16 The Environmentalism of NGOs *Versus* Environmentalism of the Poor? Mexico's Social–Environmental Coalitions

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List of Terms

CCMSS	Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sostenible (Mexican Civil Council for Sustainable Forestry)
CECCAM	Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el Campo Mexicano-Maderas del Pueblo del Sureste (Center for the Study of Change in the Mexican Countryside-Maderas del Pueblo Southeast)
CIEPAC	Centro de Investigaciones y Economicas Politicas Accion Comunitaria (Center for Research on Political Economics and Community Action)
CONCLAVE	Coordinadora Nacional Contra Laguna Verde (National Coordination Against the Laguna Verde)
ERA	Estudios Rurales y Asesoria (Rural Studies and Consulting)
FECOMEX	Federación Conservacionista Mexicana (Mexican Conservationist Federation)
GIRA	Grupo Interdisciplinario de tecnologia Rural Apropiada (Interdisciplinary Group for Appropriate Rural technology)
NAMA	Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales (National Assembly of Environmentally Affected People)
PAIR	Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de Recursos Naturales (Program for the Utilization of Natural Resources)
PSSM	Proyecto Sierra de Santa Marta (Sierra de Santa Marta Project)
RAFI	Rural Advancement Foundation International, renamed the ETC Group in 2001

In the early 1990s, caught up in the new wave of mobilization that followed the democratization of Latin America, all of the countries of the region seemed to experience some kind of environmental movement and the creation of national environmental agencies (García-Guadilla and Blauert 1994; Hochsteler and Mumme 1998; Alfie Cohen 2005a). The environmental struggle, alongside indigenous rights and women's rights, has often been called a "new social movement (NSM)," distinguished from previous social movements by the higher social status of its members, by their identity-based and post-materialist causes, and by the low priority they gave to direct action through extra-institutional means (Melucci 1999). While this label of "NSM" had every

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opportunity to highlight the emergence of new forms of collective action, it also underscored the environmental mobilizations' elitist[1] dimension and the role given to NGOs. Hence in Mexico, the existence of a national environmental social movement seemed self-evident to the rare analyst who took it on as a specific topic (Simonian 1999; Diez 2008; Velazquez Garcia 2010; Durand et al. 2012), and their attention remained focused on NGOs. Indeed, even today, the very existence and demarcations of this "social movement" remain highly controversial among its stakeholders, and each scholar of environmentalism must question her or his own definitions.

This broad dichotomy between the more elitist "NSMs" and the more grassroots mobilizations is at the root of the two main sociological frameworks currently used in the analysis of environmental mobilization in Latin America. On one side, many publications emphasize the role of NGOs and transnational coalitions, staying closer to the discourse of the most visible actors (Kurzinger et al. 1991; Torres 1997; Umlas 1998; Hogenboom 1998; Alfie Cohen 2005b; Pacheco Vega 2005). On the other side, a more significant role is given to the grassroots organizations of marginalized populations, and to confrontation strategies, through analytical frameworks like Martinez Alliez's "environmentalism of the poor" (2002), or the "environmental justice movement" (Carruthers 2008; Leff 2001; Verduzco 2002). This latter approach emphasizes environmental conflicts and local indigenous and/or peasant movements that resist infrastructure construction projects (hydraulics, mining, nuclear, petrol, tourism, etc.).

However, this broad opposition between research programs on NGO activities on the one hand, and on the popular mobilizations on the other, was largely overcome during the 1990s (Clarke 1995). A convergence emerged between the study of the internationalization of social movements (Smith et al. 1998), and the role of NGOs in "transnational activist networks" (Keck and Sikkink 1998). This new analytical framework encompassing both social movements and NGOs established an evolutionary typology: the formation of coalitions articulating heterogeneous actors through campaigns constituted a middle ground between a mere network of information exchange on one hand, and the existence of genuine transnational social movements based on a shared identity and strategy on the other (Tarrow 2005; Bandy and Smith 2005).

This chapter, then, builds on analyses of mobilizations that have focused on the plurality of networks between organizations (Diani and McAdam 2003), an approach that has only been applied to select aspects of the Mexican movement (Pacheco and Obdulia 2003; Velázquez García 2008). Unlike a somewhat idealized analysis of social movements focused solely on grassroots mobilizations, an approach focused on coalitions can show that the different actors mobilized are connected to one another as much by complementarity and division of labor, as by a shared set of common values (Pacheco and Obdulia Vega 2003). Environmentalism is often characterized by a "transclassist" heterogeneity of participants, and coalition building is therefore the most common way to expand a mobilization. This is the *distinct* nexus between "elitist" and "grassroots" organizations, as well as the two distinct historical trajectories of alliances that allow us to empirically divide what we might call "Mexican social environmentalism" into two components.[2] Conversely, we will not deal here with another organizational field, that of "conservationism," which brings together (many) organizations that work only in the management of protected areas (Dumoulin 2003, 2007). Not because we take for granted the claims of many of the conservationists of being apolitical, but rather, because their activities are too narrowly focused on "project management" to fit into any definition of a social movement.

[1] This elitism was fortified by the specific role played by academics and by "information politics": the use of scientific data was exceptionally intense within environmental mobilizations.

[2] The term "social environmentalism" is not usually used by the members of the organizations analyzed here. This analytical category was used for the 1st time by Gonzalez Martinez (1992).

This study is based on several periods of fieldwork in Mexico by the authors between 2000 and 2012[3]. It builds on over a 100 interviews with participants of the organizations mentioned, as well as select periods of participant observation. Each of the chapter's two parts, then, explores the construction of an "organizational field" built on coalitions between local populations, urban elites, and international organizations: we call the first "sustainable community development," and the second "environmental resistance"; in the conclusion, we will return to the main advantages of our way of constructing the object "environmentalist social movement."

The Networks of Sustainable Community Development: From the Grassroots to the State and Funders

A. The Origin of Alliances between NGOs and Rural Communities The first step in establishing a field consisted of urban groups, which were often organized into civil society groups, forging alliances with local communities. In the second half of the 1970s, and throughout the 1980s, an environmentalist current emerged in Mexico that was deeply rooted in the rural sector, and whose core activities were based more on the search for alternative community development than on nature conservation, which clearly distinguished it from the traditional conservationists (Carruthers 1996). In 1970, several student groups decided to take the environmental crisis seriously and seek alternatives in rural areas. They recognized the influence of the different schools of thought, often coming from Marxism and shockwaves of the 1968 repression in academe, but also from thinkers like Ignacy Sachs and Ivan Illich (who led the Intercultural Center for Documentation in Mexico between 1961 and 1976). Another inspiring persona was that of Mexican agronomist Efraím Hernandez Xolocotzi, who advocated a "ciencia de huarache" (science in sandals), meaning a science based on fieldwork, on direct contact with rural people and the recognition of traditional knowledge and practices. After creating the first autonomous ecology research centers,[4] several groups embodied the growth of a movement oriented toward sustainable community development.

The founding members of the Grupo de Estudios Ambientales (GEA), experimented first for several years with new research programs, training local populations, and assembling development projects at the community level (forestry, traditional corn growing, etc.) before formally establishing their NGO in 1977, and implementing alternative projects in marginalized rural communities in various regions (Xalapa, Puebla, Guerrero, etc.). A second major group consisted of researchers from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), essentially biologists who assembled around ethnobotanist Victor Manuel Toledo and biologist Julia Carabias, who were conducting left-wing opposition to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (the PRI).[5] Thanks to the success of a first local experiment of an alternative development model, their group changed the scale of projects through the Programa de Aprovechamiento Integral de Recursos Naturales (PAIR), which extended across the country's various regions (Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Durango) (Carabias et al. 1994; Toledo 1983). A third group of scholar-activists

[3] These fieldwork periods had very different durations: from 2 years (during each of the authors' PhD preparation) to numerous 1 month periods dedicated to different research projects on related thematics throughout the last decade.

[4] Alongside the Centro de Ecodesarollo, created in 1972, and the Institúto d'Ecología (1974), we found that INRIREB—Instituto de Investigaciones sobre Recursos Bióticos—which embodied the "social environmentalism" movement (1975–1988). All the three remained very dependent on the Mexican State.

[5] The Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM in Spanish) emerged from the fusion between the Mexican Communist Party and different currents of the Mexican left. It won the municipal elections in the city of Alcozauca in the state of Guerrero at the end of the 1970s. This victory gave this group the opportunity to move from reflection to political action, and to implement an experimental project that was seen as a pioneering experience of sustainable development in the region (mainly environmental diagnostics and a municipal management plan).

participated during the second half of 1980 in the state of Oaxaca's Sierra de Juarez communities' movement to recover their forest territorial rights from concessions to parastatal companies. They founded the organization Estudios Rurales y Asesoria (ERA). This first mobilization was part of the founding of one of the most interesting movements of community forestry, when a local organization, the Unión Zapoteca-Chinanteca (UZACHI), was trained in how to sustainably use the forest's resources. In this way, two large sectors—community forestry (Barton Bray and Merino Perez 2004), and organic coffee production (Ejea and Hernández 1991)[6]—forged intense relationships between NGO supporters and community organizations, transforming modes of development and local political systems alike. The struggle for control of natural resources and land, whether against the State or against local chieftains, and the processes of organizing communities into unions or cooperatives was fundamental to this first phase.

The environmental movement thus served as a point of attachment between a highly politicized urban elite coming from the academic or religious world on one hand, and local communities engaged in struggles on the other. This alliance sometimes led to long-term partnerships between communities. The idea that there existed an indigenous environmentalist movement that was locally anchored around traditional practices (water, soil, and forest management) or in alternative modes of production (of coffee, honey, vanilla, and so on) was then put forth by the movement's intellectuals, including Victor Manuel Toledo, who went on to evoke the seductive idea of "green Zapatistas" (Toledo 1992, 2000).

B. Institutionalization and State Relations In the early 1990s, following the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, a second generation of organizations cropped up around the issue of sustainable rural development. To cite only a few salient examples, they included the Grupo Interdisciplinario de Tecnología Rural Apropiada (GIRA), which operated within Michoacán's indigenous communities; the Proyecto Sierra de Santa Marta (PSSM), in the southern state of Veracruz; and the Grupo GAIA, on the coast of Oaxaca. There was also an effort to coordinate at the national level, through the Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sostenible (CCMSS), which formed in the mid-1990s to try to capitalize on different local experiences and promote community forestry on a national level, especially with the public authorities.

To understand the rapid development of Mexican environmental NGOs, we must place it within the wider national context of the Mexican system's democratization process, which left room for certain experiences outside official corporatism (Mollard and Lopez 2006). However, in a nation-state that had been controlled by the PRI for nearly 70 years,[7] and a party that was rooted in corporatism and patronage, the question of whether to forge a relationship with official institutions presented a fundamental dilemma to all Mexican social movements. The dilemma was between maintaining independence at the risk of being cut off from all institutional leverage and resources,[8] or maintaining access to jobs and benefits (financial or other) at the much greater risk of legitimizing a system set up by the PRI, and suffering under its many constraints.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the group that had formed around Julia Carabias and engendered PAIR made the choice to institutionalize because when Ernesto Zedillo came to power in 1994, the opportunity presented itself to cre-

[6] The most representative examples of this wave of exportation oriented around organic coffee cooperatives were the "Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Itsmo" (UCIRI) and the "Indígenas de la Sierra Madre de Motozintla" (ISMAM). In these organizations, members of liberation theology-type groups were more influential than members of academia.

[7] The PRI controlled Mexico from the end of the revolution during the 1920s, until the year 2000. After a 12-year transition dominated by the presidency of the right-wing Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) party, the PRI returned to the power in 2012, at both the national level and in many states.

[8] Indeed, a 1991 study (Kurzinger 1991) showed that 75 % of the organizations taken in account had some connection with the State, and that 30 % received State funding.

ate the first Mexican Ministry of Environment, Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT).[9] This opportunity also corresponded to the greening of the Mexican government in the late 1980s in response to external pressure (North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) negotiations, entry into the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)) and internal pressure, including the channeling of many environmental movements and their emergence during this time as a dissident force (see Part II).

The integration of Carabias's entire team into the State can therefore also be read as part of the great Mexican tradition of co-opting social movements. After appropriating the concept of sustainable development, this team conducted 6 years of considerable work to consolidate the official Mexican environmentalist institutional and legal framework, to train administrative staff in environmental issues, and to increase and strengthen the supervision of natural protected areas, all while taking into account human activities.[10]

Despite extremely virulent criticism by various social movements against Carabias, from her stance, which was deemed overly conservationist, to her positions against the neo-Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Julia Carabias's 6-year tenure accomplished unprecedented quantitative and qualitative gains in terms of addressing major environmental issues in Mexico. This passage of NGOs into institutions and from the local to the national often risks peril. If managed budgets and implementation instruments are incommensurate with those of civil society, their means are insignificant compared to other public policies like that of agriculture, and more structural and predatory at the environmental level. One GEA member explained the difficulties of translating civil initiatives into public policy in this way: "*If you don't enter into it, if you don't negotiate, they marginalize you, and it's important to position yourself politically, even if we may not be linked to any State power or party*." [11]

Other field organizations that chose not to enter into partnership with State authorities maintained a subtle position against the State: beyond a certain amount of critical discourse that might imply a wholesale rejection of the corporate State, some flexibility seems to have been accepted through collaborations with environmental institutions. At the discretion of personnel changes in the SEMARNAT's central offices as well as in different states, relationships with members of government agencies, new programs, and funding opportunities, gaps and "windows of opportunity" sometimes opened to members of the movement for sustainable community development. A certain amount of pragmatism in relation to national and international institutions seemed to prevail.

C. Globalization Connections: Funding and Professionalization Playing a perhaps marginal but nonetheless pioneering role, social environmentalism organizations were well-placed to receive, beginning in 1992, the influx of international funding for sustainable development and biodiversity issues.[12] A certain degree of similarity in the international funding and "partnership" channels should be emphasized because it illustrates the existence of the same transnational networks, (the Ford Foundation, cooperation agencies in Northern Europe, and the World Bank)[13] as distinct from those of the envi-

[9] The "Secretaria de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca" who, after having been reduced from the Fishing Sector at the end of the 1960s with J. Carabias as head of the ministry, became the "Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales" (SEMARNAT). See Stearns and Almeida (2004) for the mutual reinforcing benefits of social movement coalitions with state institutions.

[10] Julia Carabias, personal interview, October 14, 2004.

[11] Translated by L. Kraftowitz.

[12] During the1980s, a majority of these organizations were self-financed; more rarely, they were financed by public funding.

[13] The most visible is the Ford Foundation (alongside the Foundations Rockfeller, McArthur and the German Friedrich Ebert), which was almost always present in supporting these organizations, at least until the end of the 1990s. In addition, Oxfam Novib (the Dutch organization

Table 16.1 The construction of a dense “organizational field” for “sustainable community development”

	Escalation of social network mobilization	Types of links and coalitions	Examples
A	NGO/local communities connections	Long-term relationship of technical support, spokesperson, fundraiser, and political support	Relations between CCMSS and the forest communities of the Sierra Norte de Oaxaca
B	Connections between NGOs, local organizations, and different levels of government	New relationship beginning in 1994; mutual influence and financial interdependence. Old social networks between new environmental entities, NGOs, etc.	The relationship with the PRODERS program managers in the states, and those of the FMCN in Mexico City
C	Trans-scalar connections with international donors	Financial dependence, reciprocal legitimacy	Relations with the World Bank, the UNDP, the Ford Foundation, or Friedrich Ebert

ronmental resistance. However, we might ask whether structural dependence vis-à-vis international institutional donors (as well as national funds, like those distributed by the Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza), did not help undermine the activist and alternative aspects of community development organizations, transforming them into service providers and local technical operators.

In this light, the PSSM example is significant. The organization eventually demonstrated such a close relationship with the various institutions of the Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve, whether through its participation in its design of ecological scheduling, governing bodies, and the operation of some of its programs, which we can legitimately wonder if it did not become a part of the official system itself. In a national and international environmental context where environmental issues are institutionalized, the choice of themes to work on is partly determined by funding opportunities. Luisa Paré, the organization’s founder and an environmental activist for over 20 years, gave the following analysis:

> We went from an era of activism with a strong political commitment by those who lived and worked in the communities, to a more professional attitude today, where people are really trying to change things and prioritize the technical aspects of their work. I’m not judging, I’m just saying that these are different times and forms of action.[14]

The arrival of foreign funds thus allowed for a certain amount of organizational professionalization, as well as the adoption of lines of work that, while still related to the promotion of local development projects, were increasingly institutionalized and restricted to sustainable development. In the 1990s and 2000s, community development was increasingly inserted into managed networks and national and international institutional funding. To a large extent, the social and productive alternative that sustainable rural development might have represented was widely and gradually standardized as sustainable development came to dominate national and international policies (Leonard and Foyer 2011) (Table 16.1).

for international development cooperation), as well as the religious German organizations Misereor and Pan Por el Mundo, and the cooperation agencies of northern Europe (Scandinavia and Germany, but also the UK via DFID, and the Department for International Development). The General Environmental Facility (GEF), managed by the World Bank, was also an important source of financing, enabling these actors to consolidate or create new organizations. Regarding the multifold relations existing between these NGOs and the World Bank, see for example Deborah A. Bräutigam and Monique Segarra (2007).

[14] Personal interview, on October 3, 2008.

Environmental Resistance: From Coalitions against Local Projects to Coalitions against the Neoliberal Order

A. Resistance Coalitions to Mega-Projects and National Coordination Parallel to and sometimes crosswise with the organizational fields of community development, some resistance campaigns against mega-development projects also created synergy between some urban elites and local grassroots organizations. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when environmentalists were still rare, two coalitions gave visibility to a fledgling Mexican environmental movement opposed to the state: (1) the fight against planned deforestation and (2) the relocation of the Chinantecos to Uxpanapa (Veracruz 1973–1975). Even more connected to populist organizations was the emergence of mobilizations against oil drilling, and against the massive pollution by the national petrol giant PEMEX, especially the 1976 Pacto Ribereño in the state of Tabasco (Velázquez Guzmán 1982).

The 1987 anti-nuclear mobilization, Coordinadora Nacional Contra Laguna Verde (CONCLAVE), brought together large sectors of the population: farmers' and fishers' organizations, NGOs, intellectuals, mothers' groups, and even the Catholic Church (García-Gorena 1999; Paya Porres and Víctor Alejandro 1994). This mobilization experienced episodes of radical confrontation (blocking streets, etc.), and is considered the movement's founder. The 1990s was a theater for large protests whose successes illustrated both the ability of NGOs to engage directly in political work with "grassroots organizations" in marginalized regions, and the central role they could play in mobilizing coalitions in an environmentalist framework (Verduzco 2002). This was especially true for mobilizations against dam projects (in Guerrero against "Altos Balsas," beginning in 1990), against the proposed highway in the Chimalapas region in 1991 (Umlas 1998), and against the construction of a salt factory in the San Ignacio Lagoon in Baja California (1995–2000) (Castro-Soto 2005; Velasquez Garcia 2010).

In some cases, as with the famous victory against the Tepoztlán tourist resort project (1994–1995), peasant organizations led struggles where the environment was only one element among others. Conversely, certain coalitions had more "naturalistic" and limited goals, tied to a number of NGOs in the national arena, like the demand for accountability for the slaughter of migratory birds around the Silva Dam in 1994–1995. These various experiences connected a growing number of local organizations scattered across many states into an ad-hoc coalition, along with NGOs that were involved in the national arenas, and many successes contributed to creating shared social ties and memories. However, overall coordination between these "protest events" hardly existed, except through the existence of informal social networks.

From 1985 to 1994, urban political ecology groups in a state of rapid growth attempted to organize a national movement, to create a common identity under the banner of "contentious politics." Several initiatives brought together different coalitions, but without succeeding in unifying them. National meetings of environmental groups, attempts to unify the environmental movement in the Federación Conservacionista Mexicana (FECOMEX) in 1985, the same year of the great earthquake that catalyzed intersector organizational synergy, and also generated the "Pact of Environmental Groups" (PGE, established with 50 organizations that shared a national agenda) were all attempts to organizationally coordinate a national movement. UN negotiations on the Rio-92 conference generated the creation of FOROMEX, gathering more than 100 organizations around a common agenda (Diez 2008, p. 86). The main turning point was probably when coalitions formed around NAFTA between 1990 and 1994. Indeed, these initiatives required groups to develop a common agenda against a common enemy, and the window of opportunity gave them an entirely new level of visibility and influence on the Mexican State (Torres 1997; Hogenboom 1998; Gallardo 1999).

All of these alliances allowed for the gradual emergence of a shared multi-sector agenda[15] and coalitions on a new transnational scale that marked the protests that followed. But the institutionalization of the environmental cause also divided and destabilized these coalitions, which now contained an extremely diverse membership, with strongly held and sensitive ideological positions that preferred different strategies (Hogenboom 1998; Hogenboom et al. 2003).

B. Network Transnationalization and Anti-Neoliberal Resistance From the late 1990s on, the environmental resistance network grew by structuring itself around anti-neoliberal themes at national and international levels. It was nearest to peasant and indigenous mobilizations, especially for organizations tasked with defending a national agenda, actors close to the neo-Zapatista, and then the anti-globalization movement. At the national level, an important organization was thus forming in Mexico to produce both technical and political expertise on environmental issues in rural areas. The Centro de Estudios para el Cambio en el Campo Mexicano (CECCAM), was initially intended as a think tank to generate political ideas for the peasant federation, Unión Nacional de Organizaciones Regionales Campesinas Autónomas (UNORCA), a member of La Via Campesina. CECCAM's discourse, which covered forestry, agro-ecology, and biotechnology, highlighted the gradual penetration of environmental issues into the world of rural organizations. Organizations like CECCAM, which had a national perspective, exhibited some social environmentalist maturation, halfway between technical expertise and PR activism, a stance that brought them closer to expert-activist organizations and transnational network campaigners.[16]

Organizations that were implanted in Chiapas, like Maderas del Pueblo del Sureste and CIEPAC (Centro de Investigaciones y Económicas Políticas de Acción Comunitaria) denounced the Mexican government's various environmental initiatives, like the relocation of local populations outside the Montes Azules Biosphere Reserve, its bioprospecting projects like the ICBG Maya ICBG (Dumoulin Kervan and Foyer 2004), luxury ecotourism projects, and initiatives like the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC), which was considered as the environmental side of the Puebla-Panama regional trade initiative. Claiming a Zapatista autonomist approach in direct rupture with the government, these organizations moved away from community development activities and toward denunciation campaigns against official environmentalism, which they saw as overly conservationist, or as serving the interests of multinational corporations.

The second half of the 1990s and early 2000s corresponded with the arrival of transnational actors who influenced Mexican social environmentalism's already dense landscape. Catherine Marielle of the GEA summed up what she considered to be a new phase:

> The arrival of Greenpeace and the ETC Group is much more recent. Unlike these organizations, we do not have the time to really work on visibility like Greenpeace does as a fundraising strategy. This is a very distinct phase, and very new, with its own characteristics corresponding to globalization. These organizations came after Rio 92.
>
> Before, our work was much more situated at the national level, whereas now we are participating in international networks.[17]

[15] Nevertheless, we have to take note that this agenda was strongly influenced by the international agenda, much more than by some Mexico-specific features (cf. Miriam Alfie Cohen 1995).

[16] It is worth recalling the uprising of one of the first peasant movements, which self-identified sharply as ecologist from 1997 on. It took place in the Costa Grande of the Guerrero State, with Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera as its two leaders. They were imprisoned from 1999 to 2001, then forced into exile. In 2000, they won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize for their work.

[17] Personal interview, on January 22, 2006. Translation by L. Kraftowitz.

Although Greenpeace had been present in Mexico as far back as 1993 for air pollution campaigns in Mexico City, against the Laguna Verde nuclear power plant, and for toxic waste importation campaigns, it was not until 1998 that it decided to start a "genetic engineering" campaign in Mexico. Mexico was considered a strategic area for this issue because of its agricultural biodiversity and the risk posed by U.S. imports.[18] In 1999, Silvia Ribeiro, a representative from RAFI (the Rural Advancement Foundation International, which in 2001 was renamed the ETC Group), experienced in advocacy journalism, arrived in Mexico from Uruguay. Despite their organizational restraints, Greenpeace and the ETC Group played a central role in initiating and orchestrating campaigns against bio-prospecting and against transgenic maize. Significantly, they introduced some major communicative methods to Mexico and became nodal points for an incipient opposition network in training.

They quickly created alliances with Mexican environmental and peasant organizations. In this way, Greenpeace linked up with GEA and ANEC (La Via Campesina's other peasant union) to found the *Sin Maiz No Hay Pais* ("No Corn, No Country") movement, while the ETC Group became closer to CECCAM and UNORCA, and formed "Red en Defensa del Maiz". Generally speaking, the arrival of these international organizations in the context of globalization appears to have "pulled" one section of Mexican social environmentalist actors from the local to the global, and from concrete problems rooted in local communities to more structural problems defined in terms of national and international policy. The confluence of environmental mobilizations into multi-sectoral coalitions therefore presented the great challenge of this new period. Mobilizations during the WTO summit in Cancun in 2003 emphasized the divisions and risks of some NGOs' desire to appropriate coordination networks. With this change in the perception of scale, a part of Mexican environmentalism was drawn into the ideological reconfiguration represented by the opposition to neoliberal globalization.[19] Importantly enough, some key personalities of this movement were incorporated into the new environmental ministry when it came to be headed by Lichtinger in 2001, after the PRI was defeated. However, far from meeting expectations, the ministry was unable to push for greater environmental justice, and instead lost political power.

In parallel, the 2000s also saw mobilizations continue against mega-projects, marked by this radical new character of peasant and indigenous organizations, which were now integrating the environmental argument into an increasingly unstructured political discourse in both the rural and national arenas. While some successes followed violent struggles (like the mobilizations against the airport in San Salvador Atenco (2001–2002) (Davis and Rosan 2004), and against the "La Parota" dam in the state of Guerrero (2003–2012) (Castro-Soto 2005), it was above all an era of rapid advances of large-scale mining projects across a vast section of the national territory. The dynamism of the Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales (NAMAs), born in 2008 out of previous coalitions and "caravans" thus illustrates both the gravity of local conditions, and the attempt at a unified environmental struggle against neoliberal policies (Table 16.2).

[18] One of the objectives was to monitor and strengthen as long as possible the moratorium on GMO corn that had been declared by the Mexican government at the time (Gustavo Ampugnani, personal interview, January 23, 2006), as well as to impede the authorization of Mexican GMO corn, notably through some activist and legal measures.

[19] This ideological reconfiguration can be observed through the systematic denunciation of the NAFTA commercial agreement, and through the strong support given to the neo-Zapatista movement, which constitutes a main reference point of the alter-globalization movement.

Table 16.2 Four paths of mobilizing a radical oppositional repertoire on a broad social basis: From minimalist transformative collective action to a strong social movement

	Escalation of social network mobilization	Examples
A	Collective action based on one local–national connection	Consejo Mexicano para la sylvicultura Sustentable (CMSS) and its partners
B	Coalition of a large number of national environmental organizations	Red Nacional de Derecho a la Información Ambienta (RNDIA) en 2001[a]. Pres Silva, Foromex
C	Large coalitions connecting national/transnational NGOs with strong local mobilization against big development projects	Laguna Verde (1987–1988), Tepoztlan (1995–1996), San Salvador Atenco (2002), Presa La Parota (2003–2012)
D	Large inter-sectoral coalitions where environmental organizations are just one component of a broader social mobilization	Tepozlán, the "Sin Maïs no hay Païs", Campaign, Social Forums

[a] "Su creación se dio en el marco del II Encuentro Nacional de Ecologistas, donde participaron 50 organizaciones de 26 estados del país" Voir Velazquez, 2005

Conclusion

In the Mexican case, the opposition between, on one hand, an "environmentalism of the poor," with grassroots movements and mobilized local communities as its basis, and on the other hand a network of transnational NGOs, does not reflect the complexity of the different components of the environmental social movement. Based on the analysis of these different organizations and their over 30-year-long trajectories, we argue in this chapter that this movement is composed of two distinct "organizational fields." Each one developed from a different coalition between NGOs and local organizations, which then became part of broader national, international, or transnational networks. In these two fields, we can identify this kind of "transclassism," a typical feature of the environmental movements, as well as an extension of coalitions from local to transnational. Beyond reciprocal stigmatizations claims of "elitism" and of "populism," the best criteria for differentiating these two ways of articulation between local, regional, national, and transnational organizations should be the repertoire of collective action. Indeed, the sustainable community development coalitions are more "reformist" and are focused on the construction of alternatives for the poorest, while environmental resistance movements put at the foreground "contentious politics" in the name of the dominated[20]. These two methods of aggregation not only define two sides of the Mexican environmental social movement, but also match two distinct scholarly definitions of what a "social movement" is.[21]

Even though "sustainable community development" seems to fit quite well with the diagnosis of NGOization and technification, the historical analysis of this particular type of mobilization demonstrates that it cannot be reduced to such a process. Broadly speaking, the tendency is not unilaterally towards the "NGOization" of social movements through institutionalization (Álvarez 1999; Diez 2008). Some old formal organizations were indeed in existence before larger mobilizations, and some cycles of re-politization have occurred after a tendency to institutionalization. On the other hand, Alvarez (1999) accurately identified the "double identity" of the leaders who, in spite of institutionalization conserve mixed networks and repertoires, between NGO and social movement dynamics (Velasquez 2005). First of all, this field undeniably found its origin in the collective mobilizations, with an openly political dimension. Indeed, direct opposition

[20] This polarity is close to the one proposed by Pleyers (2010) in his in-depth analysis of the alter-globalization movement: between experimentation and counter-expertise.

[21] Touraine (1981) could be cited as an example of the first, and Tarrow (1998) of the second.

to the State and community participation played a crucial role; and today, a significant part of these organizations still maintain close ties with the "environmental resistance" field. Moreover, the very strong relations connecting the sustainable community development NGOs to local organizations in marginalized regions, which are even more "professionalized" today, have always had and maintain a key role. In some cases, this has resulted in long-term processes of organization, autonomy, and empowerment, and has allowed for the adoption of new productive practices (community forestry, organic coffee growing, fair-trade…), which then transformed the political relations that these communities had with external actors. Of course, the institutionalization of this component is sometimes perceived as the death of an environmental movement based on contentious politics. But on the other hand, this dynamic might also be seen as the best way to gain influence on institutions and meta-norms that are regulating the relationship that Mexican society has with its environment. Such a production of symbols, information, and laws plays a leading role in the transformation of the developmentalist model (Azuela 2006).

If we look at its direct confrontation strategies using extra-institutional means, as well as its anti-system discourse, more critical and radical against the State, neo-liberalism and transnational firms, the field of "environmental resistance" appears to fit perfectly into a more classical definition of social movements. Nevertheless, this time too, things are more complex, as we observe institutionalization phenomena in some alter-globalization networks, and as some of these universal claims can sometimes been seen as elitist, when top topics on the agenda are closer to some high-educated urban "avant-garde" than to indigenous or peasant population grievances (counter-expertise, bio-prospecting, GMOs…). The structure of political opportunities has undergone an important transformation since 1990, as has the form of mobilizations. A double tendency must be emphasized: the transnationalization of a majority of networks and agendas, and at the same time, a pullback toward local political struggles (Velazquez Garcia 2010; Pleyers 2011). Locally rooted environmental organizations have flourished over the last decade, but since they lack visibility as they do not search for larger actions, the emerging in-depth analysis of some of these local networks has great value (Velázquez 2009, Lutz Ley and Salazar Adams 2011).

Finally, who are the true environmentalists? Those who are constructing development alternatives with marginalized communities, or the ones who are involved in struggling against the more aggressive manifestations of a destructive model? This polemic, that rattles activists as well as analysts, is actually pointless. These two components both oppose the dominant social order and constitute the two sides of what should rightly be called "Mexican social environmentalism."

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