I look at how leaders respond to conflicts by making changes to the coalition's structure and its modes of decision-making. This chapter also provides evidence for how leadership skills are more significant for conflict management than participant location in the coalitions sampled.

Preempting Conflict

Among the Mexican coalitions of social movement organizations sampled, one method for confronting conflicts in many cases involved some form of preemption. So effective is this method of minimizing or eliminating conflicts that it is institutionalized: the coalitions are designed by leaders with mechanisms in place to preempt conflict. These mechanisms are based on activists' experiences with social movements and other organizations, which alert them to the types of problems to expect, and they are instituted as the coalitions are built. In a sense, these organizations were created with *conflict in mind*—not only to tackle external social problems but also in anticipation of internal strife.

Bilateral Relationships and Local Knowledge

Two methods used by *Alianza Cívica* for preempting conflict involved developing bilateral relationships and gathering local knowledge of project sites. A bilateral relationship is an organization-to-organization agreement on how to collaborate on a project. What I observed and learned from the interviews is that this can include agreements on the division of labor and communication between organizations.

Scholars have addressed the significance of local knowledge in social movement work (Ganz, 2004; Polletta, 2002). Ganz (2004: 186) writes, “The better our information about how to work within a particular domain – our local knowledge – the more likely we are to know how to deal with problems arising within that domain.” Here, Ganz (2004: 186) includes the skills and access to particular domains as the knowledge not only of such acquired skills as “how to strategize” but also the “knowledge of constituencies, opponents, and third parties with which one is interacting.” Local knowledge is gained and evidenced through efforts by *Alianza Cívica* workers as they develop and implement projects. This can involve traveling to the project site to meet with coalition members or to make preliminary contact with potential partners. These contacts are followed by a workshop or orientation process for the project and, in some cases, subsequent meetings to recruit volunteers.

On September 1, 2004, I went to interview Rocío Eslava at *Alianza Cívica* headquarters in Mexico City. Rocío has participated in the work of *Alianza Cívica* since she first volunteered with the coalition during the elections of 1994. Since then, she has continued to volunteer and has been invited to work for main body of the coalition on a

part-time basis either as project leader or analyst of their electoral monitoring project data. Rocío was completing her report on the electoral monitoring project for the 2004 gubernatorial elections in Oaxaca at the time of our interview.

In developing this project Rocío spent a significant amount of time in Oaxaca City and other areas of the state months before the election. *Alianza Cívica* staffers take the time to learn about the communities where they are to implement an electoral project. In an August 26, 2004 interview Rocío describes how this process works.

Rocío: First, we access which organizations can assist with a particular project, with this we see what issues people are working on in a particular region and see if we can coordinate our projects. We basically work through networks. There are times when we hit a wall...we try to [develop] a clear plan...of what we want to observe and in which zone. But there are times when we have no supporting organizations or individuals, [in this case] we try to find help at the last minute and if we can not accomplish this well ...within this context we do our work.

Here we see some indication as to the context this coalition works in when seeking out to engage in collaborative work. That is, *Alianza Cívica* has to work with other organizations in order to accomplish its goals. Having to rely on other organizations shapes the nature of how these relationships are formed. As stated earlier coalition work involves the use of shared linkages or multiorganizational fields in developing collaborative projects (Klandermans, 1990). Having relied on these kinds of relationships it is in the interest of coalition organizations not to damage these valued links between groups. In social movement organizations leaders would not have such concerns as they could use the hierarchical structure of the organization to deal with any potential problems.

In interviews with Rocío's she gave the sense that there was a lot of "footwork," she had accomplished as Rocío had to periodically travel back and forth between Mexico City and the state of Oaxaca (each time, spending from six to nine hours on a bus depending on which area of the state she was traveling to) three months before the gubernatorial elections of July, 2004. The reason for this was that, apart from the orientation process, *Alianza Cívica* problematizes other factors such as the coalition's access to a significant sample of voting booths for collecting observation data. Also, the group's work might involve aiding a pool of volunteers to obtain credentials as observers. Finally, there are a series of tasks to complete on the day of election that have to do with the coordination of observers and the collection of data.

We can look at this time spent in the field as an integration process and as a method for building trust between the *Alianza Cívica*'s main body and its partners. This work helps to preempt several potential problems, including those that can occur during the preparation and implementation activities such as miscommunication, misunderstandings about the division of labor, bad information about political situations on the ground, and cultural adaptation, especially when Mexico City residents are based as workers in rural or semi-rural areas. Rocío described the differences between working in D.F. (Mexico City) and Oaxaca that emerged in meetings of the *Colectivo por la Democracia* (Democracy Collective).

Rocío: ...for example here [D.F.], we have a meeting in order to make a decision, let's say, a decision on a press bulletin and its main points. We meet...[and] in one hour we make a decision, and at the same time we make the bulletin...In Oaxaca it's different. First, it was decided [in a *Colectivo por la Democracia* meeting] if it was necessary to have consensus on whether or not the make

a [press] bulletin, and [then] we asked if it [the bulletin] was indeed necessary...Now that everyone in the world stated whether it was...[what happened next was]... [someone would ask], “Who will make the bulletin?” “What will it say?” “Who will write it up?” “Who will send it?” “Who will do this?” “Who will do that?” So, it goes around and around to an almost bureaucratic point but this also permits the people to feel part of the process... It shows, “If you want to work quickly, it is difficult in Oaxaca,” because the process of consensus takes a lot of time. So on one hand it causes problems because of the amount of time taken [to make decisions], but other benefits have to do with how included the people feel and that their work is valued.

In these remarks, Rocío provides her view of the participatory democratic decision-making methods that are used in Oaxaca. She identifies the benefits that result from this process as those that ensure that people can “share *ownership* of decisions...their sense of solidarity and commitment is heightened” (Polletta, 2002: 8). The outcome of using these methods is that there is a greater likelihood that the *Alianza Cívica* project will be completed as envisioned. Apart from this, in the lengthy quote above, we get a sense of the large amounts of time, energy, and detail that Rocío has spent to establish her work relationships. Another outcome, of course, is that through experiences like these she has acquired detailed knowledge about life in Oaxaca. This knowledge pays off for leaders such as Rocío as they can use it to help them assess the conditions for implementing a project but also the players involved. Having understood the cultural context for doing this type of work in Oaxaca, Rocío can use her experience to aid her in dealing with coalition partners. As the above quote illustrates she had to learn to adapt to doing work in Oaxaca. Highlighting organizational prestige would not have been enough to progress in the face-to-face interactions faced by this leader.

In this interview, Rocío described much of the collaborative process that took place in Oaxaca, the difficulties that she encountered in doing work in the field, and internal tensions that developed during her work with the Oaxacan coalition, *Colectivo por la Democracia*, for the 2004 gubernatorial elections. This Oaxacan coalition included *Alianza Cívica* and 26 other NGOs and SMOs from Oaxaca, and only two out of the 26 groups in *Colectivo por la Democracia* were members of *Alianza Cívica*. I was informed that bilateral relationships between *Alianza Cívica* were established with each member organization in this coalition. This method allowed for working collaboratively. It is a common method that is used by the coalition, even though it would seem to limit inter-group contact between coalition partners (which is sometimes a good thing).

Due to the possibility that coalitions bring together diverse organization, groups, or individuals with different interests and perhaps preexisting rivalries, leaders attempt find ways to keep the larger organization focuses on its agenda. As Zald and Ash Garner (1987) state social movements use a “common denominator” when establishing these kinds of links between organizations. Building relationships that are bilateral is one way to sidestep potential conflict, as *Alianza Cívica* can function as a “bridge organization”⁶ (Brown and Fox, 1998) or a broker organization. The coalition is able to limit contact between groups, which is particularly important when there are pre-existing hostilities between them. In order to accomplish these leaders needs to spend more time working one-on-one building relationships with individual organizations. This is where experience working with different kinds of organizations comes into play.

⁶ Brown and Fox (1998: 449) explain the outcome of the solidarity conferences that brought together local and international-level NGOs as forums that served as bridge organizations “which provide arenas for contact and joint action among representatives of diverse actors.”

In the case of *Alianza Cívica*'s work in Oaxaca having someone with previous contact and knowledge of human and indigenous rights organization could be used to build alliances between organizations. For example, in an August 26, 2004 interview with Rocío she commented on how she established contact with organizations in Oaxaca where the relationship is personal; consider that what *Alianza Cívica* ties to do... [which] is to be the uniting factor, but always maintain a relationship with the other organizations...in my case I talked with every single organization.”

Here we have another example of how coalitions deal with conflict differently as in this case where Rocío's work in Oaxaca involved negotiating ties with each organization it worked with. She had to establish a direct tie between *Alianza Cívica* and the coalition participant. Rocío's leadership skills also mattered a great deal more than her title as Electoral Coordinator of the coalitions as her work involved drawing on the time she had already spent in Oaxaca plus her knowledge of organization and movements in the Southern part of Mexico.

We get a sense of how this process of how coalitions mitigate must work to mitigate conflict differently from that of SMOs through my interviews of Rocío where we learn that in order to make these types of contacts requires an “on the ground” presence by coalition leaders. I asked Rocío how she supervised this coordination of tasks between *Alianza Cívica* and the Colectivo por la Democracia in an April 18, 2004 interview. She stated “supervision of work came in the form of my living in Oaxaca...working directly with the people, with organizations, [and] in meetings.” The method used here is face-to-face contact between a coalition's leadership and the

organizations that one seeks to collaborate with. In a SMO the organizational leadership with rely on local level surrogates to recruit potential members.

Alianza Cívica's approach to forming bilateral relationships with each member of the *Colectivo por la Democracia* is done with attention (in Rocío's own words): "*Alianza Cívica* maintains a bilateral relationship with all the organizations. Which is to say, we do not associate ourselves with one organization and leave the rest behind...because, thankfully, having those links allowed us to accomplish the work in a collaborative way." Rocío points to collaborating with organizations with attention to a perception of inequality or favoritism. In coalitions, leaders must decide on how they will negotiate business within the coalition. There is the possibility that participants in coalitions would grow uncomfortable with any perceived alliances between the leadership and other members of the coalition.

One can see in these examples how gathering local knowledge at a project site aids in establishing bilateral relationships with coalition partners, particularly when ties have recently been established. One of the benefits to forming this type of relationship is that it can limit contact between groups thus limiting the potential for new conflicts. Also, similar to the benefits of local knowledge, by creating bilateral relationships it would seem that *Alianza Cívica* is attempting to reduce the division-of-labor problems that can impede the accomplishment of coalition goals. A final note on the benefits of this arrangement: the continual presence of *Alianza Cívica* workers during project implementation stimulates the continual flow of information and maintains relationships, thus making it somewhat difficult for participants to waffle on commitments.

This use of *referentes* (key contact groups) by *Alianza Cívica* is another useful tactic doing work on-the-ground work that is done by the group. The use of local knowledge that is accessed through its contacts to local groups aids *Alianza Cívica* in recruiting volunteers, making contacts with other groups, is done to try to limit any potential problems “on the ground,” and, in the end, furthers the execution of the project. Rocío explained the significance of the local groups as a situation in which the coalition’s use of key contacts, in effect, multiplies the organization’s efforts, as in the case of *EDUCA* (*Servicios para una Educación Alternativa/ Service for an Alternative Education*):

Rocío: They [*EDUCA*] do a lot of grassroots work...as do the members of the *Colectivo [por la Democracia]*. This is, let’s say, the important contribution of *Alianza Cívica* and the *Colectivo*, that everyone has different types of work in the various regions of Oaxaca. So, what we try to do is multiply those abilities, multiply those contacts that *Alianza Cívica DF* does not have. What we did was meet with *EDUCA*, so that they would invite us to their meetings in the communities they work in, and in that manner we could multiply the work.

This example shows how organizational links between groups allowed *Alianza Cívica* to establish ties to local level groups in Oaxaca. Coalitions will use their more established ties as a gateway to a larger constituency of social movements and other potential coalition partners. In Rocío’s view about the project in Oaxaca she stated that her contact with organizations that “have their own prestige that by [*Alianza Cívica*] associating with these Qaxacan groups automatically open doors and we are accepted as part of the larger group working together.”

The significance of referents emerged in my observations of and interviews with *Pinotepa Nacional*, Oaxaca, where there were municipal-level elections in 2004. On October 2, 2004, I accompanied the executive secretary of *Alianza Cívica*, Silvia Alonzo, Bety Camacho, the coordinator of the coalition electoral projects, Rocío Eslava, and four other volunteers to *Pinotepa Nacional*, which is a nine-hour drive from Mexico City.

Rocío, Hilda Guillén of *Alianza Cívica Pinotepa Nacional*, two other volunteers traveled by mini-van to several voting locals. For the entire time they spent at this voting booth and several others, Hilda remained in the mini-van. The reason for this was that she had been entered into the political process in *Pinotepa Nacional* as a supplemental candidate, so she could not be seen with *Alianza Cívica* on Election Day. As addressed in earlier chapters, *Alianza Cívica* stresses that it is an “apartisan” civic organization, hence its representatives could not be seen with Hilda, as it would appear that the organization supported the *PRD* ticket in *Pinotepa Nacional*. In the late-night meeting before Election Day, Hilda (who owned the local stationery store that served as our unofficial headquarters), had informed the group of her candidacy. Silvia joked with Hilda about staying in the house and not being around *Alianza Cívica* the following day to avoid tainting their work.

Apart from potentially tarnishing *Alianza Cívica* “apartisan” stance with the inclusion of Hilda in the political process, the coalition had to weigh this with that fact that she is one of their main contacts in *Pinotepa Nacional*. From Rocío’s perspective in a May 24, 2005 interview she stated “the problem was that she [Hilda] has a relationship with the community, with indigenous people, with workers, and her ongoing activist relationships.” In the following quote Rocío justified this necessity based on resources

and project success. Again this insight would not be possible without the skills used in obtaining local knowledge about Oaxaca.

Rocío: limited resources you have to optimize them in whatever form possible, so when Hilda suggests that she go in the minivan is important because she knows the community, in particular the PRI, that are causing irregularities, and the buying and coercion of vote. Above all that she know exactly where all the voting booths are located... Since the most important objectives were to observe as many voting booths as possible, detect problems in the booths where she already had some idea that their would trouble... this is why it was important that Hilda was with us in the van.”

Despite the reservations about Hilda’s role in the Pinotepa elections she did participate in the electoral monitoring project. In my later interview with Silvia Alonzo, executive secretary of *Alianza Cívica*, she stated that it was decided that Hilda would travel with us in the van; however, when I asked her about this particular situation she laughed, then stated this was upset and worried about the potential impact in would have on *Alianza Cívica’s* image. In a June 2, 2005 interview I asked Silvia about this particular situation.

Silvia: Well look, I was annoyed because they [*Alianza Cívica Pinotepa Nacional*] were not respectful of the agreements established between participating organizations because we have a relationship of mutual support in order to push for common objectives and there [in Oaxaca] this was being violated. Also, in many cases there is a degree of political naivety among local groups in the sense that they are not able to assess [the situation]. What worries worried me was the credibility of *Alianza Cívica’s* work that would be perceived there.

Another example of this kind of local knowledge comes from a 2005 interview with Bey Camacho who was the full time coordinator in charge of electoral projects for *Alianza Cívica*. Bety described the coalition relationship with other organizations. In the case the role Christian based communities in the State of Mexico. She explained to me the benefit of this affiliation, “although the Christian based community networks are groups that belong to the Catholic Church, they are extended throughout the State, and it is an advantage.” I then asked Bety about how they created this relationship between this Christian based communities and the coalition.

Bety: what happens, for example, that Father Ivan [Father at a church where Bety held a workshop] is a friend of Rogelio Gomez Hermosillo, who used to be the President of Alianza Civica. Before that he worked for the Center for Ecumenical Studies...they have many contacts with the Catholic Church and other types of churches, well, not only Catholic churches, but predominantly Catholic.

Alternative to Accountability

The *Colectivo* also used a form of preemption in its decision not to collect dues which could have been used to pay the salaries of leaders, for materials, and other coalition needs. Most of the *Colectivo*'s leaders and members are employed full-time or have other financial resources apart from their work for the coalition. The decision not to collect dues within the coalition could be interpreted as trying to establish an alternative definition of the leadership's accountability to the membership. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the ABCM used a philosophy of self help in the training of its activists. Although

the *Colectivo*'s leaders were clearly in charge of the organization, an absence of dues-collection could have been used to limit an argument that the group's leaders "owed" the membership speedier results and allowed avoidance (or limitation) of that kind of pressure. Because dues were not collected, the organization's entire membership was converted into volunteer labor. Although, contrarily, one could argue that the resulting lack of finances and/or members' skills in dealing with institutions leaves such a population with few options.

However, the leadership's alternative to monetary dues included obligating the membership to attend meetings, marches, and any other events where their presence was necessary. Therefore, participation was the mechanism for paying into the organization. In an interview with Valentine a member of the original *Asamblea de Barrios* provided an example of this philosophy. On August 12, 2005 Valentine stated the following:

"I told them [the group he leads] that I would help them resolved their problems buy if they do not contribute then I will not do a thing, this is not my home, as a matter of fact I do not own a home. I have no interest here. I am here to help my friends that I have known since I was a kid."

The benefit of this approach is that leaders of the group could limit some of the work they had to put into the organization. As Sánchez Estévez (2005) pointed out, these leaders had an extensive workload in *Grupo Apaches* involving negotiations, protests, and coalition work which left little time for "hand-holding." By not collecting dues, the leadership could place the responsibility for making progress on home-ownership directly in the hands of the members. Finally, both institutional and personal conflict is avoided in this case, as the leaders can deflect challenges of corruption and slow progress by questioning the membership about their own efforts in the housing process and their

participation in the *Colectivo*. However, as described in the previous chapter, this non-collection of dues leads to other problems.

Flexible Participation

To some extent, all the coalitions sampled allowed coalition members flexibility in how they chose to participate in the coalition. Zald and Ash Garner (1987) stated that organizations seeking to be inclusive with the participation of other groups and individuals require a minimal amount of commitment at least at the initial point of their participation. This meant that there was a plan in place for how participants defined their participation.

In Oaxaca, during the gubernatorial elections of 2004, the process used for implementing *Alianza Cívica*'s Electoral Observation project began with an invitation from the *Alianza* to various NGOs and SMOs to attend an orientation about the goals and work involved. This meeting was held three months before the election. The meeting's primary goal was to present the project and provide the organizations with "space" to decide how they would participate with the coalition. I interviewed Rocío Eslava about the Oaxaca project, on December 3, 2004, at the coalition's main office in Mexico City. Rocío had been selected to head the Oaxaca project in place of the full-time coordinator, who had recently had a child. During the interview Rocío talked about the main reason why *Alianza Cívica* allows for this "space."

Rocío: Because I cannot assume that, as *Alianza Cívica*... [For example,] if you are an organization that is dedicated to coffee production,...that you dedicate yourself to coffee production, and that you [will also] dedicate yourself 100% to electoral observation...Therefore, in terms of your work commitments...in what manner can I [the potential participant help] with this *Alianza* project? ...In what part can they collaborate with me?

This remark brings to mind Jasper's (2004) discussion about the process of "reaching out" to potential partners by SMOs, in which they consider what groups to include in an alliance. Rocío's statement addresses the step wherein *Alianza Cívica* considers how groups are *incorporated*. This passage provides some evidence as to how coalitions preempt some forms of conflict when trying to collaborate. Coalitions developing and acting on group goals do not have the luxury of relying on a movement based to implement projects as would be possible in an SMO. Given that they are reaching out to other organizations the passage above shows the sensitivity shown to potential coalition partners. As part of being an inclusive organization, coalition work of this kind must allow for diverse forms of participation in order to accomplish its goals. What this passage above also demonstrate is that the legwork leader put into gathering local knowledge allows them to deal with circumstances as those face by Rocío in Oaxaca.

One outcome for the coalition is that projects are executed more effectively, perhaps due to the flexible options that are given to coalition partners as to how they will participate. The possibility of conflict between the main body and coalition partners is reduced, as the relationship described above lowers the risk of work overload and, inevitably, the non-completion of tasks by coalition participants. Should coalition

members decide to defer more of the election project's workload to *Alianza Cívica*, this then leaves the main body with control of the final project and results in a potential reduction of further tensions that might be found in collaboration. In sum, the coalition's sensitivity to the way in which groups are incorporated into coalition work aids in reducing conflict.

We can also see how participation is defined in the way in which individuals or SMOs are *invited* to participate in an alliance. This is another form of conflict mitigation. One such method used by *Alianza Cívica* involved trust that came from social networks (personal contacts) between the *Alianza* and its coalition partners. This coalition primarily chooses to collaborate with organizations with which there is a pre-existing relationship, and this includes both organizations that have been part of the coalition since its founding and groups that have had more sporadic participation in its activities.

As described in the last chapter, many of the participating coalition partners in *Alianza Cívica* involved organizations that had been in contact with the coalition since it formed in 1994. I interviewed two *EDUCA* members on November 11, 2004, as I observed the *Usos y Costumbres Asamblea* (community level meeting that elects people for administration/official post purportedly without the participation of political parties) with *Alianza Cívica* in Oaxaca City. During the interviews I asked how their group came to be involved in the work of the *Alianza Cívica*. Initially, *EDUCA* grew out of an organization called the Christian Youth for Democracy, which was motivated to form, in part, by the insurgency of the EZLN, the contested elections of 1994, and “vanguard bishops” in the Diocese of Oaxaca who worked mostly in indigenous communities.

Through *EDUCA*'s links to national civic religious organizations such as the *Centro de Estudio* (Study Center) and the *CEE*, they were invited to an *Asamblea Nacional* that was convened by the *Alianza Cívica* in 1994. *EDUCA* and *CEE* form part of *Convergencia*, which was one of the founding organizations of *Alianza Cívica*. One member of *EDUCA* described spoke about the various links that tied them to *Alianza Cívica*

Miguel: Yes, in 1994 there were more or less 6 organizations with well established ties that made up *Alianza Cívica*. So there was a very good link of trust established through *Convergencia* and we form part of this organization.

Here, by working with already-known partners, internal conflict is minimized, to an extent, although this, by itself, is not enough to eliminate the possibility of tension (Polletta, 2002). We can see why maintaining consistent participation within *Alianza Cívica* can be significant, as it reduces the time and energy that are involved in socializing new members and allows for greater concentration on group goals. Finally, these examples show how groups are incorporated and invited to the coalition, and how this process is dictated by the main organizational body of *Alianza Cívica*.

The *Colectivo*'s method of incorporating participants was quite informal as compared to the steps taken by the other two coalitions. The process involved someone in the organization inviting a friend or neighbor to the *Colectivo*'s weekly meetings. Time was taken by the *Colectivo*'s leader, Raymundo, either before or after the weekly meeting to assess the new participant's needs. He discussed with them the *Colectivo*'s strategy as to how they could go about negotiating for housing. They were told to obtain documentation from the office of Property Registry to help establish ownership of the

property they wished to obtain. Since this particular coalition was not dues-driven, this kind of informality in recruitment probably served the organizational leaders' interests, as there were simply fewer people to concern themselves with in the coalition. The personal process might also draw in more committed (and perhaps desperate) participants to the coalition. Also, as mentioned, *Colectivo* leaders have an abundance of work having to do with *Grupo Apaches* (Estevez-Sanchez, 2005), and, therefore, they may not see the necessity of or have the time for recruiting more members. We could also view this as a type of practice of exclusion described by Michels (1962) where by limiting the amount of new members *Colectivo* members control the direction of the organization.

Sección Mexicana described its own structure, as follows: “The Coalition [*Sección Mexicana*] is a network, a space, it is not an organization, and this permits the distinctive elements in Mexican unionism to join, even if, on occasion, they find themselves at odds within their respective union organization or in their union sector” (de la Luz Arriaga, 2003). As can be seen, the coalition defines itself as a loosely structured “space” and not an organization. But, clearly, this is not the case, as the coalition has monthly meetings, coordinates actions, and shows other signs of an organizational structure.

However, the implication of the preceding quote is that, like *Alianza Cívica*, *Sección Mexicana* is sensitive to notions of autonomy of its constituent organizations. This statement also could be interpreted as an attempt to not oblige participants beyond coordination of their efforts to protest the privatization of education. What we have here are preemptive moves to reduce conflict within this organization, particularly as recognition is given to conflicts that may already be occurring within particular unions or

union sectors. *Sección Mexicana*, in this sense, can also be viewed as a “bridge organization” (Brown and Fox, 1998), meaning that this coalition, because some constituents are already in conflictive relationships, serves as a neutral space or arena of contact for participants.

Additionally, characterizing the coalition as a space or a network evokes the image of a setting for discussion or dialogue. This strategy may prove useful as it allows for the inclusion of as many participants as possible and perhaps signals the type of commitment that is necessary to participate. As described in the last chapter, conflicts in *Sección Mexicana* emerged over uneven or unfulfilled workloads. Forming the loose structure described above may have been one way to head off complaints about burdening participants with already full work schedules. However, the *Sección Mexicana*'s “loose” structure and its attempts to avoid certain conflicts generated other forms of internal conflict that were associated with participation.

I interviewed Arturo Ramos on August 3, 2005, before I was to accompany him to a meeting of the leftist-socialist coalition, *Asamblea de Socialistas de la Izquierda* (Assembly of Leftist-Socialists). This coalition included a group that he participated in called the *Colectivo-ULR (Unión de Lucha Revolucionaria /Union for Revolutionary Struggle)*.⁷ The interview covered several matters including the tensions surrounding participation in *Sección Mexicana*. He provided his views on the coalition's inclusiveness and explained that although the coalition does not try to “exclude or limit the presence of official union representatives...their participation was ideal; however it

⁷ This group is said to be composed of former members from the organization *ULR* of the 1980s. In 2002, the *Colectivo-ULR* membership reunited former members of *ULR* who had become educators, students, union and community leaders, public sector employees, and artists.

was not always possible for participating *Sección Mexicana* union members to send an official representative.” However, one problem is that it was less useful to have union representatives present who were neither aware of nor committed to *Sección Mexicana* goals.

Arturo: It is good that those unions send representatives and bring information, but you also need someone who is committed to education, not just someone who goes to vote, and [thinks] that they have nothing else to do.

To some extent, making participation requirements and structure this wide open or loose sets the stage for declaring that all members are welcome, however, this same “looseness” seems to have driven away more consistent participation by each of the sectors. As mentioned earlier in this section, this structure, in effect, serves to keep “control” of the group by core members, as the absence of other members leaves less possibility of multiple interventions into organization goals and decision-making. This control reminds us of what Michels (1962) argued as the responsibilities and functions are removed from the larger organization as the groups becomes more bureaucratized. The result being that a small number of people make organizational decisions. Additionally, Michels (1962: 162) raised this dilemma having to do with cooperative organizations where groups have to decide whether to “succumb to the rapid discord due to multiple interventions or else submit to the will of one or a few orgs.”

These core members had had more experience dealing with educational issues, at least from what we can glean from Arturo’s comments, allowing for consistent attention to coalition goals. However, as described in the last chapter the concentration of power

in a few hands and the loose organizational system tended to foster problems with holding members accountable, representation, and other difficulties associated with coalition work.

Specificity of project

Part of the effort to maintain consistent participation by coalition members has to do with how the group's goals are formulated and articulated. The ability of a coalition to focus on narrow goals is not only important for reaching out to participants but it also serves to reduce conflict. As mentioned before Zald and Ash Garner (1987) stressed that this was important when establishing alliances between organizations. Bandy and Smith (2005) state that how coalitions decided to define themselves has implications for motivating participation, drawing in adherents, and building solidarity between members and is related to the specificity of the coalition project. Movement leaders must also provide common goals that allow for the subordination of differences or conflicts that are present in the coalition (Bandy and Smith, 2005). Bandy and Smith (2005) cite Jonathan Fox (2002) who states that an agenda shared within movements develops through group action rather than through group intentions. Finding a model for collaboration is a difficult process for SMOs, and they may take a series of missteps, as described by Brooks and Fox (2002), in establishing concrete forms of collaboration.

All of the coalitions that I studied have been organized around one common goal for a number of years. For example, what facilitates *Alianza Cívica's* work with other

coalition members is how they orient potential participants. In a February 9, 2005, interview with Rocío Eslava, she spoke of how the organization enters a project with “clear” and “honest” objectives. This is done through the use of an orientation meeting with participating organizations where, as Rocío stated, the general impression is given that “this is our objective, this is our work, and this is our citizen observation program.” Rocío described this method of orientation as a common practice for “small NGOs like *Alianza Cívica*,” which, in her view, is advantageous for the organization. Her reasoning is that there exists a clarity in their projects that does not exist in large social organizations. It would seem that this clarity allows participating organizations to understand the time and energy that are needed for participation in the project. *Alianza Cívica*’s projects are, in Rocío’s words, “very concrete, very punctual...not with great expectations, but they are concrete.” During the interview, Rocío recalled that a member of the *Colectivo por la Democracia* said to her that “it is great that *Alianza* is presenting this project, because if it had emerged from Oaxaca we would not have been able to reach the alliance we did with you all.” Although this recollection conveniently justifies *Alianza Cívica*’s approach, it does provide some recognition of the coalition’s efforts at finding common ground.

Alianza Cívica also has had experience organizing projects where there was a clear division of labor. After the organization presents a new project, what is entailed, according to Rocío, is the development of input from member organizations and identification of the time and energy each one can put into the project.

This ability to focus on narrow group goals has been an important element for the survival of *Sección Mexicana*, which has focused on protecting public education for the

past 13 years. Mariluz wrote, “*Sección Mexicana* is a coordination of unions and academics from the two educational levels, K-12 and university, that have had defined action in defense of public education with an international-trinational perspective. It is the only space of its kind in our country” (de la Luz, 2003). By limiting their goals to defending public education from privatization, *Sección Mexicana* has held this loose structure together due, in part, to what Cullen (2005: 77) describes in her work as “transversal issues.” Transversal issues are “campaigns of particular policy objectives that resonate with the majority of members and are perceived as more important than existing differences” (Cullen, 2005: 77). Cullen followed the activists of European Union NGOs, which represented diverse interests and sectors of society and were able to manage the latent and overt conflicts by focusing on a particular policy or campaign goal. She states that through transversal issues the NGOs were able to “bracket their most serious sources of difference,” in order to focus on policy goals (Cullen, 2005: 77).

Finally, the work by the *Colectivo* to further their struggle for subsidized housing and commercial projects has been their main goal since 1996. Raymundo claims that from 1998 to 2003 the *Colectivo* was the only organization trying to warn urban popular movements and other social movement groups about the coming privatization of the *vivienda* system. Raymundo describes the last two years of protesting the privatization of the *vivienda* system as having been continuously challenging work for the group. They claim that it was not until 2003 when larger groups such as the MUP understood the coming problem in the housing system and invited the *Colectivo* to participate in that front.

Flexible Organizational Forms

As shown in Chapter Two, each coalition has its own organizational form. These coalitions have specific mechanisms for dealing with conflict. Importantly, the preemptive procedures in place allow coalition participants to be involved in the decision-making functions in order to diminish conflict. This is a recognized tactic, and scholars have addressed the effectiveness of using regular, open, deliberative, and tolerance in the decision-making processes of SMOs (Bandy and Smith, 2005; Ganz, 2004; Polletta, 2002).

According to my observations, however, poor attendance at meetings results in fewer voices in the decision-making process, which helps in maintaining harmony. For instance, *Sección Mexicana* meets once a month to discuss the state of current projects, events/activities of participating coalition members, and other issues. Of the total of 17 member organizations, only a few attend the meetings. In my time in the field I observed that the more frequent representatives were from *STAUACH*, *Politécnico*, two members of Section Nine, and two of the Academics, with sporadic attendance by some of the other unions. *Sección Mexicana* planned cultural events on teachers' movement history, the Social Security Reform Conference, a demonstration against *CENEVAL*, and helped coordinate the 2006 Trinational Conference in Oaxaca City while I was in Mexico. Many of these events were planned by the above-mentioned core group of members, and a steady stream of them is produced every year. The planning and execution of pertinent events and activities are crucial to maintaining the organizations' credibility, as leaders in coalitions must convince their memberships that they are advancing toward their stated

objectives. This is done by a continuous show of the benefits of coalition work to participants, be it the skills and experience of mounting collective action or protest, historical presentations, or educational/ professional events. When this is not possible coalition participants begin to doubt the benefits of coalition work which leads to internal conflict over leadership, organizational form, and goals (Staggenborg, 1986; Shefner, 1999). To avoid the frustration and problems inherent in collaborative efforts, leaders in coalitions must meet the basic needs of participants such as sharing resources, expertise, training, and access to allies (Bandy and Smith, 2005). But, as noted, only a few key participants make the decisions and do the work that keeps the organization alive and relevant to its wider membership.

Through interviewing and archival research *Sección Mexicana* has been described as “loose” and non-hierarchical. The rationale for this is explored later in this section. On paper, the group seems quite large, given that it includes many unions with substantial memberships. However, as previously mentioned, much of the work is done by only a few activists. How this fact contributes to the reduction of conflict in *Sección Mexicana* has to do, first, with the reality that many of the coalition members either abstained or had little time for the group’s work. This may have led to fewer conflicts due to less need for inclusion of divergent lines of strategy or goals, which seems to be a positive outcome that promotes focus of purpose and effort as well as harmony. So, by the sheer absence of competing viewpoints, strategies, and objectives the coalition has reduced the frequency and strength of its internal conflict.

Second, geography also plays a part in minimizing internal conflict in a way that is similar and contributes to the factor just outlined, that of low membership involvement.

Because *Sección Mexicana* is a nationwide coalition, representatives of some member unions have to travel long distances from their home states to reach the group's meetings and events, which takes time and money. Six unions (*SUPAUQ*, *SPAUAZ*, *APSASUTN*, and Sections Seven, 18, and 22 of the *CNTE*) are particularly affected by the necessity to travel, and their participation is notably minimal. My observation fits in with Michels (1962) point about the fact that the urban centered section of an organization makes all of the decisions for that group. The organizations outside of Mexico City in the case of *Sección Mexicana* are restricted from participating based on their geography.

In addition to these factors, the reduction of internal conflict in the coalition is influenced by the organizational repertoires in place to deal with group tension.

Collegiality

Sección Mexicana defines its organizational design and decision-making processes as "collegial." In this circumstance, the term means that, for the most part, the group does not make decisions through voting or in a series of formalized committees, but, rather, they use a more informal and intimate (perhaps friendly) style of decision making that appears to be similar to methods used by some Civil Rights organizations of the 1960s (Polletta, 2002). The purpose behind this flexibility was that it allowed for each coalition member to have the same "rights as everyone else" (Arturo Ramos). This simple-sounding goal seems more complex as one recognizes that the coalition is made up of three sectors that include unions, sections of unions/democratic delegations, and

academics. In our conversation on April 19, 2005, and in response to an inquiry about the conflicts that had emerged in the coalition, Arturo Ramos explained, at length, the decision-making process in *Sección Mexicana*. He gave a picture of meetings that worked through consensus, in which, at some point, someone would stop the discussion and say, “Well, let’s see. Who is in agreement [with a given issue]?” Almost everything we decide on is *por confianza* (through trust). People come as they please [to *Sección Mexicana*],...[and] we are not here [mainly] voting on things.”

The rationale provided in interviews as to why *Sección Mexicana* is organized in this relatively unstructured way was that although the unions that belong to the coalition all use democratic methods for decision making in their own organizations, the organizers of the coalition wanted to avoid the hierarchical structures that characterize Mexican unions. Arturo Ramos outlined his understanding of why the coalition has tried to avoid these rigid structures in its organization.

Arturo: The reason that I believe so is that sometimes hierarchical structures, established roles etc., become too bureaucratic and administrative and often anti-democratic. While here [in *Sección Mexicana*] we work out of conviction and enjoyment, without hierarchies, based on discussion and making decisions horizontally and democratically.

Arturo spoke of one of the unions that frequently challenged the loose structure and function within *Sección Mexicana* and an organization that, in his view, represented the type of inflexibility they were trying to avoid. He stated that while such unions have the capacity to mobilize people, in his view their union has “a very bureaucratic concept of work...they think that formal voting would work in making decisions instead of substantial discussion, reflection, and real work.” Arturo parried a question about a

possible lack of representation for most members in *Sección Mexicana*'s informal deliberation and decision-making process by pointing out that the coalition is more than just committee work and that it requires special skills and experience. He stated that although the unions that participate in the coalition are "independent" they are also heavily bureaucratic organizations in which many of the decisions are made by voting, which is different from the style used in *Sección Mexicana*, where decisions are made *por confianza* or by consensus among the participants.

In an August 3, 2005 interview Arturo pointed out that some of the reasons there are conflicts in *Sección Mexicana* has to do with some of the organizations in the coalition.

Arturo: There are conflicts among the membership, for example, there is a differences between Section 9 and 22...[they] have close [relations] and Section 18 and 7 who for example maintain there unions in isolation, [and] lead an independent struggle. Those differences [between these sections of the CNTE] enter with them into all of the spaces where they participate in agenda setting.

Arturo goes on to described that in his view of the university unions which is "that with university unions we can say that the majority of them are independent democratic organizations [and] that there are some differences between the more leftist, more democratic like STUAUCH and unions like STUNAM.

Another member of the Coalition described this history of conflict between competing unions in a February 24, 2005 interview. I had interviewed Pedro of Section Nine about the reintegration of coalition members (Section 7, 14, and 22 of the CNTE). He stated that these organizations would be able to "reinforce the work of the coalitions."

Pedro went on to explain that his union and Section 18 have a lot of mobilizing power which in his view is significant for the coalition.

Pedro: this [mobilization potential] helps us [the Coalition] but is also complicated because there are distinct project between these two groups. Section 18 has its own perspective on things from all the other sections. There is a lot of conflict [over this fact], there are differences, [and] it is difficult to reach agreements [among the sections].

Here we have more evidence as to some of the differences in conflict management within coalitions. As the members of *Sección Mexicana* have recognized that in working with organizations in this coalition that one has to keep in mind ongoing tensions between organizations. Coalitions will accommodate for ideological or strategic differences to some extent.

In sum, this collegial form of decision making serves to reduce the conflict and frustrations that can come from participating in bureaucratic organizations, as Arturo Ramos' comment points out. However, it must be noted that Arturo's point of view also seems to reflect the organizational preferences of some of the key members of *Sección Mexicana*. It seems clear from the perspective of the Academics that the least desirable form of decision making (voting, committee assignment, elections) would be avoided due to the accountability involved and other forms of bureaucracy. However, for other activists this collegial method may not be acceptable due to identity-based differences (Polleta, 2002; Rose, 2000) or some other organizational dilemma (Jasper, 2005). And, to some extent, the division of opinion about organizational styles is related to the constant change in representation on the part of union representatives (see Chapter Three).

Another of the groups I studied, the *Colectivo* (as described in Chapter Two), has a basic hierarchical structure. There are weekly meetings and other activities in which coalition members have to participate. In both the weekly meetings and our interviews, Raymundo claimed success for the *Colectivo* at impacting housing problems on the national level and locally in Mexico City's organizations. He stated several times in the meetings that he and Rosa had been invited to give talks in different parts of the country on the housing struggle. He also highlighted the group's alliances with the *MUP*, the *Promotora*⁸, and the *Frente Sindical Campesino Popular*. Raymundo frequently brought up the fact that the members do not pay dues, which in other organizations can be as much as 50 pesos (5 dollars) per week. This is a considerable amount for the average working-class Mexican whose daily wage is 46 pesos.

The *Colectivo*'s success in stopping government *desalojos* (evictions) by local authorities was also mentioned in weekly meetings and interviews. These actions have been described as quite violent as residents resist such actions by authorities. The *Colectivo* mobilized to defend properties from being taken away by the authorities, and they have successfully seized others. In meetings, Raymundo also noted other advances due to their advocacy, such as the number of *viviendas* that were to be constructed. In a public relations windfall, the group played a small role in a Mexican film, "*El Cobrador*" (the collector). The film includes several themes having to do with globalization, including housing. Raymundo described this as an important opportunity, since the group receives little media attention. In addition to the possible media attention that

⁸ In communication with an activist in the *Colectivo-ULR*, who participates in the *Promotora*, it was stated that Raymundo does carry some weight in the groups despite the fact that the *Colectivo* is a small organization. This apparently has to do with Raymundo's activist profile and experience.

Colectivo leaders hoped would come from the film, all of the participants received wages: 400 pesos (\$40.00) for adults and 200 pesos (\$20.00) for children, which are large sums of money for people who generally earn that much in two to three months.

As shown in the previous chapter, tensions are, for the most part, voiced by the leaders of the *Colectivo*. These conflicts had to do with disparities between what the leaders had to put into the organization as compared to the membership, and they were managed organizationally through the withdrawal of certain groups. One specific case was the problem of overcharging by Don Rogelio and Leticia Prudente which eventually led to the groups managed by these two individuals leaving the *Colectivo* to work on their own. Of the other conflicts experienced by this group, most grew out of how much contact its members had with one another.

In comparison to *Sección Mexicana* and the *Colectivo*, *Alianza Cívica*'s structure is quite well-defined. However, there is less contact between the main body of the coalition and its partners. Apart from annual strategy meetings with all state-level partners, the coalition does not meet, unless there is a significant national project such as an electoral observation campaign. In this case, *Alianza Cívica* gathers in Mexico City more than once to prepare for this particular project. For the most part, there is little communication between the main body and the entire coalition; however, there was an attempt made to coordinate communication using a Google group about the time that I completed my fieldwork (see Chapter Two for details on the group's organizational structure).

We could assume that since there is less contact within the coalition there was also less conflict within *Alianza Cívica* coalition. However, *Alianza Cívica* seems to only

elicit collaboration between its members when there is an actual project to develop or, as stated, when it convenes a national-level meeting. The result of this is similar to the workings of *Sección Mexicana*, where coalition partners are not burdened with many responsibilities. Another similarity of note is that, on paper, *Alianza Cívica* appears to be a large coalition that spans the entire country, when, in actuality, most of the work is centralized in the main office. The benefit of this, of course, is that it can sell itself domestically and internationally as the Mexican national electoral watch dog group. In addition to the project work, this fact may also help draw in funding, as the organization appears from the outside to be a large and all-inclusive citizens' movement. The fact that, as an NGO-social movement, it is consistently able to get funding from government and other agencies does eliminate some money-centered conflict, as the group does not have to solicit financial resources from coalition partners for its operational costs.

As with *Sección Mexicana*, *Alianza Cívica*'s ability to maintain its loose organizational structure is due in part to the gathering of resources and execution of coalition projects, which also serves to reduce conflict. Aguayo (1995) writes that the *Alianza Cívica* established a "Mexican model" for monitoring elections. This model "consists of adapting the efforts of the international community to the rhythms and requirements of indigenous monitoring organizations" (Aguayo, 1995: 167). Aguayo (1995) goes on to write that the *Alianza Cívica* electoral project differs from those in other countries through its reliance on volunteers, the local knowledge of communities, and that their projects are carried out by local organizations.

Given *Alianza Cívica*'s name recognition, one positive result is that it may have fewer mobilization costs (efforts to recruit new members, raise public awareness about

goals, and other costly activities). In part, this is due to the close ties to government agencies and other institutions that the coalition has been able maintain in terms of acquiring resources. *Alianza Cívica* relies on government and other sources of funding to continue its work, and this is predicated on their development of partisan and educational projects. However, as detailed in the previous chapter, many conflicts have developed around *Alianza Cívica*'s coalition structure.

As already discussed, *Alianza Cívica* and the other groups under consideration have a variety of institutional mechanisms in place that are aimed at preventing or heading off potential conflicts. As may be surmised, though, there are occasions when disagreements or strife do occur, despite these safeguards. A key part of this inquiry is to understand how the groups react and adapt to the presence of open conflict. The next paragraphs and the following section address these issues.

Morrill's work (1991) is helpful in an exploration of institutional reactions to internal conflict, as he explored the idea of how informal norms govern interpersonal networks. Morrill applied Baumgartner's studies (1984, 1989) to his work on the customs of conflict management among corporate executives. "Baumgartner argues that 'loose-knit' and 'dense-knit' networks are systematically associated with particular customs of grievance pursuit" (cited in Morrill, 1991: 873). Morrill (1991) writes further that these loose-knit networks "refer to settings in which people have sparse communication about task- and relationally oriented issues and little interdependence (of information or material resources) with each other," while in terms of dense networks there is a high degree of "communication and interdependence between actors". Morrill (1991) states that Baumgartner "predicts that individuals living in loose-knit settings will

likely opt for subtle, nonconfrontational forms of pursuit, whereas aggrieved parties will be more likely to opt for confrontation in dense-knit networks.” He further defines confrontation as “the airing of grievances via talk or physical action directly between principles,” while the definition of nonconfrontation occurs when “grievances are expressed without direct verbal communication or physical action” (Morrill 1991: 872).

To some extent we can see how these concepts of loose-knit and dense-knit networks help explain how conflicts are managed within each coalition. *Alianza Cívica*, for instance, seems to provide an ideal example of how the coalition’s social distance and autonomy (Morrill, 1989) reduce the potential for conflict. Also, when conflict does occur, “subtle” and “nonconfrontational” management styles are used to confront and handle the problem. However, as noted in the section above and in those to follow, the group is hardly free of conflict: on those instances when the *Alianza Cívica* meets as a coalition tensions do occur. As observed and uncovered through archival evidence, more direct action is taken in these instances. Like *Alianza Cívica*, *Sección Mexicana* enjoys the positives of social distance, as mentioned earlier, due in part to the geographic distance between coalition partners. However, given that they meet more frequently than *Alianza Cívica*, this group does exhibit the conflict-management style that is associated with dense-knit networks, in which problems are confronted directly. Finally, the *Colectivo* exhibits the traits of a dense-knit network, as the leaders and members have weekly contact. When there was a problem, coalition leaders often confronted the membership in meetings to deal with internal issues. This is an example of what Morrill’s statement that “dense-knit settings exhibit cultures of confrontation in which the

public recognition of conflict and its outcomes are central” (1991: 873). This point is addressed further in the next chapter.

Adapting to conflict

Another form of conflict management has to do with how leaders adapt to the conflicts that emerge by making changes to the coalition. This is to say that (possibly unexpected) tensions emerge, and the coalition is changed as a way of dealing with the conflict at hand. The examples in this section show how leaders adapted to conflictive situations or tensions, usually by making changes to the organizational structure. Wood (2005) in her work on the Peoples’ Global Action (PGA) describes how this particular coalition developed mechanisms to deal with unequal power relations. For example, she observed how open the PGA was to modifying its manifestos when there were tensions over the language that was used in the documents produced by the coalition. Other mechanisms used by the PGA were decentralization of power and maintaining a horizontal communication structure. These mechanisms were developed when it was perceived that the international gatherings held by the group were a sign of power consolidation at the international level. In these two examples, it can be seen that these specific coalitions were open to adapting to accommodate their members’ needs as a part of coalition maintenance.

My observations of the Mexican coalitions revealed similar reactions to their members’ discomfort. For instance, *Sección Mexicana* has gone through a series of

changes related to how it organizes its work. As described in Chapter Three, *Sección Mexicana* has frequently dealt with tensions having to do with who represents the coalition. Since 1999 the leaders made changes to the organizational structure to increase the compatibility between its three major sectors of participants. Specifically, they created a collegial coordinating commission (CCC) that includes members from basic education, academic unions, and academics.

An example of how *Sección Mexicana*'s flexibility allowed for change in order to address conflict was described in a interview with Mariluz on August 18, 2005, when she discussed how the coalition dealt with this particular conflict over representation by creating the CCC. Apart from creating this commission, there was also a new understanding implemented to shape how the group presented itself to outside parties in which it had to respect certain principles of each constituent organization. This meant that *Sección Mexicana* did not represent itself as speaking for the individual unions but only for the group as a whole. This notion was said to be carried into their conference work. For example, when a representative of *Sección Mexicana* participates in an international event such as the Trinational Conferences, there is an agreement as to what that individual or group of delegates is responsible for. In the passage below, Mariluz's remarks are an example of how *Sección Mexicana* attempts to adapt to tensions over how the group message is represented to other organizations or contexts.

Mariluz: We will not speak for union X or Z but for the group...I cannot speak in the name of Section 18 or 9 because I am not their representative [at the Trinational Conference]. I solely can talk about the agreements that we had at the Trinational, and I have to stick to them no matter if I like them or not.

As explained in the last chapter, this flexibility in the coalition's organization, as described above, may itself be a source of conflict, as participants' expectations are based on their own prior union and coalition work which most likely employed more formalized and specific forms of decision-making (Wood, 2005). In an interview with Arturo Ramos he provided his view, which was that the general changes within union organizations were associated with a growth in the toleration of differences. These changes, he believed, were reflected within *Sección Mexicana*. He stated that, in fact, an organization with a collegial organizational style would not have been possible 20 years ago. This was due in part to the fact that political organizations then had a different way of organizing (primarily from the top down). Arturo's view was that during the last 20 years various forms of organizing have experienced crisis with centralized decision making in social and political organizations. He then explained that he reacted to this crisis by acting in ways that can be viewed as "voluntary," where union members in "democratized" unions were allowed to decide if and how they wanted to participate in organizational activities and actions.

Although these tensions were addressed, and a coordinating body within *Sección Mexicana* was created to more equally represent the three sectors of membership, conflicts over representation and leadership persisted. During the preparation period for the 7th Trilateral Conference in Oaxaca, tensions over the role of the Academics rose again, and it was decided that Mariluz would no longer be the coordinator. Instead, she was reassigned to "less mainstream responsibilities."⁹ It was proposed that she could remain in the group, with Arturo Ramos in charge of the new coordinating commission.

⁹ Reassignment was one of several methods used by top managers in handling their interpersonal grievances in the corporation studied by Morrill (1989: 393).

Other changes to the CCC included an increase in the number of members from three to five, with two members from basic education, two from higher education, and one Academic. Also, this commission is now scheduled to change every two years, and the members vote on a new commission at the *Conferencias Nacionales Ordinarias*, which are the preparatory meetings for the Trinational conference. Finally, these adaptations also give some insight into the limits of leadership skills. Meaning that leaders have reached their positions in part for their ability to create and broker relationships. When they can no longer accomplish this task they are replaced.

Another example of evolution occurred in the *Alianza Cívica* in order to address concerns that were expressed at a national meeting in 1997 over the lack of resources, when representatives of state-level organizations decided to restructure the coalition. The results of this meeting led to a proposal to deal with many of these structural problems. The proposal included, first, “restructuring the national committee to include leaders of civil society who would contribute to giving political orientation to *Alianza Cívica*.” Second, the “restructuring and strengthening of State Alliances, nine of which had disappeared, 12 were intermittent and only 11 still had some capacity of action.” Third, that “new programs would be elaborated in sensitive areas of civil action, like control of government (especially vigilance over public spending), the struggle against vote buying and coercion to vote, and the setting up of a citizen’s agenda” (Olvera, 2000). This case is somewhat different from *Sección Mexicana* because, although there was a consultation process in proposing these changes to the *Alianza Cívica*, the decision to implement them was decided by the main coordinating body in Mexico City.

Another instance that can be seen as a type of evolution was the shift in the tradition of non-collection of dues by the *Colectivo* that occurred as I was finishing my fieldwork. In an about-face, the *Colectivo* instituted a weekly ten-peso (\$1) contribution by every group, which adds up to about \$40 for the year, to be used for miscellaneous costs such as bus tickets, copying, and other costs that core members had often paid out of their own pockets. Although some members had expressed the desirability of charging dues, similar to *Alianza Cívica*, this change was actually decided upon by the main decision-makers, Raymundo and Rosa. One group leader within the *Colectivo* although sympathetic to group resource needs saw this change within the group as problematic. I had asked Valentine in an interview about the new practice of making a list and asking for money from each member during the last meeting.

Valentine: I saw what was going on and I said to myself 'what is this'. I think what is happening is that there is no money and one of the major things we have to do [in participating] with Ray and Rosa is that we have to create ways to increase resources and we have to contribute [from our own pockets] so that we can make flyers [for example]. You always have to be transparent. It is a double edged sword when you are trying to balance resource needs. I will tell you that I was very surprised when I saw what was happening. I told Ray [Raymundo] that we need a mechanism that is more transparent or this will hang us up later on.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the methods that are used by leaders in social movement coalitions to deal with the problems that surface in the maintenance of a long-standing organization. Coalitions such as *Alianza Cívica* complete projects that are so specific that they only include a wide representation of their members when it is time to implement and complete a project. And the lack of contact or distance between *Alianza Cívica* and its partners seems to limit certain types of problems (work loads concentrated on a few) while generating others (representation by only a few). This strategy allows *Alianza Cívica* to “localize” problems that might arise when it works on a project with a specific group. In the case of *Sección Mexicana*, there is a coordinating body representing three different sectors that works closely on organizational goals. Although *Sección Mexicana* has activists and an organizational structure to help minimize problems, the organization experiences constant problems over representation due, in part, to the composition of their group. There is tension between the constant stream of newly elected union representatives who are sent to participate in the coalition and those individuals who have consistently participated in the coalition. Finally, the *Colectivo* meets regularly, which allows for coalition leaders to deal with any problems in the group and continue to motivate members to work on obtaining the *viviendas*. However, the group’s lack of incorporation of its members into the organizing process has set up a system where most of the responsibility lies in the hands of two long-time leaders.

What this chapter has also demonstrated is that leadership skill is vital when dealing with internal conflicts within social movements (See Appendix A: Table 1

Organizational Structure and Conflict Management). For example, leaders in the coalitions employ their knowledge of the communities they are working in, as was observed in the case of participants of *Alianza Civica*, or their knowledge of history of inter-union tensions as in the case of *Sección Mexicana* representatives. Leaders in the three coalitions also relied on their knowledge of organizational repertoires in guiding the creation of their respective coalition. This knowledge allowed for the leaders to recreate the coalitions in ways that accommodated aired tensions between coalition partners.

As stated the differences in conflict management between coalitions and SMOs is that the individuals are constrained in their actions because they are representatives of other organizations. This is observable in the efforts made by activists in building and maintaining relationships with coalition partners. In the coalitions observed time was taken to address the particular needs and concerns of member organizations. For example, in the description of how Rocío of *Alianza Civica* went about reinitiating and creating new relationships through her own fieldwork with organizations based in Oaxaca provides evidence for this process. She had to physically be present in Oaxaca and took substantial steps at making contact with organizations for the purposes of completing the coalition project. This involved making personal contact with each potential and lapsed coalition partner. This effort at integrating membership organization puts a premium on making sure that such a collaborative effort is successful. Rocío's efforts also reflect the short term nature of the alliance. This type of energy in maintaining relationships would be difficult to maintain in an SMO. Additionally, within an SMO the hierarchical nature of the organization would bring members into line when trying to accomplish a particular task. In a coalition you can not rely of this fact when trying to accomplish a project.

Alianza Civica has to rely on the volunteerism of other organization and individuals to get their projects completed. It is unlikely that an SMO would go outside of its own membership in order to accomplish a specific task.

The next section addresses the actions that were taken by leaders and activists deliberation and intervene on both ongoing and situational conflict.

CHAPTER FIVE: MANAGING AND DELIBERATION

ON SITUATIONAL AND ONGOING CONFLICT

In the first chapter I had stated that the leadership in SMOs needs to balance the task of maintaining member commitment to group goals in conjunction with their efforts to reach out to other organizations (Zald and Ash Garner, 1987). The skill sets of leaders are most important of accomplishing this task of organizational maintenance and establishing relationship with other SMOs. The qualities of participants in SMOs, specifically the skill sets, experiences, and the repertoires of activists which motivate mobilization and maintenance of the groups, have been examined by other scholars (Tilly, 1995; Voss and Sherman, 2000; Bystydzienski and Schacht, 2003; Bandy, 2004; Ganz, 2004; Bandy and Smith, 2005). These attributes of individuals are important factors to consider in an analysis of conflict within organizations, as they can modify or magnify the impact of any conflict both on the institution and the people involved. Further, the skills and experiences of group leaders constitute a key part of the “assets” of their organization.

This chapter examines the methods, maneuvers, and actions that were taken by activists in managing conflict in coalition and which were informed by their social or “leadership capital” (Nepstad and Bob, 2006). Additionally, this chapter adds to a burgeoning trend in the literature that has begun to problematize the role of leaders in

social movements (Barker, Johnston, and Lavalette, 2001; Aminzade, Goldstone, and Perry, 2002; Veltmeyer and Petras, 2002; Diani, 2003; Nepstad and Bob, 2006).

Leadership Capacities

In the last chapter, I discussed the significance of local knowledge in coalitions in their organizing efforts. This was primarily explained in terms of how leaders use information and contacts that serve to preempt conflict. However, we can also think of local knowledge as the qualities or the experiences that are held by the activists. These are factors that aid in managing and/or alleviating conflict.

Scholars have discussed the significance of social-movement activists' qualities and have defined them as "personal resources" (Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette, 2001), "cultural capital" (Nepstad and Bob, 2006), "education capital" (Morris and Staggenborg, 2004), "domain-relevant skills" (Ganz, 2004), or possession of experience with "cross-cultural socialization" (Rose, 2000). In short, local knowledge is social capital (Edwards, Foley, and Diani, 2003).

There is some discussion as to the source of leadership skills, as Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette (2001: 11) state that leadership demands commitment to such tasks as "synthesizing" of information and persuasion. Much of this activist training involves observation, listening, talking, and participation (Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette, 2001). These skills are largely gathered through educational opportunities. Morris and

Staggenborg (2004) write that educational capital is an important resource for social movements.

To be successful, social movements require that a myriad of intellectual tasks be performed extremely well. A host of social movement activities – framing grievances and formulating ideologies, debating, interfacing with media, writing, orating, devising strategies and tactics, creatively synthesizing information gleaned from local, national, and international venues, dialoguing with internal and external elites, improvising and innovating, developing rationales for coalition building and channeling emotions – are primarily intellectual tasks (Morris and Staggenborg, 2004).

However, there are uncredentialed sources of social movement training (Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette, 2001; Morris and Staggenborg, 2004, Veltmeyer and Petras, 2002). Similarly, Nepstad and Bob (2006) stress the importance of local idioms and practices. However, they single out the significance in what they define as universalistic capital and transcultural skills. Universalistic capital includes the knowledge of “values, sympathies, cultural principles and political trends within the broader public they seek to engage” (Nepstad and Bob, 2005: 4), while transcultural skills are the “ability to operate effectively in multiple milieus among widely differing audiences” (Nepstad and Bob, 2006: 4).

In short, all of these traits provide leaders with an advantage for accessing constituents, groups of activists, or other audiences or participants. Leaders with such traits can better understand expressions of internal conflict or have the skills to deal with them, given their knowledge of these settings. This is important, as Morris and Staggenborg make clear when they state that, among many other tasks, leaders are responsible for coalition building and channeling emotion. Diani (2003: 56) writes that,

when working with organizations which can have their own diversity of actors (both organizations and individuals), leaders'

influence over social movement networks [is tied to] to their capacity to link groups and organizations that are not merely disconnected, but positively kept apart by some cultural or ideological barrier. The emergence of a movement cannot be reduced to a process of successful coalition building; it also entails the formation of a collective identity. It entails, in other words, the recognition of commonalities between actors that previously were not merely strangers, but often regarded each other as positively different, and sometimes as antagonists.

Leaders are responsible for finding these commonalities and pushing past barriers between people and groups. This can be a constant and complex task.

Leadership and Managing Conflict

Leaders, according to Morris and Staggenborg (2004: 171), are the “strategic decision-makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements.” In coalitions, leaders work to “demonstrate a micropolitics of democracy.” This includes the necessity that leaders demonstrate qualities such as “generosity, openness, and a commitment to equality – as they openly affirm and respect members’ needs for autonomy while promoting inclusive participation toward general common goals” (Bandy 2004 cited in Bandy and Smith, 2005: 245). One can see how these characteristics could serve to mitigate conflict.

In their work, Bandy and Smith (2005) found that leaders or brokers were a common factor in the building of transnational coalitions. They define a broker with McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's (2001: 26) definition which is the "linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relationships with one another and/or with yet other sites." Bandy and Smith (2005: 240) state that "coalitions could not survive without each organization's members taking some responsibility for brokering the bonds of solidarity." Brokers possess special qualities and skill sets that serve to maintain coalition integrity. These qualities include the level of legitimacy they possess within the coalition and the authority or weight they hold within the coalition, both of which provide some advantage at building and negotiating relationships. The source for this authority comes from an array of innate and attributed qualities that include charisma, status, or elected position. Finally, these individuals are able to communicate, educate, provide a common platform for "discourse," manage conflict, and allow open discussion within a coalition (Barvosa-Carter, 2001; Bandy and Smith, 2005; Cullen, 2005), thus contributing to the survival of such organizations (Bell and Delany, 2001).

Additionally, leaders have personal interests in their work with an SMO that can include intrinsic rewards, personal commitment, and added value in their social movement work (Ganz, 2004; Cullen, 2005).¹⁰ It is possible that leaders also draw satisfaction from their capacity to deal with the difficulties in social movement coalition work. This motivation may provide them, for example, with the impetus to engage their creative capacities or to acquire new skills for tackling these issues, which may be quite

¹⁰ These interests can be the basis of conflict between leaders and members (Klandermans, 1989).

diverse. The “salient knowledge” or skills of the leaders aid in dealing with a variety of people or contexts (Ganz, 2004). Finally, scholars have addressed the role of “emotion work,” often accomplished by women, that is involved in organizing, particularly in the coalition-building process. Much of this demanding and essentially “invisible” work involves finding commonalities between diverse interests (Bandy and Bickham Mendez, 2003; Ferree and Merrill, 2004).

Conflict Management by Coalition Leaders

Leaders tend to publicize internal conflict. In this instance, “publicize” refers to the airing of conflicts before the other participants in a coalition. The voicing of conflict can be viewed as a method for managing these organizational challenges. However, in most cases more attention is necessary than merely giving voice to conflicts. In some instances, internal coalition conflict is situational (ex: grievances expressed in a meeting), which requires immediate, substantive intervention. Another tactic is behind-the-scenes deliberation by leaders on what strategies to use in dealing with a particular organizational grievance. There are, of course, situations and contexts where participants decide to confront conflict by choosing to avoid or ignore it, or to use some other non-confrontational reaction. These strategies are addressed later. My observations of the *Colectivo*, *Sección Mexicana*, and *Alianza Cívica* provided examples of these and other ways in which group leaders handle conflict. (For the duration of this chapter, the instances of conflict management that are examined here are labeled “scenarios.”)

Confrontation

In the case of the *Colectivo*, I observed several confrontational approaches that were used by the main leaders.¹¹ Before these approaches are identified, it is useful to detail the leadership style in this coalition, particularly that of Raymundo Hernandez: his general weekly meeting demeanor and the setting in which he worked. Raymundo's presentation style was energetic and his method for running weekly meetings had the tone of a classroom lecturer. These qualities resembled but were not identical to Polletta's model for tutelage in SMOs (2004).

At weekly meetings, Raymundo would introduce a topic for discussion and guide the members along in understanding a particular social issue. However, Raymundo's style fell short in that he lacked either the capability or interest to guide members' participation or initiative in organizing activities. If Raymundo had been able to involve others, such guidance might have resulted in the development of more organizational leaders (Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette, 2001; Polletta, 2002) and, perhaps, achieved speedier results. I discovered in my observation of the *Colectivo's* weekly meetings that Raymundo often used examples, stories, and metaphors in his lectures. However, the meetings also seemed to function as Raymundo's pulpit to get across his own ideas, goals, and perhaps to vent his grievances about the organization, its goals, and Mexican society in general. The possibility that the *Colectivo* served as an outlet for Raymundo brings to mind the research on the "preservation function" of social conflict that can

¹¹ Here, I am using Morrill's (1991: 872) definition of confrontation as "the airing of grievances via talk or physical action directly between principles." Non-confrontation occurs when "grievances are expressed without direct verbal communication or physical action."

develop from the airing of grievances (Coser, 1956). This outlet may be warranted given that the coalition is not a professional organization which contributed to leadership frustrations with group progress. Raymundo is able to release his frustrations on the *Colectivo*. The membership seemingly tolerates his passionate expressions of grievance and possibly aids in maintaining Raymundo's commitment to the group.

In meetings, Raymundo discussed topics as diverse as privatization, genetically modified foods, Marxism, and Aztec culture. When he used this lecturer mode in presenting these topics they were often articulated in a manner that seemed to be not easily accessible to most of the *Colectivo*'s participants. This may have explained their lack of participation in meetings when he discussed these topics. However, another explanation could involve the fact that the weekly meetings were held late in the evening, after work, when fatigue perhaps dulled listeners' motivation and keenness of mind. From what I observed, participation by the membership mainly involved showing up for weekly meetings (which meant sitting and listening), marches, and those instances when the membership attended negotiation sessions with the INVI.

Counseling and Clout

Various interactive approaches were used by *Colectivo* leaders as they dealt with the members. First (**Scenario #1**), Raymundo used what can be categorized as a *counseling* approach when dealing with internal problems. Morrill (1989) detailed the authoritative counseling that sometimes went on between corporate executives in the

corporations he examined. He wrote, “[S]ometimes superiors informally counsel their most able subordinates following verbal or written commands. When this occurs, the language used becomes more conciliatory or even ‘helpful’ as the superior attempts to explain to subordinates how they can “get on the right track” (Morrill, 1989: 392).

Scenario #1 is a counseling example that demonstrates how leaders react to an ongoing problem. That is, this scenario is not situational. In the following example, it can be seen that Raymundo’s approach to the situation demonstrates a high level of deliberation; in other words, his behavior was strategic, not just a spontaneous reaction. On November 15, 2005, I observed as Raymundo spoke to the *Colectivo* about the intra-group problems that he associated with internal harmony and communication. As he stood in front of the other members, he began the meeting by looking at the group with a disappointed look on his face and asked, “*Somos compañeros, no?*” (Aren’t we all colleagues?) Then he talked about the infighting that he had observed in the *Colectivo*.

In his remarks, Raymundo identified three levels of friendship which included “*camaradas*” (comrades), “*amigos*” (friends), and “*compañeros*” (colleagues). He explained that *camaradas* was the highest expression of friendship and the term *compañero* was a minimal expression of friendship. Polletta’s (2002) discussion of Lugones and Rosezelle’s (1995) work on feminist activists is helpful here. These authors made distinctions between the concept of *hermana* (sister), *amiga*, and *compañera*. Summarizing Lugones and Rosezelle, Polletta (2002: 174) writes that “*compañera* does not require the depth of emotional attachment and sympathetic communication that *hermana* and *amiga* require.” She quotes Lugones and Rosezelle further, “*Compañera* connotes egalitarianism, but the egalitarianism is one of companionship and participation

in common political struggle...The term does not connote unconditional bonding.” This model elucidates what Raymundo seemed to convey to the *Colectivo*, that *compañerismo* is a model for the level of group commitment and is defined by having trust in one another. The “lesson” Raymundo conveyed is that the *Colectivo* members should feel mutual respect as they work toward group goals. This sentiment was reiterated as Raymundo stated

“We are here [at the meeting] for something...for life, not for death... not for the worst...We need to start talking about that... ..What is the best? What is it that serves us best? In what way can we help deal with our conflicts...this would be good...this is what we have to reflect on within each group.”

Raymundo further used this particular internal problem as an entry point to discuss other conflicts, such as the lack of communication in the group. For example, some of the members had failed to submit the documents that were necessary for the negotiation process with *el INVI*. However, as mentioned previously, Raymundo’s response to the problem had not been immediate. Instead, there was some degree of deliberation before he actually addressed the issues of internal harmony and communication with the group. Indeed, they were not mentioned until the problem had spilled over into a negotiation meeting at *el INVI*.

In the details of Scenario #1 we begin to see how leaders use both their cultural and symbolic capital in order to deal with this particular problem. Cultural capital is the knowledge, skills and abilities of a constituent population, and symbolic capital is the “prestige, honor, and social recognition” that are possessed by leaders (Nepstad and Bob, 2006: 4). Raymundo *knows* the *Colectivo*, and his wide experience is a key factor. He understands their difficulties and frustrations, since he has worked in housing movements

since the 1980s. He has known a number of the individual members since their days in the ABCM. And, finally, he was a street vendor for a period of time between his two posts with Mexico City PRD officials.

Given Raymundo's depth of involvement with the *Colectivo* and other housing movements, he essentially "knows how to talk to this group." So, he provides them with a guide to internal group interactions based on the term *compañero*, a common reference used by people in social movements and other political organizations, and he confronts these problems with a lesson on how to respect one another in the *Colectivo*. It also serves Raymundo well that he can draw on his symbolic capital as the leader of the organization. Despite the fact that the *Colectivo* is made up of a constellation of various housing projects, it is Raymundo's group, and he has the greatest amount of clout or moral authority in the coalition (Nepstad and Bob, 2006).

One example of this type of clout was observable in *Colectivo* weekly meetings. I observed that the meeting would not begin until Raymundo showed up at the community center. Leticia, one of the members of the *Colectivo* who eventually left the group over having charged group members for architectural costs had stated the following in an interview on September 10, 2004. In the interview she spoke at length about her participation in the *Colectivo*.

Leticia: ...if Raymundo does not show up and I begin the meeting, like you might have observed that day [the meeting the previous week], we did not initiate the meeting because Raymundo did not show up. Many times I have begun meeting in the past, the members do not pay attention until Raymundo shows up and then I have to say everything all over again.

As the *Colectivo*'s identified leader, Raymundo is the individual who openly confronted the group's problem. That is, he is the person who decided to voice the grievance and discuss it. He then placed the burden of coming to a resolution in the hands of the group. Although his approach is that of a counselor, it also attempts to provoke reflection and to some degree *shame* for their previous behavior in the members. It is questionable whether such a strategy actually resolved this grievance, however, as similar conflicts continued to occur in the coalition.

In my observations of *Sección Mexicana*, I saw situations that were similar to Scenario #1 in which an activist's clout and ability to moderate communication were significant in addressing conflict. As discussed in Chapter Three, conflict in *Sección Mexicana* emerged frequently over the question of representation (**Scenario #2**). This issue was targeted at the role of the Academics who participated in the coalition. Some union representatives frequently brought up the fact that Mariluz (one of the group's key leaders) did not represent an organization and thus should not be allowed to participate. The reason voiced was that the union representatives represented thousands of workers, while Mariluz and others like her represented only themselves. Therefore, to many of these members it did not make sense that the Academics would have an equal footing with the union representatives. Also, some members thought that it was unfair that Mariluz personally benefited from her role as a coordinator of *Sección Mexicana*, as she was able to fly and visit various countries on behalf of the group which widened her circle of professional contacts and increased her standing at home. However, other coalition members vigorously defended Mariluz's presence and actions.

Arturo Ramos, of STAUACH, stated that when he began participating in *Sección Mexicana* in 2001 this tension over the Academics had been present. In an interview on August 3, 2005, Arturo explained that his effectiveness in dealing with this problem about representation was that he saw his role as a *mediator* in *Sección Mexicana* and often tried to find amicable solutions to these and other issues in the organization.

Arturo: I think it was good that I committed myself [to *Sección Mexicana*] and also that because of my personality, which is to be the conciliator, mediator,...I play this role...[One] example is that the entire time I held that we cannot throw out individuals like Mariluz because they have been the originators, the ones that have dedicated the most effort.

Another example of this capacity comes from an April 19, 2005 interview where he explained how he tried to deal with conflict in the coalition.

Arturo: So in *Sección Mexicana* although most of the members are very tolerant, for example, with my personality, [more importantly] than anything else, I have been able to achieve a lot when conflictive positions have emerged, I am able to accomplish the task of posing [the problem] facing both sides. I am able to reach a point of consensus where neither side has won. At times we don't reach this point. [But] this is the role I play.

It is of course to Arturo's advantage that he shapes himself as the mediator within the group. Meaning that it is convenient for him to tell the story that within the coalition he is the one that can bring people together when conflicts emerge, thereby, dramatizing his importance to the group. In this interview he took time to describe the conflict as he perceived it which included inter-union conflict and tension over the participation of Academics. Arturo also used this occasion to place blame on one union over why these

conflicts emerged. In one case Arturo was dismissive of Section 18 behavior in the coalition:

Arturo: Section 18 of Michoacán is, I don't know, now [participating] excessively with many organizations, and so it is in tense relations with everyone and it has problems with Mariluz and with everyone else simply because we have our own opinions. They prefer that everything be resolved through votes or a majority, no, [and the reason] they give is that 'we are too many, we are wrong; there is always some [reason].'

However, that said we can look back on the earlier conflict (**Scenario #2**) with regard to interview segments about his conflict management skills, where we can, to some degree, understand how Arturo went about participating in the management of this conflict with academics. In interviews, he stated that in situations during the monthly meetings where participants in *Sección Mexicana* criticized the presence of the Academics he raised the argument that these individuals were of value to the group in terms of the prestige and the amount of labor they contributed to the coalition. This particular disagreement seemed to occur more frequently in those situations when finances were involved, which had to do with travel to conferences or conference and event organizing. Here, Schwartz, et al.'s (1981) work is helpful in understanding why this conflict with leadership occurred as it often appears to follow a "round of intense activity" which then leads to group evaluation and often highlights the differences in access to group resources (financial and other) that are available to by leaders versus members. Specifically, in this case, the group's leaders often have their travel and lodging expenses paid by organizational funds, whereas members must pay their own

expenses or find subsidy from another source. This seems to exacerbate already-problematic issues among the coalition members.

In interviews with Arturo, it appeared that his capacity to deal with these situations stemmed from his social, cultural, and symbolic capital (Morris and Staggenborg, 2004; Nepstad and Bob, 2006). Ganz (2004) explains that leaders' creativity is facilitated when they come into contact with "diverse points of view – within one's own life experience or the combined experience of the members of a group." Arturo's previous experience with social movements, education, and the hands-on training that was gained from serving on his union's strike committees seemed to serve him well in these kinds of conflictual situations. As a sociologist at the University of Chapingo he could argue the benefits of having academics in the coalition based, in part, on his ability to identify with the researchers. Also, Arturo is a union activist who has held various positions in STAUACH. Arturo's role in handling this problem is an example of a situation that Ganz (2004) identifies as one in which leaders are more successful when they are "insiders" to one group and "outsiders" to others. His "multiple" or "hybrid" identities as union member, former secretary general of STAUACH, activist, teacher, and sociologist allow him to speak from different positions of legitimacy. Additionally, Arturo's experience on the collective bargaining teams of STAUACH and almost 20 years as an activist in multiple SMOs explain this capacity to deal with conflict. Therefore his "domain-relevant skills" included the skills and information (negotiating, activism, union organizations) which could be applied to the setting (a coalition made of diverse sectors of educational workers and academics) in which he found himself (Ganz, 2004).

Lastly, it is also significant in Scenario #2 that, as a man who held a high office in his union, Arturo has access to others in the “upper echelons” of his union and other organizations, and his word has a considerable amount of influence. In their work, Bandy and Bickham Mendez (2003) state that women’s issues took a back seat to other issues that were more germane to the male industrial union leadership in the cross-border coalition they studied. According to female activists they interviewed in these cross-border labor coalitions, this reflected the common circumstance that issues and positions of power are skewed toward male interests: “[T]he authoritarian tendencies with labor organizations have accompanied a fraternal and masculine orientation of its organizers” (Bandy and Bickham Mendez, 2003: 177). As noted in previous chapters, we can also see these types of grievances in *Sección Mexicana*. Chapter Four details how the coalition has made several changes to add extra layers of accountability in the organization (some might argue that this adds even more masculine layers) and restructured the main organizing body, the CCC, which happens to be predominantly male. One of the more significant changes was that Arturo was named the group’s coordinator after several years during which Mariluz was at the helm, thus removing one of the few women who hold a powerful position. This change reflects a leadership structure that most union activists in Mexico are accustomed to that has a

division of labor around private and public space, in which female activists and their community organizations are expected to occupy the *promotora* roles of educator or event coordinator, while male unionists work as spokesmen and strategists planning strikes, elections, and negotiations (Bandy and Bickham Mendez, 2003: 178).

Even in an organization such as *Sección Mexicana*, that rarely uses radical tactics and focuses most of its activities on educational campaigns, conference coordination, and

research, we may observe the repetition of the gendered traditions of union hierarchies within a coalition that was organized, in part, in order to circumvent such tendencies.

Teaching

As may be seen in Scenario #1, part of the counseling approach to conflict involves *teaching*. The examples that follow provide evidence of how internal conflicts become teaching moments for the *Colectivo*. They also help to demonstrate the degree of deliberation that is used by *Colectivo* leaders.

Raymundo “teaches” through example. He provided several examples to the membership when he gave voice to internal group organizational problems. In one case during a November 15, 2004, meeting (**Scenario #3**), he used the film, “The Patriot,” to demonstrate these problems. Here, Raymundo used this example to explain that there was a problem with group cohesiveness within the *Colectivo*.

Raymundo: The community organizes itself... They confront the English, and they begin to win, but they do not secure their town. They return to visit their families and then go back to the field; in their return they commit an error. When they go back to fight, the English army burns the townspeople in the church... Something like this has happened to us. We went to fight outside, and we did not take care of the inside. This is very important.

Raymundo attributed this problem with cohesiveness to the “youthfulness” of the membership. This was a critique of the lack of organization and professionalism, but it was delivered in a way that shifted the blame off of the membership. To some extent, he

pointed out, these problems were not the fault of individuals but, instead, had to do with the “newness” of the organization or group errors. This seemed to be a method that, to some degree, absolved everyone of blame for these problems.

In the same meeting, Raymundo then explained that he believed that many people belonged to the group for personal or “miserly” interests. He then proceeded to describe a study that he had read about communities and related it to a possible outcome of the lack of cohesiveness.

Raymundo: with 10 people, it [a community] will disappear, if a town holds at 10 people...I don't remember which country...their communities are not very big. But when they hold at 10 they say, “We'll erase the town,” because they know that it will not be possible to reproduce, to have neither children nor grandchildren. In Mexico it seems that the number is a little larger. If they have 30 inhabitants the tendency is to disappear. I mention this because it is significant that in the case of our group this is happening to us. There are *compañeros* that do not have a clue about it...their problem is disengagement with the group.

Hostility

The counseling approach described above could and did give way to another form of more openly confronting problems, at times within the same meeting. This approach is categorized as *authoritative*. That is, it reflected a superior-subordinate relationship, where the person in the superior position gave authoritative commands to subordinates (Morrill, 1989). In the *Colectivo*, this involved the leadership openly ridiculing and

humiliating the membership. In the meeting of November 15, 2005, Raymundo criticized the lack of attentiveness, professionalism, and the self-interested mindset of the members. This constituted **Scenario #4**, which was a situation in which Raymundo began by explaining the status of the group's project in *el Centro*, where many of the members were trying to establish ownership of their properties and which involved both housing and business sites. Raymundo described the coalition's goals as intermixed. This meant that issues involving one set of properties could not be resolved independent of another's. Primarily, this had to do with the strategy that had been proposed by the *Colectivo* to *INVI* in which the *el Centro* projects called for the installation of a combination of *vivienda* (housing) and *comercio* (shops).

Raymundo: How do we solve the trouble with *viviendas* and *comercio*? Is there a solution? Well, no, *compañeros*! Since all you see are your *puestos* only your *puestos*, you will not be able to resolve this, because we are proposing a project that integrates *viviendas* and *comercio*, and *no les cae el viento!* (You don't get it!)

In the passage above, Raymundo talked down to the group. He insinuated that their motivations were selfish and uninformed. As mentioned, Raymundo addressed this issue in response to the problems that occurred at an *INVI* meeting where housing authorities witnessed the infighting in the *Colectivo*. Here, he shifted his strategy in the coalition meeting and confronted the problem of the lack of professionalism and self-interested motivation in a hostile manner. Again, he would have been fairly certain that this would be a successful tactic based on his understanding of the group, and he knew that it was unlikely that he would be openly challenged by another member when he used this approach. This was due, in part, to his elevated position in the *Colectivo*, and, in

part, to what he could offer to the members in terms of services. Also, his years of training as an activist provided him with effective tools for debate and negotiation.

Other instances were observed during *Colectivo* meetings that in which this authoritative and hostile form of confrontation was used by leaders. One case in point (**Scenario #5**) was the conflict described in Chapter Three over the incidence of overcharging in the coalition. As in Scenario #4, this shows the level of planning leaders use in order to address internal conflict. Prior to the meeting on November 28, 2004, Raymundo and Rosa decided to “entrap” some members of the *Colectivo* in order to single out the omissions in how their projects were managed and their communications with the leadership.

The meeting was led by Rosa prior to Raymundo’s arrival. After he got there, Raymundo confronted the membership over their series of discrepancies. Much of the discussion up to that point had involved a meeting with *el INVI* that had been set up without consultation with the leadership and discrepancies with the reported structural condition of *Correo Mayor 10*. About half an hour into the meeting Raymundo raced into the auditorium, walked up the steps to where we were seated, and stated, “Tell her [Rosa] the truth *compañeros!*... You did not tell the truth about the *padrones* (a census on how many potential inhabitants there were for each housing project).” Because of a phone call to Rosa in which they had discussed what some of the members had said, Raymundo was aware of what had transpired during the meeting prior to his arrival. Raymundo’s accusations led to a tense exchange with *Colectivo* member Rogelio of *Correo Mayor 10*. At one point, Raymundo raised his voice in response to Rogelio’s remark that Raymundo had the freedom to enter new petitioners into any *vivienda*

project. He shouted, “I do not want to enter anybody! We left it that here we were to define the *padrones*! Because they are screwed up! Because we do not know how many people are being approved? Because we do not know what the money is for [the overcharging]. Because you are doing it [overcharging] in my name...I have not authorized any charges!”

Rogelio, seated in front of Raymundo, responded to his criticisms about unauthorized charges to *Colectivo* members by reminding Raymundo about the source of his past “salary,” which was provided through member donations. Their exchange is provided here to demonstrate the extent of the confrontation.

Rogelio: Well for you. When we have given money. We gave it to you.

Raymundo: What money?! What money?! [He is standing over Rogelio and shouting down at him.]

Rogelio: From *Academia*, every eight days.

Raymundo: What money?! Tell me [to the membership]: Who asked for the *arraigo* (legalization of projects)?! What meeting with David?! What *padrones*?! The situation is not simple, so tell me with which *padrones* are we going? And with which *compañeros*? Tell the truth to Rosa!... Which *padrones* are we taking to *INVI*? When did we close [the discussion on] the *padrones* in the properties [in question]? When did we say that?!

Throughout this exchange, the hostility between Raymundo and Rogelio was escalated ever further, as Raymundo’s credibility was challenged. This led Raymundo to address the problem in a confrontational style, providing a concrete example of Morrill’s description of conflict in small, intensely interrelational groups: “dense-knit settings exhibit cultures of confrontation in which the public recognition of conflict and its outcomes are central” (1989: 873). What also contributed to the escalation of the

combative exchange is that a subordinate (Rogelio) challenged a superior (Raymundo). This tense interaction between Raymundo and Rogelio led to the latter's eventual departure from the *Colectivo*, along with other individuals that had engaged in overcharging the membership. This tactic may have served Raymundo and Rosa in two ways, first, that the accused would leave the group. Second, this tactic served as a lesson to the entire membership about their expectations for how members were to comport themselves in the *Colectivo*.

This November 28 interchange demonstrates how hostility can be used as a method for addressing conflicts. Both Scenarios #4 and #5 also show how these particular leaders deliberate about the ways in which they will address internal problems before the membership. In both cases, the leaders observed or were made aware of a particular ongoing problem and decided how to address it.

Scenario #6 is a case where the strategy of hostility seemed to instill fear in the coalition. It provoked, in this case, a response in which some of the members reacted in a conciliatory manner toward Raymundo's hostility. At the end of this same November 28, 2004, meeting several of the women in the group made a point of saying goodnight to Raymundo. Many walked up to him to shake his hand or give him a hug. It seemed as though they were trying to convey the sentiment that they supported him and that they wanted to avoid further tension. Perhaps they feared that, if he felt sufficiently alienated from the others, Raymundo would no longer help them with their *vivienda* process. Again, in this organization, Raymundo is the individual with connections to housing authorities and in possession of negotiation skills and tactics that are not present among the majority of the membership. Also significant from these meetings is that the issues

were not so much considered by the *Colectivo* as a group, but rather they were presented to the membership by Raymundo.

Generally, the members of the *Colectivo* did not react openly to these kinds of provocations by the leadership. Instead, they tended to “tolerate” (Morrill, 1989) the leaders’ tirades or to react with inaction. Their inaction could be read as a strategy of patient endurance and permanent avoidance of conflict (Morrill, 1989) with *Colectivo* leaders. As Morrill (1989) writes, the subordinates in a corporate structure held long-standing tensions against their bosses. However, they chose not to voice their discontents or found other methods to communicate these tensions. Finally, the fact that a majority of the meeting’s attendees were women may have encouraged Raymundo to use this authoritative approach even when dealing with men. This may explain why he would revert to this kind of approach.

As observed, **Scenario #7** did not involve using hostility to quell conflict, but, instead, it showed how the activists within *Sección Mexicana* reacted to another member’s hostility. This instance occurred during a ride back to the nearest metro station with some teachers of Section Nine of the CNTE after the *Sección Mexicana Reunión Nacional*, which had been hosted at the National Autonomous University of Chapingo in the State of Mexico. The conference was convened in order to prepare the coalition’s platform for the April, 2006, meeting of the 7th Trinational Conference in Defense of Public Education to be held in Oaxaca City, Mexico. On the ride back I struck up a conversation with Pedro Hernandez about the conference, and, at one point, we talked about the end of the conference where time was given in order to inform the members about logistics, plans, and the costs of the conference that was to be held in Oaxaca. As

discussed in Chapter Three, at one point during the meeting a representative from Section 18 of the CNTE expressed his concerns in a raised voice about the costs of food, the cultural events that were planned during the Trinational conference, and the number of delegates allotted to Section 22 of the CNTE, which was to host the event.

Several participants who had attended the National conference responded to the concerns. At no point did those who responded try to shoot down (directly) or disqualify the concerns that were raised by their *compañero*. Instead, they used techniques to deal with this moment of tension. For example, Mariluz stood up went through reiterating the purpose of the conference costs. She went as far as to call the cost “tentative” and to explain the history of conference participation at Trinational meetings, the contacts made, and how they generally work to get proportional representative. Then Pedro intervened speaking only to the conference coordinators, stated that the plans were “fine as they were...we should stray with the number [we allotted]...Every union should decided their participation.” that there was no need for changes. He provided little recognition to what the section 22 representative had said. Then another participant re-labels a portion of a grievance that had been mentioned. He stated that that part of the hosting union participants would be official representatives but the majority we be received as delegate to the meeting. Then the Felix, from Section 22 member who was running this portion of the meeting restated the fact that collectively the coalition had already made many of the arrangements for the conference and that this is not a personal decision.

Pedro, after the conference, further explained to me that there are many tensions within the CNTE. He stated that Section 18 continues to try to dominate all of the spaces and organizations in which it participates, which explains, in part, the scene they made at

the conference. This often generates conflicts within the CNTE. But, he went on, “In *Sección Mexicana* we run our meetings differently from the way that we would in our union [Section Nine] or in the CNTE.” What we can take from my exchange with Pedro is that coalition members were used to complaints from Section 18, and this might have reduced their willingness to lend credence to the tensions expressed, particularly when this union had been absent from previous proceedings. Additionally, given that part of the meeting’s purpose was to achieve consensus on all aspects of organizing the conference it seemed more suitable that the other participants try to ameliorate the Section 18 representative and his conflicts. In a later interview with Felix Garcia of Seccion 22 (Oaxaca) he gave a different take on what had occurred during this meeting. In the following passage he talks about his read on the concerns raised by the Section 18 representative.

Felix: First, he had a right to say so. He had a reason to say what he wanted because he was not there [at the previous meeting] when we settled the delegate question. But second, he was intervening in an agreement made at those previous meetings where we had settled on how many delegates each group would have. If they [Section 18] were there [at the meetings] then they could have launched their complaints about the delegates in those meetings...in that sense, they do have the right, they have the right to ask for more delegate for their union, but they do not have the right to change an agreement already made at previous meetings.

This kind of deliberation was observed in another meeting of *Sección Mexicana* (**Scenario #8**) where the topic of discussion was whether the coalition would include themselves in an international meeting in Canada where the president of the official teachers union (the SNTE) was planning to attend. In my observation of an April 9, 2005

meeting Mariluz raised the following concern about Ester Gordillo president of the SNTE. Mariluz had insisted that “they can not be seated at the same table with Ester Gordillo” or find a way to have her “barred from participating.” Other members began to intervene. Pedro brought up the fact that many unions in other countries in Latin America have asked about their relationship to the SNTE and Ester Gordillo (Pedro had attended a recent international meeting in Cuba). Pedro then voiced his objection differently from Mariluz and stated that they would not be in agreement with such an arrangement, however, that time should be spent in explaining why they object. Arturo then intervened by agreeing that they should reject this idea. He then when only to explain the importance of this as it would be an opportunity to explain to union members in other countries about what goes on in Mexico. Arturo then point out “we should also consider that maybe Red Sepa needs to be are part of this organization (host organization for the conference). He went further to say that RED SEPA is important for the coalition. Mariluz chimed in by stating “I am not saying we should leave RED SEPA. We have a lot of work [in collaboration} with this group.” She when onto say that the national union already has a international presence and that *Sección Mexicana* has opened a path for “democratic union” [to work internationally]. This dialogue ended with no resolution and they left this topic for another day.

Shaming

Scenario #9 is a situational example which occurred at the November 28 *Colectivo* weekly meeting where Raymundo confronted the organization's lack of attentiveness to other commitments and communication.

Raymundo: Rosa explained what happened in the *Dialogo Nacional*¹². There are *compañeros* here that did not go or make an appearance or [spend] half a minute to see what the situation was... That is a very serious problem of the *Colectivo*...the *compañeros* go about in a crazy manner, [going] about their work, and they don't bother attending and learning about the current state of affairs.

This statement is contradictory to what Raymundo mentioned in weekly meetings and interviews about the separation between the organization's political and social work. He stated clearly that the members who did not want to participate in political work could focus on their *vivienda* projects. However, as mentioned, this meeting was used to fish out inconsistencies in communication and trust between some members of the group, and Raymundo admonished the entire organization. He took the opportunity to shame them for their focus on their particular projects and lives while ignoring other issues and events that he viewed as significant for the entire *Colectivo*. Raymundo took the opportunity to remind the coalition exactly who was in charge of the group. He stated, at one point, "We are going to a meeting that I did not know about, nor why we are going. They have not notified me, and I did not ask [for the meeting]. I said very clearly to David Cervantes that he should call us [Raymundo/Rosa] for special meetings."

¹² A national conference of coalitions was held in the fall of 2004 representing labor unions, human rights, anti-neoliberalism, and *campesino* workers (see la Botz, 2005).

Here, the meeting in question was organized by another member, but Raymundo criticized the group for their lack of respect for the leadership structure. He made a point to single out who was the leader. Raymundo then continued with his earlier discussion about the lack of honest communication and began to explain how he and Rosa set up the *Colectivo* members with the purpose of uncovering the communication problems between themselves and the membership. In addition, he commented on their responses to Rosa's interrogation about the progress on each of the *vivienda* projects. This was clearly another lesson in who was boss, and how the communication structure worked in the group.

Raymundo: You are not giving information the way you should to Rosa. You want to divide us, and you want to get us into a fight... This is bad, *compañeros*. There is permanent communication, and we know what is happening in each one of the groups. What you are asking for? Who you are asking? When I was without work, the money that was collected...you told me it came from solidarity...Don Rogelio comes to throw this in my face...For that reason I said that I would not accept anything. Yes or no, that is what I said to everyone? ... What other money is being asked for?

Further, in a May 2, 2005, meeting Raymundo confronted (in **Scenario #10**) some female participants who had made light of his relationship with Rosa, as they were married at one time. Raymundo went to great lengths in several *Colectivo* meetings to show that critiquing Rosa was a mistake, and in finding ways that his words could divide them. The lengthy set of quotes below is provided to demonstrate how, in dealing with this problem, Raymundo's remarks took on an "Us versus them" tone with the membership when he defined what the organization was for.

Raymundo: We talked about this the other day. Rosa said, “Hey, the *compañeros* keep telling me that I am your wife.” How many times have I told you that we are separated? You do not need to marry us! The *compañeros* are not parents, they are not priests who will marry Rosa and I, no? Nor meddle in our lives, no? ... There is a *compañera* that still says, “Well it’s that Ray says that you are his wife.” When did I say that, you sons of bitches?! ... If there is one thing that we take care of in this organization it’s not to get involved in the private lives of the *compañeros*, no?

Raymundo: You can’t come and make gossip. You bring your personal problems, no? When personal problems have been brought up the result is that one group leaves, because they dedicate themselves only to gossiping... and we do not come here for this. If someone wants to gossip they should go someplace and look for a comrade and put themselves to gossiping the entire day, but not here. Here we come to inform ourselves, to educate and see how to get in the struggle, no? ... Is this part clear, *compañeros*? I think that the organization should foment *compañerismo*, camaraderie, no? If someone does not want to be someone’s friend it is your obligation to be their *compañeros*, no? To be a *compañero* what is needed?... Respect, second solidarity and support, no?

Here Raymundo comes back to this idea of *compañerismo* as a model for group cohesion and uses it as a way of shaming the group. His critique again is the lack of professionalism. Raymundo’s frustrations with the group, however warranted, seem to some extent unrealistic, as the membership have a lot of contact with one another, and these kinds of personal, internal dynamics seem unavoidable.

In the case of *Alianza Cívica* (**Scenario #11**), I observed the *Asamblea Nacional de Alianza Cívica* that was held at the Hotel Sevilla in Mexico City on June 9-10, 2006; the main coalition body hosted this meeting for 20 coalition participants. On the second day of the meeting a number of technical and resource-based problems were discussed.

Some of the problems raised had to do with complying with the processes for reimbursement from government institutions. Much of the mediation of these issues was done by the *Alianza Cívica*'s Executive Secretary Silvia Alonso. She attempted to *shame* those members who had not complied with this process by singling out those that have.

Silvia: No one will have money transferred, if they have not proven what has just been explained. Respectfully, diplomatically [speaking], there are people, and we will not say who they are, but we will say who has [complied] because it is necessary to recognize their efforts at completing agreements. Those that have proven their commitment are Chiapas, Estado de Mexico, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz... Respect the dates we agreed on, because this not only impacts the local group, it has an impact on the collective. So, we are responsible if the money does not arrive for us... [This means] it does not arrive for anyone else. So, if we make the effort at being conscious that the collective's work, one depends on the other.

Silvia not-so-subtly addressed complaints about the funding disbursement process by turning the blame back on those coalition members who had not satisfied requirements for further funding. Silvia also invoked the goal of collaborative activity, which is well-known not to work unless all members comply with the funding requirement prerequisites; and this can also be seen as a type of shaming. In the end, Silvia's efforts served to quash this particular problem for the remainder of the meeting. However, this is not to suggest that grievances about this topic did not linger or were all resolved.

Scenario #12 from *Alianza Cívica* involved a direct-conflict confrontation over resources. At issue was how much and when the main organizational body would transfer money to the coalition membership for costs connected with election observations on July 2, 2006. Participants in the meeting tried to explain the difficulties

involved in cataloguing these costs. Part of the difficulty had to do with the format for applying for funding through agencies like INDESOL, which involved gathering receipts and invoices to justify their further financial support. The requirement that a local official had to sign some of the supporting documents on Election Day further complicated the process of proving these costs, and some participants argued that finding an official on Election Day to sign the necessary paper work would be difficult. One of the *Alianza Cívica*'s staff members attempted to address these frustrations by offering to help institute a half-measure whereby each group's application for funding could be split between actual proof of costs with receipts and a general invoice of expenses incurred. As the complaints continued, Silvia intervened by *blaming* the process itself.

Silvia: Look, everyone! The format [for funding] that we are asking you to fill was not our invention. It is the agreement we made with the agencies. The agencies provided the format where we have to prove the resources used, so, like we said the last time...If you recall, there is an estimated budget for each of the groups...You can manage this money however you want. ... What is not flexible is how you justify [the costs] to us....Is this clear? So, I am very sorry, they are not formats that we invented. This is how we were instructed, and that is how we must document [costs].

Here, we have Silvia intervening after many participants were allowed to speak and had been given an explanation of the funding process by a staff member. She first places the blame on the agencies that granted the funds for the project and away from the main body of *Alianza Cívica*. Then Silvia highlights the flexibility in how the money for project costs may be used by coalition members while making it clear that the cost reporting is not at all flexible and that this is not an *Alianza* rule. Apparently, further funding is tied to how the organization follows through with this cost-justification

process. Silvia's remarks make it clear that she and all the members are in the same boat, subject to the same requirements, which have been imposed from the outside. This displaces the members' discontent from the *Alianza* and herself as its local head onto an absent third party whose requirements can neither be appealed nor denied.

Value

In *Sección Mexicana*, those participants who argued for the continued presence of academics stated that their recognition that the academics offer skills and resources which are important to the group (**Scenario #13**). In this scenario, an argument is made that advantages to the collective can serve to justify some inequities between members. The two passages below convey this perspective.

Arturo: Mariluz was one of the founders of the Trinational, and she has been the person most consistent with the work. There are many activists or representatives that have arrived and left... This may be because they get tired, or they are not interested, or because they have left their representative posts. Furthermore, Mariluz is probably the only member that has dedicated the most time to the Coalition. And, finally, due to her experience with educational issues, she has good ideas and always looks for consensus and unity to maintain the life of *Sección Mexicana*. Mariluz is well known in Canada and the United States for her track record with the Coalition, such as ties she has developed over the years with the founders of the Trinational.

This sentiment was echoed by Pedro Hernandez of Section Nine of the CNTE in an interview on January 26, 2005, when he made similar arguments about the value of the

academics. He seemed to use this fact as a way to reconcile the presence of academics in the coalition.

Pedro: At one point there was discussion about whether only the representatives of unions could participate,...and the conclusion was, no, that their [the investigators'] role, for example Hugo Aboites, has been very important. He is a well-known researcher, he has helped the Coalition with his investigations and all the information that he has. It was settled that there was also the possibility to participate like an academic, like an investigator.

Here the recognition of the academics' social and educational capitals (Morris and Staggenborg, 2004; Nepstad and Bob, 2006) served to deal with the conflict that their presence created. Those members who defended the academics' presence in the organization did so by saying that the academics' experiences and "know how" had value for the organization as a whole, and that this fact should be enough to counter any objections to their inclusion. In addition, they argued that the academics' ties to educational unions, researchers, and other activists in countries outside of Mexico were a valuable commodity. As Ganz (2004: 189) writes, "Leaders with weak ties with multiple constituencies are more likely to know how to access a diversity of people, ideas, and routines that facilitate broad alliances." Arturo obviously agreed with Ganz' statement; additionally, he recognized that there are other kinds of leadership abilities and activities that have to do with organizing, developing projects, maintaining coalition ties, and building new organizational relationships, all of which he observed in Mariluz (Morris and Staggenborg, 2004). These types of qualities can be signs of effective leadership and standing in a movement (Diani, 2003). This support shown by some members of the coalition toward academics also addresses how "[e]ffective leadership requires layers of

people who share strategic ideas and can win over others” (Barker, Johnson, and Lavalette, 2001).

Non-Confrontational

Shouldering Conflict

This method involves the leaders’ decisions to take responsibility for actions and dilemmas in order to move beyond them. This often involves being the site for venting frustrations by coalition members. Mariluz reveals in her writings and interview responses one example of the shouldering that activists do when dealing with the tensions that surface in movement work. Below, in **Scenario #14**. Mariluz qualified her analysis in this memo about the deficiencies of the *Sección Mexicana* by pointing out the issues of workload, communication, and lack of experience.

Mariluz: ...[A] problem that has presented itself is the difficulty in getting across the work of the Coalition, on the part of the union representatives, due to multiple tasks that have to be completed by a respective union or section, or because of the lack of explicit commitments by the participating union organizations.

Here, she qualified her argument by attributing some of the problems in *Sección Mexicana* to activists’ workloads, communication within the coalition, and the regular leadership changes within participating unions to explain much of the organization’s problems. The reasons for these difficulties are expressed as being beyond of the control

of the union activists that participate in *Sección Mexicana*. In fact, Mariluz placed much of the blame on *Sección Mexicana*'s own inability to address these problems. Here, through Mariluz, the organization takes ownership of the problems that exist in the group. To some extent, this is similar to Baumgartner's argument that in loose-knit settings the management of grievances becomes "exercises in restraint, inaction, and subtlety," where confrontation is not the proper method of settling disputes. In such settings leaders channel emotion (Morris and Staggenborg, 2004) into more "constructive" or "educational" forms of dispute management.

Another example of Mariluz's shouldering comes from the August 18, 2005, meeting. In this example, previously cited in Chapter Three, Mariluz comments on the tension with academics in *Sección Mexicana*. One can see in this same quote (**Scenario #15**) Mariluz's efforts to be non-confrontational:

Mariluz: The reemergence of this preoccupation [with academics], which was not everyone's in reality, *es un poco canyon* (it's a tough situation). I think it is because they [the union members] do not have too much experience with other [forms of] associations, but they have been more focused on their [union] work and understand the characteristics of international work through their own [union]. I think they value this more.

She stated that it is not the participating union representatives who are at fault for this particular problem, which she defined as having to do with their lack of experience working outside of the union context. Her motivation for being this diplomatic may be that any other response would conflict with Mariluz's perception of herself or her role as bridge-builder. Robnett (1997: 191, in Morris and Staggenborg, 2004) points to the existence of "an intermediate layer of leadership, whose task includes bridging potential

constituents and adherents, as well as potential formal leaders to the movement” Morris and Staggenborg (2004: 177), and others (Ferree and Merrill, 2004) add that these mid-level leaders “perform the bulk of a movement’s emotional work.” Although it is difficult to accept at face value as Mariluz may have an interest in presenting her self in a positive light and the “victim” in this particular scenario, in my interviews with her, she conveyed her efforts at being non-confrontational, diplomatic, and humble. I learned that this professor of economics has participated in teachers’ movements since the age of 18. She spoke dismissively of those early years of activist work and characterized them as the efforts of a novice given her lack of organizing experience. But this information reveals that Mariluz has had considerable amount of contact with teachers and teachers’ unions which may have trained her to tolerate internal group critiques while trying to maintain coalition relationships.

Another version of shouldering was described by Rocío of *Alianza Cívica*. She explained how she dealt with the rivalries that existed in the *Colectivo por la Democracia*, which is a coalition of SMOs that have common interests in electoral reform in Oaxaca and that worked to monitor the elections of 2004. Rocío explained in a September 1, 2005, interview that *Alianza Cívica* took part in this coalition. She described one exchange between herself and the members of ISTMO (*Union de Comunidades Indigenas de la Zona Norte del Istmo/ Indigenous Communities Union of the Istmo Northern Zone*). According to Rocío, at one point during her stay in Oaxaca, members of ITSMO expressed displeasure with the participation level of one of the other organizations, called EDUCA. Rocío stated in the same interview that “there is no [prior] relationship between these two organizations and I noticed that there were rivalries

between them, but I did not know if they were personal or institutional.” ITSMO members told Rocío that she should “tell those people at EDUCA to do some work.” Rocío stated that she clearly could not do such a thing because she had worked with EDUCA on several projects. Here, her shouldering involved serving as a “locale” for venting frustrations. Rocío’s years of experience was also significant in this situation and the many months spent in Oaxaca allowed her to understand how to deal with these various organizations.

In the case of the *Colectivo* (**Scenario #16**), there is significant internal strife in some of the neighborhoods that participate in the coalition, and one member stated that they live in a difficult situation which aggravates conflicts. This was detailed in a group interview on November 1, 2004.

Reyna: ...[L]ike we said before, because of a hesitant government or because the [*vivienda*] process can take years to complete from the purchase of the property... It can take two, three years, and the government can extend this time from 10 to 12 years. Or, sometimes, it is not even resolved. This results in people fighting, which is due to a lot of wear, many hours spent together, many hours of discussion, and then the people blame you. If something comes out wrong the people do not turn to look at the general policy, but they say, “You did it wrong.” It is that, “You did not do what you are supposed to,” and they do not see the state offensive.

This is a somewhat mixed example of internal and external conflict, where one participant described how leaders can be used as a focal point for venting frustrations, while, at the same time, the leadership focuses the blame primarily on the government and the *vivienda* process.

Subsuming Leadership

As explained by Rocío, before and during the Oaxacan election for governor, *Alianza Cívica* avoided taking on a leadership role on the electoral monitoring project and subsumed themselves into the group *Colectivo por la Democracia*. This occurred despite the fact that *Alianza Cívica* had brought the electoral monitoring project to the *Colectivo por la Democracia* (it may be that other interested groups might have been involved but did not want to take a subordinate role). According to Rocío, the dynamic that was present within *Colectivo por la Democracia* resulted in consensus-based decision making. She also described the organization's structure as collegial, in which an effort was made to divide up the work in a way that fit every group's capabilities.

When asked (**Scenario #17**) about the direct relationships that had been established with these groups, Rocío detailed much of her work with organizing in Oaxaca. In the selection below, she describes the differences between organizing in Mexico City versus non-urban areas, which provides some insight into how leaders in *Alianza Cívica* build their social capital through relationship-building. These relationships are useful because they facilitate smoother implementation of project goals, and they can help avoid problems in organizing.

Rocío: The thing about having these types of relationships is that, to date, it has been policy since the beginning of *Alianza Cívica*... We do not think of ourselves as “*en todologos*” (organizers that do all of the work) like we say here [in D.F.: Mexico City]... If I was here in Mexico City,...I would have to work in a *tejido* (network) between organizations that would allow me to complete an observation... In order to reach this goal, many times people come directly to *Alianza Cívica*. For example, here in D.F., many people [will come and say], “I am interested in

doing observation in Mexico City. I want to participate. I don't participate in any organization." They come in independently. In the case of Oaxaca, I have commented that we do not have an office in the city. There exists one in *Pinotepa Nacional* but not in Oaxaca City. Therefore, it is difficult for us as *Alianza Cívica* to arrive in Oaxaca, and that we alone do our work. The important thing is that there is a successful observation...and that it comes from citizen participation. I do not know if we could think of our organization without these direct relationships.

We see here part of the motivation for the way in which *Alianza Cívica* collaborates with groups in other states, which has to do with the lack of infrastructure and labor that spurs *Alianza Cívica* to seek out participants. However, there is an organizational ethos in which their approach to work with others involves deferring leadership to some extent.

The Safe Choice

Scenario #18 has to do with an event that honors the history of the teachers' movement in Mexico. *Sección Mexicana* organized an event around a film on the *CNTE*, called, "*Granito de Arena*" (Grain of Sand), to be followed by a roundtable discussion between activists and academics. In a May 7, 2005, coalition meeting, Georgina Tecla, of *Politécnico*, was one of the members assigned to be part of this roundtable event. Georgina showed discomfort at being selected and began to shy away from participation in the meeting; she even called for other members to participate. Mariluz explained that the roundtable needed her presence because the other members had not been a part of the

movement. Georgina responded, “*Es que siempre hay broncas* (It’s that there are always problems).” Mariluz responds back by stating there are unions that do a lot of good work, however, their range of activities is somewhat narrow. Also, she stated that the “this is not a CNTE event.” Mariluz follows this up by explaining that Section 22 (one of the states that gave “birth” to the CNTE movement (Cook, 1996)) would not have the time to participate. She also explained the purpose of the event as a method for reflecting on the movement and what Georgina’s contribution would involve. Others intervened, such as Pedro Hernandez, who stated that the roundtable needed someone who could speak as a teacher’s movement participant in juxtaposition to the two academics who were also included, one of them being Mariluz.

Pedro: I understand about Oaxaca,...but it cannot be assured that for the 20th [May] the people of Oaxaca (Section 22) will be here. So obligating them is difficult, and the other thing is that it is a little complicated to say to Oaxaca [“Can you participate?”] and not ask the same of Michoacán [Section 18].

What these brief segments of a Seccion Mexican meeting show is that one strategy in dealing with tensions is through deliberation. By talking through the issues that Georgina finds problematic the other members attempt to set her at ease with the role they want her to play in the upcoming event. We could look at this quote above and interpret it as if the coalition looked for a “safe” choice in selecting someone who represented “the movement,” but who was not part of one of the larger sections within the CNTE. By choosing Georgina as their representative, it is likely that the activists were hoping to avoid potential conflicts. Therefore, the efforts by Mariluz and Pedro to highlight her story as a long-time activist were important in convincing Georgina to

maintain her role in the event. Also, she played on her sense of duty to the coalition by pointing out the practical reasons why she needs to help the group.

In Mariluz's attempt to convince Georgina to participate, she added that the teachers' movement began before the efforts of the CNTE. She described how many people were working as activists, and that there had always been people who tried to exclude teachers. Mariluz's remarks establish Georgina's bonifides as an effective choice to be part of the roundtable by highlighting her "historic" role in this movement.

Mariluz: This is not about a problem of affiliation, of representation, or representativeness, but of about someone who has committed their life's work to a democratic movement...even before the CNTE existed.

Georgina: I entered *Poli* [*Politecnico*] in '72. I then began to participate in a movement that was very important. I went to the first *Asamblea de Barrios* meetings... I am ready to help, but I wanted to clarify [some things]... I wanted to clarify some things because later there are problems.

Coincidentally, in the same meeting, the very problem Georgina was trying to avoid actually occurred. Members of Section Nine had come to the meeting to ask for help from *Sección Mexicana* and the Trinational to start a letter-writing campaign in support of the teacher's strike in Chiapas. The Section Nine members asked why a member of the CNTE had not been included in the cultural event celebrating the teachers' movement in Mexico. Mariluz intervened and adamantly explained that the event was not based on the current membership of the CNTE, and that it had already been agreed to by the coalition. This stopped any further discussion.

In this section we see that the coalition sampled seem to rely more on confrontational methods of conflict management than nonconfrontational given that the

data shows more scenarios having to do with this strategy (See Table 2: Conflict Management: Confrontational and Nonconfrontational Methods Appendix B). We can see that in those instances when leaders of Alianza Civica intervened by confronting conflict they used shame in order to bring the tension observed to some sort of resolution. This was different from Seccion Mexicana where in confronting conflict leadership repertoires ranged from using their clout, dealing with hostility, or pointing out the valued of another member's participation level. The *Colectivo* leaders uses their clout in the organization but in most cases these leaders used some form of hostility or shame in order to deal with the tensions at hand. Both Alianza Civica and the *Colectivo* used some form of nonconfrontational tactic to manage conflict but it was Seccion Mexicana who had the most observed instances of these techniques which had to do with shouldering conflicts or negotiating choices.

Conclusion

This chapter makes it clear that for leaders in coalitions must make some attempt to address a variety of internal group dynamics as they can affect coalition work. In many cases, conflict was not resolved, but, instead, it was managed by leaders. This is to say that group leaders intervened in incidents of internal conflict in order to mitigate their strength, but they were not necessarily resolved or taken to a conclusion. The internal problems addressed ranged from serious organizational problems such as organizational structure, representation, and participant motivation to more mundane small-group

grievances and personality conflicts. My observations detailed how leaders used a variety of confrontational and non-confrontational techniques in managing internal conflict within each of these three organizations, as well as the public and private ramifications of these maneuvers. To some extent the techniques used to address conflict are informed by the participants' previous SMO experience, their education, and other forms of social capital.

In the case of the *Colectivo*, the conflict-handling maneuvers included use of both hostile and conciliatory approaches. In *Sección Mexicana*, there were incidents in which the prestige of a particular participant was helpful in addressing conflict. In *Alianza Cívica*, we saw how previous movement experience and shaming helped to quell outbreaks of conflict. Finally, this chapter shows that the role of leadership in dealing with conflict was found to be important in three cases sampled regardless of their focus, resources, or size of organization.

The actions taken by leaders in managing conflict seemed to reflect their prior experiences work with social movements more than holding a current position in an organization that participate in the coalitions sampled. That is, the ability to management conflict had to do the various repertoires available to them in order to handle some particular conflict. These repertoires where learned from participating or observing other social movement organizations. Although we could one could argue that it takes someone with a degree of charisma, which is a skill in itself, to bridge differences. This is only a first step and all social movement organizations would not necessarily have this type of personality among their membership. That said, "bringing people together" is

only one step in dealing with conflict. Social movements need people in place with the repertoires in hand in order to deal with conflict.

CONCLUSION

Conflicts within coalitions are managed differently in comparison to how they are handled within SMOs. An SMO can rely on the hierarchical and personal nature of its organization; perhaps the emotional bonds between its members can be manipulated, or non-conforming participants can be ejected from the organization. Coalitions, on the other hand, cannot rely on these more-intimate methods of conflict management, because the conditions for collaboration are more group-oriented—one individual represents not just him/herself but an entire member organization—and management on a personal level may be detrimental to the coalition’s efforts. Hence, leaders in coalitions must rely on different management models based on their organizing structure when dealing with conflict. Also, the interpretation of conflicts by leaders requires knowledge of conflict management tactics and the circumstances that have produced or might generate tensions in coalitions. My findings show that leadership repertoires for conflict management in coalitions of social movements differ from SMOs. This has to do with the fact that coalition are made up of representatives from other organizations. Leaders have to negotiate with their coalition partners in the process of accomplishing organizational work. This involves making contact with individual organizations in order access their interest in participating in coalition work. Leaders must acknowledge certain conditions of importance for potential coalition partners such preexisting tensions with other organizations and the time they can dedicate to coalition work. Also, leaders of coalitions must make coalition work accessible to potential partners. Meaning that their

commitment to group efforts must allow for some flexibility in how they can participate. These efforts by coalition leaders help to maintain group cohesion and avoid or mitigate internal conflict. In short, leaders work to preempt internal conflict.

Furthermore, leaders in coalitions adapted to those grievances that were aired in the organization. This involved restructuring the organization in some way to appease a particular conflict. It might involve creating a committee to oversee coalition work or reworking of the leadership structure itself to compensate for what coalition partners found lacking in the coalitions sampled.

What I have also discovered is that leaders in the cases I examined relied more on their experiences, skills, and knowledge of social movements than their role or position within the coalition in the practice of dealing with internal conflicts. A review of table X shows that most of the repertoires used by leaders involved those skills they come to learn and applying them to the situation at hand.

This research shows how leadership repertoires are used to manage conflict within three Mexican social movement coalitions: *Alianza Cívica*, *Sección Mexicana*, and the *Colectivo*. In order to do this, I have investigated the formation and maintenance of these long-standing coalitions that are working, respectively, to improve democratic civic engagement in the politics of elections, the privatization of the educational system, and urban development. All three organizations ranged across several social and economic strata, and issues that involved class, race, gender, economic (in)sufficiency, and culture were all crucial to my research and conclusions. There is little scholarship on how internal conflict is managed in social movement coalitions (Shefner, 1999). Through a focus on Mexican social movement coalitions this empirical investigation contributes to

the existing literature by adding another set of cases to be included among the research on conflict resolution and social movements in different countries such as Bangladesh, Singapore, Canada, the U.S., and the European Union (Rose, 2000; Bystydzienski and Schacht 2001; Bandy and Smith, 2005). Additionally, my research provides more analysis on the role of leaders in social movements (Nepstad and Bob, 2006).

The data from this study show how leaders' management of conflict within coalitions involves known repertoires for creating coalitions with foresight about certain problems that the leaders attempt to circumvent. Additionally, leaders' knowledge of coalition formation provides options for adapting to tensions that were not foreseen. My observations detailed how leaders used a variety of confrontational and non-confrontational techniques in managing internal conflict within each of these three cases, as well as the public and private ramifications of these maneuvers.

The first of these six chapters introduces the historical context and discusses the theoretical and methodological issues that are important to the investigation. I discuss the multiple benefits and costs that are associated with coalition formation. This is followed with a discussion of possible explanations of coalition formation in the 1990s, which includes social movements' reactions to the democratization processes in Mexico, the breakdown of pre-existing social and cultural barriers between social movement sectors due, in part, to economic globalization, and, finally, the significance of forming coalitions in large urban centers in Mexico versus other areas.

Chapter Two deals with the organizational history and goals of each of the coalitions studied, which are all based in Mexico City. The social movement coalitions in my sample represent not only different movement goals within Mexico, such as

democratization, education rights, and housing, but they also allow for the consideration of how conflict resolution functions in coalitions that work at local, national, and international levels. The goal of this chapter was to describe these elements, as, in many cases, they were the subjects of conflict. For example, as described in the second chapter, each of the coalitions had their own unique organizational form. There were frustrations and limitations within each of these coalition structures that caused conflict. A history of each coalition and its goals and activities from the point of mobilization to the contemporary period is provided. This chapter also gives some insight into different forms of organizing through coalitions of social movements outside of traditional state and SMO sectors in Mexico (ex: UPMs, unions, political parties). However, as shown in this chapter and those that follow, the effort to form “new” and “horizontal” organizations gave way to the influence of previous organizational routines (ex: a hierarchical structure).

The third chapter is an empirical account that describes the various forms of conflicts and tensions that are found in each of the three social movement coalitions. The conflicts that were observed were diverse in type, but they generally revolved around resources, organization, identity, and strategy, as Bandy and Smith (2005) pointed out in their overview of conflicts in coalitions in different national contexts. Resource conflicts, for example, involved disagreements over the distribution of travel funds that were available to various unions in *Sección Mexicana*. This contributed to ongoing critiques over the role of academics who did not formally represent any union within the coalition yet who were viewed as benefiting the most from these funds. In *Alianza Cívica*, resources were only made available to coalition members for projects that were initiated

through the main organizational body based in Mexico City, which limited the state-based *Alianza Civicas'* ability to choose and fund projects independently. This resulted in calls for change within the leadership structure. In the *Colectivo*, its leaders stressed members' participation in coalition activities as a form of payment for assistance with the acquisition of housing, as the organization did not collect dues. Some members were inconsistent in their participation, which meant that members did not show up at weekly meetings, nor did they use these meetings to prepare the housing documents that were necessary for negotiations with the INVI. Additionally, members were critiqued for not attending protests, marches, and other organizing activities. These absences sparked discussions and confrontations over issues of participation and communication as well as the lack of dues.

Chapter Four explains the organizational repertoires of leaders which were used to manage conflict within each of my three cases. In all of the coalition structures there was some provision for face-to-face contact with coalition members, flexibility in participation in the group, and openness to the modification of coalition self-governing procedures. However, in all cases, the effort to head off and adapt to internal conflict only temporarily addressed the issues involved. Additionally, these efforts often generated new tensions or led to the re-emergence of pre-existing conflicts.

Leadership techniques for dealing with instances of strife are the focus of Chapter Five. In it, I illustrate how leaders within these social movement coalitions use a variety of methods, practices, and arguments in their attempts to manage internal organizational conflict. For instance, when leaders took the time to deal with conflict, one process that they used involved deliberation about how to address a problem. Of course, there are

situations in which activists must act at the moment when a grievance emerges. In this sense, leading activists themselves play a crucial role in minimizing the number of conflicts that may arise. Social movement scholars Nepstad and Bob (2006) have called for closer attention to leadership capital as a significant factor in social movement work. The coalitions that I examined all have individuals with qualities that allow them to “broker” conflicts that develop in coalition work. As shown, activists’ techniques for dealing with conflict involved confrontational and non-confrontational acts. In some cases, these techniques involved conciliatory approaches or open hostility. In other cases, the qualities of individual participants had some effect on internal grievances and how they were addressed. These included such variables as experience, contacts, class status, and gender.

As argued coalition leaders have a range of repertoires for managing conflict, and this range differs from those repertoires that are used by social movement organizations (SMOs) more generally. Conflicts in social movements themselves are managed differently from the methods we find used in social movement coalitions. In SMOs leaders can use hierarchy and peer pressure to keep “dissidents” in line with goals, actions, and other interests developed by the leadership. One tactic is to place pressure on individuals that deviate from the group’s common identity or group frame. In some cases a SMO can rely on the fact that participants will quell their own differences with the organization in order to support an SMO frame. Leaders will also focus on conflict over decision-making or other claims in order to avoid more caustic forms of conflict.

Coalitions rely on different forms of conflict management from those one would observe in SMOs. One reason for this is that leaders have to take care of the evolving

nature of alliance making. This means that coalition organizations have to deal with different levels of commitment from coalition participants, skill level, or resource base. They also have to deal with the fact that participating organizations have joined together on one specific issue. This makes it difficult for leaders in coalitions to exert pressure on participants in order to manage conflict as they could do in SMOs. Taking such action may jeopardize the alliance and potentially sacrifice the very resource that the coalition was able to pool together. Coalitions will use less-bureaucratic methods to operate the organization, homogeneity, inducements to participation, and make attempts to level social status for all members in forming these organizations. These elements can serve to manage the conflicts that emerge in coalition organizations.

As stated, coalitions will attempt to preempt and prepare for the conflict that will emerge. Two strategies involve meeting face-to-face with coalition participants and bilateral agreements with these members. This work helps to preempt conflict as it allows coalitions to reduce conflicts over preparation and implementation activities which have to do with miscommunication, division of labor problems, cultural differences, and other issues. The use of bilateral agreements allows coalitions to circumvent preexisting animosities between organizations which may prove to be a barrier for doing coalition work. Although SMOs would use face-to-face contact with potential participants for recruitment purposes, the task of managing conflict would fall on the hierarchical structure of these organizations. Additionally, using bilateral relationships between leaders and members within an SMO could prove to be highly inefficient and serve to contradict efforts at group unity.

My research also found that leaders can use alternative methods for holding members accountable. Whereas in SMOs use pressure by the leadership hierarchy, membership dues requirements, and the use of formal assigned task to motive participant accountability. Coalitions can use alternatives. In case I found that leaders avoided the collection of dues to pay for the coalitions operating costs and instead obligated members to participate in coalition activities as a form of payment and to justify the aid of leaders.

It was also found that each group provided some flexibility in how participating organizations were allowed to participate. In one case this meant that participants could define how they participated in coalition activities. It was also found that a coalition would maintain ties to organizations that have long supported its efforts or had some kind of tie to the coalition such as a prior relationship between a member of the coalition and another group. Both methods serve to reduce conflict either through unburdening participants with coalition task and working with groups that have prior relationships with the organization. There is evidence that coalition also use very informal methods for inviting partners to participate in coalition activities where members are responsible for recruiting new participants. This leaves the task of recruitment out of the hands of the leadership leaving them free to work on coalition work. This also limits the potential for more dissident voices in the coalition given the members will often recruits groups or individuals with which they already have some friendly or emotive tie. It was found the in order to preempt conflict coalition could were intentionally flexible in order to reduce the work load among participants. In one case this was particularly important as many of the participants in the coalition had prior history of contentious relations leaving the coalition as a method for bridging these tensions. These forms of flexibility were

facilitated by the fact that all of the organizations sample focused on one particular coalition project.

Along with the flexibility in participation there were flexible organizational structures in these coalition sampled. They ranged from what could be described as collegial to hierarchical forms of organizational structures. It was also found that the amount contact coalition participants had to one another served to preempt or avoid conflict. The flexibility in organizational structure allowed the coalition to adapt to conflict that emerged in the organizations. The coalition sampled often tried to evolve with these conflicts in their attempts to resolve them.

Future research could involve the sampling of social movement organizations to make further comparisons between conflict management styles between social movements and coalitions. Also, more exploration could be done into which kinds of conflict management styles are used more often or selected from first among an array of techniques at hand. For example, perhaps leaders use nonconfrontational methods first before shifting to confrontation forms of conflict management.

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Appendix A

Table 1 Coalition Structure and Conflict Management

Sección Mexicana	Alianza Cívica	Colectivo
Coalition Formed in 1995	Coalition Formed in 1994	Coalition Formed in 1996
One staff member as of 2006	One executive, three coordinators, and staff members	Two primary leaders
No office (meet at various union offices in Mexico City)	Main Office in Mexico City	No office (meet in a community center in Mexico city)
Formal representation by union representatives and Academics	Main Ngo body in Mexico City and 20 coalition partners spread over 20 states	Compilation of 15 housing project groups
	Goals	
Defend Public Education	Clean and Fair Elections, Citizen participation in politics	Housing Subsidies, construction
	Tactics	
Education Awareness Campaigns, Conference Events, and Demonstrations	Electoral Observation and Human Rights Advocacy	Protest, distribute flyers, and government negotiation
	Conflict Management Strategies	
	Preemption	
Define Participation	Local Knowledge, Define Participation	Local Knowledge

	Organizational Form and Adaptation	
Colegiality, Absence, Geography	Hierarchical Organization with flexibility in participation	Hierarchical Organization but seemingly flexible obligations
Changes to address conflict through consensus	Changes to address conflict implement by main body	Changes to address conflict implemented by leaders

Appendix B:

Table 2 Leaders and Conflict Management

CONFRONTATIONAL

	Alianza Cívica	Sección Mexicana	Colectivo
		Counseling and Clout	
Scenario 1			X
Scenario 2		X	
Scenario 3			X
		Hostility	
Scenario 4			X
Scenario 5			X
Scenario 6			X
Scenario 7		X	
Scenario 8		X	
		Shaming	
Scenario 9			X
Scenario 10	X		
		Value	
Scenario 11		X	
Scenario 12	X		
		NONCONFRONTATIONAL	
		Shouldering	
Scenario 13		X	
Scenario 14		X	
Scenario 15		X	
		Subsuming	
Scenario 16			X
Scenario 17	X		

		Safe Choice	
Scenario 18		X	

Appendix C

Alianza Cívica Member Organizations

Organization/Individual	State/Membership Year	Objectives/Profession
<i>Programa de Educación para la Paz y los DH Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes</i>	Aguascalientes	
<i>Consejo Regional Indígena y Popular de Xpujil, S. C.</i>	Campeche	Seeks to improve the living conditions of indigenous/non-indigenous communities of their region, promote their culture by producing sustainable developed goods, and create democratic community based organization.
<i>Centro de Educación Cívica para la Participación Ciudadana</i>	Coahuila	
<i>Alianza Cívica Coahuila</i>	Coahuila	
<i>Ciudadanos Unidos por Colima, AC</i>	Colima	
Hugo Almada	Chihuahua	Researcher
Alianza Cívica Chiapas	Chiapas/1994*	Describes itself as an independent and pluralist citizen organization that dedicate its time to electoral observation, civic education (human rights, food security, and other social issues), and disseminates information on all these issues.
<i>Universidad Autónoma de Durango</i>	Durango	

Source: Alianza Cívica, 2007, www.alianzacivica.org.mx

*Founding Organization

^aOrganizer has participated in Alianza Cívica since 1994

<i>Taller de Desarrollo Comunitario, A. C. (TADECO)</i>	Guerrero	Have projects that focus on community development, sustainable development, youth, women, and education. TADECO works in indigenous and farming communities.
<i>Grupo Ambientalista Sierra de Guadalupe</i>	Estado de México/2005	Advocate for the preservation of the environment through educational workshops and eco-technical forums. They support efforts to educate about social programs and improve their access to information.
<i>Centro de Apoyo a la Mujer Purhépecha-UAHRI</i>	Michoacán	
<i>Alianza Cívica de Nayarit</i>		
<i>Alianza Cívica Nuevo León</i>	Nayarit/2006*	Advocates and raises awareness about several themes related to human rights guaranteed by the Mexican Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
<i>Servicios para una Educación Alternativa, A. C. (EDUCA)</i>	Nuevo León/1994	Supports a democratic transition of the country, transparent electoral processes, and the development of civic education programs.
<i>Alianza Cívica Pinotepa Nacional</i>	Oaxaca/1994 ^a	An NGO made up of a multi-disciplinary team that offers support and educational services with community development goals.
<i>Alianza Cívica Querétaro</i>	Oaxaca/1994* ^a	

<i>Construyendo CAUCE Viabilidad Organizativa</i>	Querétaro	
<i>Frente Cívico Sinaloense</i>	San Luis Potosí	
<i>Espacio Ciudadano, A. C.</i>	Sinaloa/1994 ^a	The aim of the organization includes the promotion of democracy, human rights, and provides pro bono legal advice for the poor.
<i>Red de Asesoría y Defensa de los D. H.</i>	Sinaloa	
<i>Mayra Romero Gaytán</i>	Tabasco	
<i>Red de Organizaciones Ciudadanas de Veracruz (ROCVER)</i>	Tlaxcala	
<i>Sociedad Cooperativa de Consumo Regional “Chac Lol” S.C.L</i>	Veracruz/2006	Works in indigenous communities at to promote and create programs to monitor the respect and violation of human rights. They seek to educate the public about the concept of human rights and provide workshops on social investigation, sustainable development, gender inequality, and civic education.
	Yucatán	An indigenous cooperative that works with its communities to implement sustainable development in their agricultural industry and preserve their culture.

Appendix D

Sección Mexicana Member Organizations

Academic Unions	
<i>Sindicato de Trabajadores Académico de la Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo</i>	Academic Workers Union of the Autonomous University of Chapingo
<i>Sindicato Independiente de Trabajadores de la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana</i>	Independent Workers University of the Metropolitan Autonomous University
<i>Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México</i>	Workers Union of the National Autonomous University
<i>Sindicato de Personal Académico de La Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro</i>	Academic Personnel Union of Querétaro Autonomous University
<i>Sindicato de Personal Académico de la Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas</i>	Academic Personnel Union of the Zacatecas Autonomous University
<i>Asociación de Servidores Públicos Académicos Sindicalizados de la Universidad Tecnológica de Nezahualcóyotl</i>	Academic Public Services Association, Netzahualcoyotl Technological University
K-12 Unions	
Sections Seven	Educational workers of Chiapas
Section Nine	Primary school teachers of the federal district
Section Ten	Secondary school teachers of the Federal District
Section Eleven	Democratic delegations of technical, administrative, and manual workers of the Federal District
Section Eighteen	Educational workers of the state of Michoacán
Twenty-two	Educational workers of Oaxaca
Delegaciones Democráticas de el Instituto Politécnico Nacional	Democratic Delegation of the National Polytechnic Institute
Academics	Representatives from Mexico City Universities

Appendix E:

Colectivo Member Organizations

Familias de la Unidades Habitacionales de Interés Social: Aztlán Anahuac Juan de Dios Peza “Puente del Toro” A.C. Grupos Apaches IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX y X “Comité de Barrios de Iztacalco” A.C. Guadalupe 59 Integrantes de la Unión de Solitantes de Vivienda Tototitla A.C. Grupos de Inquilinos de Academia #9 Guatemala 71, 85, y 87 Correo Mayor 10 Leopoldo Auer 4447 Mascagni #59 Zacatecas #73
