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Lessons from Mexico-U.S. Civil Society Coalitions

Jonathan Fox

INTRODUCTION

Is globalization producing a transnational civil society? Are the transnational economic, social, and cultural forces that are ostensibly weakening nation-states also empowering civic and social movements that come together across borders? Analysts differ over the degree to which a "global civil society" is emerging.¹ If there is more to this trend than internationalist dreams, then clear evidence should be emerging from the accelerating process of Mexico-U.S. integration. This binational relationship is the broadest and deepest example of global integration be-

This chapter is a revised version of "Evaluación de las coaliciones binacionales de la sociedad civil a partir de la experiencia México-Estados Unidos," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 3 (2001). An earlier version appeared as Chicano/Latino Research Center Working Paper No. 26, University of California, Santa Cruz (accessible at www.irc-online.org/bios/pdf/index_docs.html) and was presented at the conference "Dilemmas of Change in Mexican Politics" (Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, October 1999) and the international congress of the Latin American Studies Association (March 2000). This chapter was made possible by a decade of conversations and collaboration with David Brooks and also benefited enormously from long-term conversations with Luis Hernández Navarro. In addition, thanks to Tani Adams, Sonia Álvarez, Fernando Bejarano, Maylei Blackwell, Jennifer Johnson, Margaret Keck, Kevin Middlebrook, Debra Rose, and Heather Williams for very useful comments on earlier drafts. The author bears sole responsibility for the interpretations that follow.

¹ Keck and Sikkink (1998) provide a historically grounded, agenda-setting approach. Tarrow (1998, 2000) offers healthy skepticism. For approaches that see transnational social movements emerging, see, among others, Brecher, Costello, and Smith 2000; Cohen and Rai 2000; J. Smith, Chatfield, and Pagnucco 1997; and Wapner 1996. For a recent overview of the literature, see Florini 2000. For conference papers that specifically examine the local impacts of transnational civil society networks, see www2.ucsc.edu/cgirs/conferences/humanrights.

tween North and South, offering a clear "paradigm case" for assessing the dynamics of cross-border civil society interaction. It is also important to take stock of the impact of cross-border coalitions, which varies widely in practice. This study looks within and across organized social constituencies to generate comparative lessons.

This analysis does not assume that more cross-border coordination is necessarily better. Instead, the goal is to see where binational relationships fit on social constituency agendas, how they evolve, and what difference they make.² It turns out that most Mexico-U.S. civil society relationships involve networking and occasional binational coalition campaigns between social and civic organizations that remain fundamentally local and national in orientation. These relationships often depend heavily on the initiatives of a small number of cross-border bridge-builders while remaining on the margins of the participating organizations' main strategies and sources of leverage. Moreover, relatively few networks have consolidated into dense, balanced partnerships that could be called coalitions, much less "transnational social movements."

If one is interested in assessing the density and impact of linkages between social, civic, and political actors, one needs to specify a standard for comparison (dense compared to what? influential compared to what?). International linkages may provide little added leverage to disenfranchised groups, but those without cross-border ties may have even less clout. Compared to where U.S.-Mexico civil society relations stood a decade ago, there is no question that a wide range of networks, coalitions, and alliances has emerged that would once have been hard to imagine. Compared to the pace of binational integration among *other* actors, however—including auto manufacturers, investment bankers, toxic waste producers, drug dealers, TV magnates, border radio networks, police forces, immigrant families, mayors, governors, and na-

² In response to the assertion that labor unions need to "catch up" in the integration process, senior AFL-CIO strategist Ron Blackwell pointed out: "Why are we lagging behind [corporations and states]? They make the rules. Not only is it their game and they take an aggressive posture toward the rest of us, but their activities in organizing people are self-financing. Business is a masterful organizer and a massive organizer of people. So are governments. We don't have that advantage. Moreover, our interests are social interests; they are particular among us and it takes awhile to find each other.... Workers have differences of interests. They overlap, but they are not identical and they do contradict each other over some issues. The whole project of building a union, of building any organization, is to be able to map the areas of overlapping interests and be able to build a working relationship, the capacity for collective action based on what we share" (presentation at the conference "Lessons from Mexico-U.S. Binational Civil Society Coalitions," University of California, Santa Cruz, July 1998).

tional policymakers—both the density and impact of binational civil society coalitions have been quite limited. The most notable exception involves partnerships actually *on* the border.

Cross-border conversations between national civil society actors have certainly multiplied enormously, encouraging much deeper mutual understanding. But mutual understanding between civil society counterparts does not necessarily lead to actual collaboration. For example, sympathetic journalistic coverage often features headlines like "budding cross-border resistance" (Rosen 1999, for example), yet we have been reading similar headlines about relations between social movements in Mexico and the United States for more than a decade. For reasons not yet fully understood, these "buds" have had difficulty flowering.³ Consolidating cross-border partnerships turns out to be easier said than done. Their impact, moreover, has often been overestimated. The involvement of international actors in the national arena, per se, does not demonstrate that they therefore significantly influence that arena. For example, there is a widespread tendency to assume that the international concern provoked by the Zapatista rebellion translated into significant international civil society impact on the course of events in Chiapas. An alternative hypothesis is quite plausible, however. International civil society actors may have been, in practice, marginal to what has been primarily a nationally determined political process.

This essay is organized into four parts. The first section frames cross-border activist relationships in terms of the broader U.S.-Mexico context, which involves diverse state and elite actors as well. The second section makes conceptual distinctions between transnational networks, coalitions, and movements, followed by assessments of the density of key U.S.-Mexico civil society partnerships in specific issue areas, including labor, environment, trade policy advocacy, democracy and human rights, women's rights, and immigrant rights. The third section turns from coalition dynamics to an initial assessment of transnational advocacy impact, focusing on three sectors: environment, labor, and human rights. The final section identifies a series of trends in binational civil society dynamics and impact across sectors, framed in terms of analytical propositions for discussion.

³ On the late 1980s–early 1990s period of cross-border organizing, see Brooks 1992; Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994; DECA Equipo Pueblo 1997; J. Fox 1989, 1992; Thorup 1991, 1993; Heredia and Hernández 1995; Torres 1997. For comprehensive listings of organizations involved, see Hernández and Sánchez 1992; Browne 1996a, 1996b.

SITUATING SOCIETY-TO-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS

The full array of binational social, civic, and political coalitions involves a wide range of state as well as social actors. This chapter will focus primarily on civil society-to-civil society relationships, concentrating in turn on those actors that pursue broader social participation and public accountability in each country. However, these relations should be understood in the broader context of the many *other* partnerships that link states and societies in Mexico and the United States (not to mention the private sectors, which have been studied extensively elsewhere). One can situate society-to-society relationships in terms of one quadrant within a simple two-by-two chart that depicts the U.S. state and civil society on one side and the Mexican state and civil society on the other. Table 19.1 illustrates the wide array of state-to-state coalitions. They range from those focusing on keeping Mexico safe for U.S. investors, such as the 1995 bailout following Mexico's peso crisis, to the increasing degree of military and antidrug cooperation, as well as regular, institutionalized exchanges between federal cabinets and border governors.

State-to-State Links

The wide range of state-to-state links between the United States and Mexico is well known and will not be detailed here.⁴ These partnerships reach across the many sectoral agencies in both federal governments and also involve congress-to-congress linkages. Increasingly, subnational governments are relating to one another—most notably in the case of the regular meetings of border governors, but also including regular visits by state governors to regions linked to theirs by cross-border immigration. Although some of these cross-border relationships between counterparts are largely ceremonial, many are quite substantial, as in the case of the U.S. Treasury and White House role in the 1995 Mexican economic bailout, and the increasing levels of cooperation between the armed forces.⁵ Jorge Castañeda highlighted the political implications of these state-to-state partnerships when he argued that the U.S. government's repeated financial bailouts bolstered the Mexican regime and postponed national democratization (1996).

⁴ For details on the 1990s, see, among others, Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994; Bailey and Aguayo Quezada 1996; Mazza 2001; Pastor and Fernández de Castro 1998.

⁵ The United States also played an important role in encouraging the multilateral development banks to invest heavily in Mexico, especially during the NAFTA debate (see *Borderlines* 2, no. 3 [September 1994] and J. Fox 2000a).

Table 19.1. Examples of Mexico-U.S. Partnerships

	U.S. State	Civil Society in the United States
Mexican State	Treasury ministries National cabinet meetings Border governors conferences Anti-narcotics aid NAFTA trilateral institutions Armed forces to armed forces Military sales U.S. support for Mexico from multilateral development banks (MDBs) Exchanges between judicial authorities Migrant education programs	Policy think tanks Private lobbyists Universities Latino NGOs Conservation NGOs Elite cultural institutions (e.g., museums) Also, Mexican immigrant civil society in United States: (Hometown clubs and federations)
Mexican Civil Society	USAID (and its U.S. contractors) National Endowment for Democracy Inter-American Foundation	Religious institutions Private foundations Media elites Environmental coalitions Trade union coalitions Democracy networks Human rights networks Women's rights networks Migrant voting rights advocacy networks Indigenous peoples networks Small farmer networks Border public health coalitions

U.S. State Links to Mexican Civil Society

Linkages between the U.S. state and Mexican civil society are relatively recent. Historically, U.S. government development assistance to private Mexican organizations was quite modest and focused on family planning, health, scientific, agricultural, and educational cooperation, rather than on civil society capacity-building (even in those sectors). Moreover, until recently, these kinds of service provision organizations overlapped heavily with the state.⁶ Since the late 1980s, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) began to invest heavily in Mexican

⁶ On the history of Mexican NGOs, see J. Fox and Hernández 1992. In Mexico, the term "*organización civil*" is often preferred to "*organización no-gubernamental*."

conservation organizations to bolster their capacity to protect biodiversity and, in some cases, to improve the management of what USAID called Mexico's "paper parks."⁷ This pattern continued to reflect the overlap between Mexican state agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

When analysts think of U.S. policy toward civil society in other countries, much of the discussion focuses on so-called democracy promotion. In the case of Mexico, however, a recent comprehensive overview of the 1980–1995 period found that democracy promotion was never a major U.S. government policy goal (Mazza 2001). With very few exceptions, both the executive and legislative branches sustained a strong consensus to leave that issue off the bilateral agenda. By the late 1990s, however, the issue inched up the agenda. USAID's funding under its category of "more democratic processes" includes support for Mexican civic organizations (US\$3.725 million in FY 2000), complementing the smaller role of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Some of this USAID funding is for judicial education, municipal development, and legislative institution-building, and therefore belongs in the state-to-state category. USAID's democracy funding also reaches, however, the Citizens' Movement for Democracy, the Mexican Center for Victims of Crimes, and the Mexican Society for Women's Rights (Semillas). USAID's proposed \$1.2 million in funding to deal with HIV/AIDS is also mainly targeted to NGOs (international, national, and local) in Mexico.⁸

The National Endowment for Democracy has played a higher-profile role in grant-making to Mexican civic and human rights organizations (Dresser 1996; Mazza 2001; Sabatini 2002). In the 1997 election year, NED granted approximately \$1.1 million to Mexican civic institutions and democratic processes, including \$371,000 to Alianza Cívica, \$278,000 through the AFL-CIO's refurbished international arm, and \$274,000 via its Republican affiliate to the conservative Centro Cívico and its women's affiliate.⁹ While these levels of funding were signifi-

⁷ By the late 1990s, environmental funding grew to be the largest category of USAID funding to Mexico, accounting for US\$6 million (the majority of its proposed FY 2000 funding). Some fraction of this conservation funding probably reached Mexican environmental NGOs. USAID also has funded the Mexican Red Cross in times of disaster. This paragraph is based on the most recent public information, accessible at www.infor.usaid.gov/pubs/cp2000/lac/mexico.html. For details, see USAID/Mexico 1999.

⁸ See note 7, above. There has been very little informed public discussion of USAID's Mexico program in either country. This gap is both cause and effect of the lack of independent assessments of the program.

⁹ By 1999, annual NED funding to Mexico dropped to under \$300,000 (see www.ned.org).

cant from the point of view of the recipient organizations, Mexico was not an especially high priority within NED's "portfolio" (especially during the early 1990s, when civic funding might have made more of a difference). For most of the 1990s, however, NED funding for Mexican civic organizations was quite controversial.¹⁰

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), a small federal agency responsible to the U.S. Congress and mandated to be independent of short-term U.S. foreign policy goals, has maintained a long-term, low-profile, but public involvement with Mexican civil society organizations. The IAF has provided grant funding to a wide range of Mexican NGOs, and in the late 1980s it shifted to more direct funding for community-based rural social organizations, including many autonomous indigenous producer groups. The IAF's levels of funding to Mexico were higher than NED's, averaging approximately \$2.3 million per year over the past decade.¹¹ Since the mid-1980s, the IAF has made substantial grants to numerous regional peasant and indigenous movement organizations and networks, including the sustainable coffee and community-based forestry movements.

Mexican State Links with Civil Society in the United States

The 1988 electoral challenge to the Mexican regime's legitimacy spilled over the country's northern border, including open campaigning by the left opposition among Mexicans in the United States. The possibility of change in Mexico resonated among Mexicans in the United States to an unexpected degree, though most of the migrant population lacked political rights in both political systems. In the United States as in Mexico, the 1988 fraud provoked post-electoral mass mobilizations of immigrants that were probably larger than those during the campaign. These protests reverberated strongly within the Mexican state.¹²

¹⁰ For one of the most persistent critics, on both nationalist and transparency grounds, see P. Rodríguez 2001. For Alianza Cívica's most comprehensive response, see Aguayo Quezada 2001.

¹¹ David Bray, former Mexico Foundation representative, personal communication, September 1999. The IAF has long published the names of its grantees, as well as the purposes and amounts of its grants, in its bilingual annual reports (though its website, www.iaf.gov, is rather sparse).

¹² Dresser quotes then-Mexican consul in Los Angeles, José Ángel Pescador: "One of the greatest protest marches against the outcome of the elections took place in Los Angeles.... The Mexican government realized that there are many anti-PRI Mexicans living in California who return periodically to their communities and have influence in Mexico" (Dresser 1993: 94).

In response, the Mexican state launched a multipronged strategy to reach out to Mexican civil society in the United States.¹³ The term "civil society in the United States" is used here instead of "U.S. civil society" in order to include the Mexican state's strategy for reincorporating Mexican nationals. One could argue that this is only formally a cross-border relationship, given that the state's outreach to the national diaspora is a cross-border extension of its national efforts to organize and reincorporate Mexican civil society actors more generally. The task of outreach to migrants falls to the Mexican Foreign Ministry (SRE) and its network of consulates, however, and is by definition a cross-border relationship. Some state governments have also developed their own outreach strategies, most notably in the case of Guanajuato. More than thirty Casas Guanajuato are organized into a national network.¹⁴ One could also argue that Televisa's long-standing hegemony (which ended recently) over U.S. Spanish-language television (especially the news) also constituted a prominent case of the (de facto) Mexican state's linkage to Latino civil society in the United States (A. Rodríguez 1999).

As Goldring has argued, most patterns of Mexican migrant organization in the United States can be understood as either state-led or migrant-led, with Mexican state actors playing an especially prominent role in inducing the formation of hometown clubs and their statewide federations (1998, 2002).¹⁵ In the process, the Mexican state has out-organized the major political parties, keeping most organized migrants in the civic rather than the political arena. At the same time, a new civic network of migrant voting rights advocates began to lobby the state and political parties in Mexico for the first time (Martínez-Saldaña and Ross Pineda, this volume). Only in the past few years have Mexican immigrants, their leaders, and their organizations begun to influence national politics and gain a voice in the national media, but this process is best understood as a relationship within Mexican civil society (see below).

While the Mexican state's efforts to reach out to its diaspora have been largely invisible outside the Mexican community, its partnerships with more established U.S. civil society actors have received extensive

¹³ See Dresser 1991a, 1993; García Acevedo 1996a; González Gutiérrez 1993, 1997; de la Garza et al. 1998; Leiken 2000; and Martínez-Saldaña and Ross Pineda, this volume; among others.

¹⁴ Personal communication, anthropologist Laura González, University of Texas, Dallas, August 1999.

¹⁵ See also studies by Espinosa (1999); Fitzgerald (2000); Leiken (2000); Rivera (1999a, 1999b, 1999c); Roberts, Frank, and Lozano Ascencio (1999); R. Smith (1998, 1999); and Zabin and Escala Rabadán (1998). For conceptual context, see M. Smith and Guarnizo 1998.

attention.¹⁶ As part of its pro-NAFTA campaign, the Mexican state's efforts to woo U.S. opinion makers reached unprecedented levels during the Salinas administration (1988–1994), and a wide range of U.S. civic and political elites responded eagerly. The most powerful U.S. private universities, think tanks, and large, moderate environmental organizations rushed to see which one could offer Carlos Salinas de Gortari their most public platform and their most distinguished honors. The Mexican state made significant economic and political investments to influence U.S. public opinion through think tanks and lobbyists.¹⁷ Mexican American civil rights and business organizations also received significant official attention.¹⁸

In summary, both the U.S. and Mexican governments increased their use of non-state actors in the other country to influence the other state, especially since NAFTA overflowed the usual narrow boundaries of conventional bilateral policy-making.

Civil Society to Civil Society

The importance and density of binational societal relationships have ebbed and flowed in long waves throughout the twentieth century, as Alan Knight has suggested (1997). Some of that history continues to resonate. Ricardo Flores Magón remains a hero for radical democratic movements in both societies, among Chicanos and southern Mexican indigenous movements, respectively.¹⁹ Radical reporter John Reed con-

¹⁶ This was not the first wave of Mexican state–U.S. civil society relationships. For an overview of Mexican relations with the U.S. political system early in this century, see Knight's comprehensive discussion (1997). On U.S. civil society's cultural and intellectual engagements with Mexican counterparts during this period, see Delpar 1992 and Velasco 1999, among others. On the Mexican state's efforts to work with U.S. authorities to repress exiled Mexican radicals (as well as their alliances with the U.S. left), see MacLachlan 1991. In the past, some ties in this category also involved Mexican government invitations extended to U.S. nongovernmental organizations, as in the case of the Rockefeller Foundation's public health (1930s) and agricultural research work (1940s), as well as the Summer Institute of Linguistics, invited by President Lázaro Cárdenas to promote literacy in indigenous regions in the 1930s.

¹⁷ See Davis 1993; Dresser 1991a, 1996; Eisenstadt 1997; Grayson 1998; Velasco 1997. The Mexican state also used elite cultural outreach in an attempt to improve Mexico's image in the eyes of U.S. opinion makers with the 1991 "The Splendor of Thirty Centuries" exhibit in New York, San Antonio, and Los Angeles.

¹⁸ See García Acevedo 1996b and Hamm 2001.

¹⁹ See, for example, Gómez Quiñones's classic treatment (1977).

tinues to inspire contemporary alternative U.S. journalists.²⁰ Other historical chapters, in contrast, have been largely forgotten, such as the mutual identification between both national labor movements in the late 1930s (Paterson 1998). The oldest sustained binational collaborative effort for social justice and mutual understanding dates back to that period, sustained by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC).²¹

This study deals with one subset of the larger universe of civil society actors. The focus is on comparative case studies of binational relationships between these nongovernmental actors in each country that see themselves as promoting social equality and more accountable public and private institutions. The intention of delimiting this specific set of actors is to recognize that many civil groups and institutions within both civil societies act primarily to *reinforce* institutional arrangements that limit public accountability and reproduce elitist political cultural legacies. For example, this would characterize the dominant broadcast media in both societies as well as the dominant tendencies within some religious hierarchies or the Red Cross.²² Mainstream U.S. philanthropic entrepreneurs have also reached out to work with Mexican counterparts, including an effort to implant U.S.-style, service-oriented "community foundations" in Mexico, with the goal of encouraging a more institutionalized approach to philanthropy within the private sector. So far there is little evidence that these Mexican foundations have sunk deep roots. Both societies also have social movements that *oppose* the extension or consolidation of rights won by other social movements, most notably women's rights. Looking at civil society in this broad sense, including its powerful pro-status quo elements, reminds us that civil society is a force of inertia as well as a force for change. This study's focus, however, is on those actors within civil society that share

²⁰ See, for example, John Ross's 1998–2000 e-mail news bulletin, *Mexico Bárbaro* (wnu@igc.apc.org).

²¹ For sixty years—since 1939—the Quaker-inspired American Friends Service Committee has organized annual summer community development programs in Mexico to bring youths from both countries together, and AFSC sustained pioneering U.S. programs for immigrant and maquila worker rights. AFSC's main Mexican partner organization, Servicio, Desarrollo y Paz (SEDEPAC) was founded in 1983 (www.laneta.apc.org/sedepac/).

²² For example, both the U.S. and Mexican Red Cross organizations have been dominated by political conservatives (Elizabeth Dole in the United States, for example). In the mid-1990s, the Mexican Red Cross was widely considered ineffective at providing disaster relief, was identified with the military in Chiapas, and its leader led campaigns against AIDS prevention activities. In a corruption scandal, the Mexican Red Cross even had to return a \$300,000 USAID Hurricane Paulina donation (Zúñiga and Olayo 1999). USAID does not mention this in its website bulletin about the grant.

some degree of commitment to democratization and social change. The concept of *counterparts* is also relevant here, a notion that does not imply similarity or agreement, but rather analogous roles in their respective societies (Brooks 1992).

DISENTANGLING BINATIONAL NETWORKS, COALITIONS, AND MOVEMENTS

The past decade witnessed an upsurge of binational civil society discussion, beginning before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) debate but then rapidly expanding. These discussions often took the forms of exchanges of information, experiences, and expressions of solidarity. Sometimes these exchanges generated networks of ongoing relationships. Sometimes these networks generated the shared goals, mutual trust, and mutual understanding needed to form *coalitions* that could collaborate on specific campaigns. As Keck put it, "coalitions are networks in action mode."²³ *Networks*, in contrast, do not necessarily coordinate their actions or come to agreement on specific joint actions (as implied by the concept of coalition). Neither networks nor coalitions necessarily imply significant horizontal exchange between participants. Indeed, many rely on a handful of interlocutors to manage relationships between broad-based social organizations that have relatively little awareness of the nature and actions of their counterparts. The concept of transnational social *movement* organizations, in contrast, implies a much higher degree of density and much more cohesion than networks or coalitions. The term "transnational movement organizations" suggests a social subject that is present in more than one country, as in the paradigm case of the Binational Oaxacan Indigenous Front (FIOB) and other indigenous organizations that literally cross the border.

In practice, these concepts of "network," "coalition," and "movement" are often used interchangeably. For the sake of developing tools for more precise assessment of the nature of binational relationships, however, these three concepts will be treated here as analytically distinct (see table 19.2) and then applied to a series of cross-border relationships between social and civic actors. In short, transnational civil society exchanges *can* produce networks, which *can* produce coalitions, which *can* produce movements.²⁴ Note that underscoring these distinc-

²³ Personal e-mail communication, March 9, 2000.

²⁴ The use of the term transnational rather than binational here is intended to suggest that this framework can be applied more broadly. Table 19.2's approach to

Table 19.2. Transnational Networks, Coalitions, and Movements

Shared Characteristics	Transnational Networks	Transnational Coalitions	Transnational Movement Organizations
Exchange of information and experiences	Yes	Yes	Yes
Organized social base	Sometimes more, sometimes less or none	Sometimes more, sometimes less or none	Yes
Mutual support	Sometimes, from afar and possibly strictly discursive	Yes	Yes
Joint actions and campaigns	Sometimes loose coordination	Yes, based on mutually agreed minimum goals, often short-term, tactical	Yes, based on shared long-term strategy
Shared ideologies	Not necessarily	Not necessarily	Generally yes
Shared political cultures	Often not	Often not	Shared political values, styles and identities

Note: Shading illustrates suggested degree of relationship density and cohesion.

conceptualizing diverse cross-border relationships was significantly informed by rural Mexican grassroots organizing strategies that bring diverse social actors from different regions, ethnic groups, and political traditions into networks and coalitions (often subsumed under the broader category of the peasant and indigenous movement). These coalition-building strategies, dating from the early 1980s, seek to respect multiple political and social differences while identifying common ground. Longtime rural organizer Manuel Fernández de Villegas, founder of the grassroots support NGO *Trasparencia*, frames their strategy for building networks and coalitions in terms of three very distinct, sequential steps: exchange of experiences, mutual support, and joint action. See www.trasparencia.org.mx. For analytical work on cross- and intra-sectoral coalition dynamics in the United States, see, among others, Rosen 2000, Shaffer 2000.

tions does not imply any judgment that more cooperation is necessarily better. On the contrary, realistic expectations about what is possible are crucial to sustain any kind of collective action. Indeed, one of the main conclusions of the cross-sectoral comparative discussion that follows is that cross-border cooperation involves significant costs and risks that must be taken into account, depends heavily on finding appropriate counterparts with whom to cooperate, and needs shared targets to inspire joint action.

It is relevant to keep in mind that, independent of the recent pace of binational integration, many civil society actors in both countries have long considered themselves to be internationalist, such as many currents within religious, environmental, feminist, human rights, and trade union communities. While many local and national groups see themselves as part of a global movement (for feminism, for human rights, in defense of the environment), this study focuses on *sustained cross-border relationships between organized constituencies* (as distinct from broadly shared goals). As a result, the study will use the relatively tangible category of transnational movement *organization* (as distinct from the more amorphous concept of global civil society, for example).²⁵

Distinguishing between networks, coalitions, and movements helps to avoid blurring political differences and imbalances *within* what may appear from the outside to be "transnational movements."²⁶ As Keck and Sikkink's pioneering study notes, transnational networks face the challenge of developing a "common frame of meaning" despite cross-cultural differences (1998: 7). In practice, however, such shared meanings are socially constructed through joint action rather than shared intentions. Political differences within transnational networks are also not to be underestimated, in spite of apparently shared goals. Even those transnational networks that *appear* to share basic political-cultural values, such as environmental, feminist, or human rights movements, often consist of actors that have very different, nationally distinct political visions, goals, and styles.²⁷ As Keck and Sikkink add, "transnational advocacy networks must also be understood as political spaces, in which differently situated actors negotiate—formally or informally—the social, cultural and political meanings of their joint enterprise"

²⁵ I am grateful to my colleague Professor Sonia Alvarez for encouraging me to specify this distinction.

²⁶ For a parallel approach that also distinguishes among networks, coalitions, and movements, see Khagram, Riker, and Sikkink 2002.

²⁷ National borders may not be the most important ones here. For example, ecologists or feminists from different countries who share systematic critiques may have more in common with their cross-border counterparts than they do with the more moderate wings of their respective national movements in each country.

(1998: 3).²⁸ This chapter builds on Keck and Sikkink's study by exploring the dynamics of these political spaces. In contrast, however, this analysis is not limited to NGOs, and it covers broad-based social organizations as well.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL/CIVIC COUNTERPARTS

The following section assesses the varying degrees of density and cohesion among a diverse set of binational society-to-society relationships. Sectors reviewed include labor unions, environmentalists, trade policy advocacy groups, democracy and human rights activists, women's rights activists, and Latino immigrant and civil rights organizations.

Labor Unions

Mexico-U.S. labor partnerships have been among the most challenging of any sector for four main reasons.²⁹ First, the political cultures of both countries' labor movements are dominated by powerful nationalist ideological legacies. Second, workers in some sectors have directly conflicting short-term interests, especially in industries characterized by high degrees of North American "production sharing," such as automobiles, textiles, and garments. Third, counterpart productive sectors often have very different union structures. Specific industries may be unionized in one country but not in the other, or unions may be centralized in one country but decentralized in the other, creating asymmetries that make it difficult to find counterparts (most notably in the auto industry). Fourth, some unions have preferred the diplomatic stability of working with politically compatible counterparts, and they have been unwilling to explore relationships with a broader range of counterparts. Until recently, the dominant pattern of binational relations between union leaders was to avoid conflict by limiting their diplo-

matic ties to official counterparts.³⁰ This made direct ties between counterparts difficult, especially in sectors with diverse forms of representation in one of the two countries (such as in the auto and textile sectors).

Some cross-border efforts to support workers' freedom of association preceded the NAFTA debate. One of the early movement leaders was the American Friends Service Committee's Texas border-based efforts in support of discreet community-based organizing of workers in *maquiladoras* (in-bond processing plants), leading to the formation of the now broad-based Comité Fronterizo de Obreras.³¹ After the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, *Mujer a Mujer* led feminist support for the independent Mexico City seamstresses union.³² In the first binational U.S.-Mexican union-to-union effort since the Cold War, the midwestern Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) coordinated in the late 1980s with an agricultural worker union in Sinaloa affiliated with the official Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) to offset the Campbell Soup Company's efforts to divide and conquer unions in the United States and Mexico (Neuman 1993; Barger and Razo 1994).

The multisectoral Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM) was founded in 1989, before NAFTA, bringing together religious, environmental, labor, community, and women's rights organizers who had

³⁰ For example, in the early 1990s the United Auto Workers (UAW) did not pursue relationships with movements for union democracy in Mexico, such as the Ford Cuautitlán movement, in order to avoid alienating PRI union bosses. This created an opening for a rank-and-file dissident movement within the UAW, *New Directions*, to gain the moral high ground by leading U.S. solidarity efforts with Mexican Ford workers (La Botz 1992: 148-59; Armbruster 1998). When CTM thugs killed a Mexican Ford worker in the plant, thousands of *New Directions* UAW workers in the Midwest wore black armbands. Yet that solidarity breakthrough may also have been a weakness, since the Mexican rank-and-file Ford movement's association with *New Directions* dissidents appears to have led the UAW national leadership to keep their distance.

³¹ See Kamel and Hoffman 1999; CFO 1999; Hernández 2001. The CFO is reportedly active in Ciudad Victoria, Río Bravo, Piedras Negras, Ciudad Acuña, and Agua Prieta.

³² See Carrillo 1990 and 1998 on the efforts to build cross-border solidarity with the "September 19th" Garment Workers Union. In the late 1980s, these ties included contacts with the major U.S. counterpart unions, as well as a relationship with Texas-based *Fuerza Unida*. International support for the Mexican seamstresses union waned following a disputed leadership transition in 1988. See also the NGO *Mujer a Mujer*'s innovative binational bulletin *Correspondencia*, which linked supporters of women worker organizing in both countries from 1984 to 1992. For further discussion of *Mujer a Mujer*, see Waterman 1998: 168-72; Carrillo 1998. On cross-border networking among women trade unionists, see also Domínguez 2000.

²⁸ On the related concept "transnational public spheres," see Yudice 1998; Guidry, Kennedy, and Zald 2000.

²⁹ For background on the international politics of U.S. labor unions, see, among others, Sims 1992; Shorrock 1999; and McGinn and Moody 1992. On the history of U.S. economic nationalism and unions, see Frank 1999. On variations in trade unions' responses to NAFTA in the United States and Canada, see Dreiling and Robinson 1998. On U.S.-Mexican union relations, see Armbruster 1998; Babson 2000; Brooks 1992; Cook 1997; Carr 1996, 1998; García, this volume; Hathaway 2000a; Kidder and McGinn 1995; La Botz 1992; E. Williams 1997; H. Williams 1999, 2000, and this volume.

been working on binational integration issues.³³ Initially led by U.S. religious activists on the border, over the years the CJM has become increasingly trinational, including a 1996 organizational decision to require 50 percent Mexican representation on its board of directors. Heather Williams's comprehensive comparative analysis of a decade of diverse CJM campaigns shows that the more cross-border they were, the more impact they had on their targets (1999 and this volume).

U.S. and Mexican labor organizers do not always share the same goals or strategies, however. According to Martha Ojeda, a former maquiladora worker leader and director of the CJM, most Mexican maquiladora organizers concentrate primarily on long-term shopfloor and community-based organizing.³⁴ U.S.-focused maquila campaigns, in contrast, often prioritize short-term media impact, especially during key national political moments, such as trade policy debates in Congress. The emphasis on U.S. media impact sometimes conflicts with more discreet shopfloor organizing. Mexican maquila organizers report past cases in which U.S. union delegations' televised factory-gate broadcasts denouncing terrible conditions were followed by firings of the workers who had long been organizing on the inside.³⁵ In contrast, the AFL-CIO and the recent U.S. student anti-sweatshop campaign appear to be more responsive to the initiatives of Mexican worker organizers, as in the case of the Kuk Dong/Nike plant in Atlixco, Puebla.³⁶

Until recently, Mexican maquiladora organizers had been quite isolated from each other. It was only after several years of meeting one another through participation in cross-border coalitions (the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice, as well as the CJM) that Mexican maquila organizers called their first two border-wide Mexican networking meetings. Although U.S.-led cross-border networking encouraged Mexican-side networking up to a point, some Mexican activists grew wary of importing U.S.-side rivalries. The second maquila worker organizing *encuentro* was called, pointedly, "La Organización en las Maquiladoras En y Desde México."³⁷ This broad-

³³ See, among others, Bandy 2000; Frundt 2000; Kamel 1988, 1989; Kamel and Hoffman 1999; Peña 1997; Ruiz and Tiano 1987.

³⁴ Discussant's remarks at the conference "Lessons from Mexico-U.S. Binational Civil Society Coalitions," University of California, Santa Cruz, July 1998.

³⁵ Interview, September 1999. Note, for example, the case of Custom Trim in Matamoros, where leaders of the visiting delegation reportedly ignored warnings that organizers would likely be fired.

³⁶ "Student Protests," National Public Radio report by John Burnett, August 14, 2001.

³⁷ Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, August 20-21, 1999. About one hundred organizers participated, mostly women. Of sixty-five participants who registered, twenty-three were active workers and fifteen were recently fired workers, a much higher

based gathering sought to further Mexican-side border-wide coalition-building by ventilating concerns, forging shared political goals, and working out a series of "ethical principles." Point 9 reads:

I will not accept any support, national or international, that comes with conditions, that encourages divisions and competition among Mexican worker organizations, that subordinates my organization to outside interests, or that demeans, endangers, or negatively affects the workers.³⁸

By the late 1990s, Mexican organizers began to speak of an incipient *movement* of maquila workers, the result of both cross-border and Mexican-side organizing. By this time the increased Mexican (and Canadian) participation in the CJM turned the coalition into a much more balanced, critical venue for forging joint strategies and for processing very different campaign styles. Most notably, the relationship within the CJM between the AFL-CIO and autonomous Mexican worker organizing initiatives is a persistent source of internal debate. In terms of the framework presented above, the CJM is aptly named. In terms of the conceptual framework presented in this study, the CJM is indeed a *coalition*—more coordinated than a network though less unified than a movement.

One of the highest-profile maquiladora organizing experiences involved Tijuana's small Han Young auto component factory. The Han Young union worked very closely with the San Diego Workers' Support Committee. Through its influential union and congressional allies, the San Diego Workers' Support Committee generated widespread U.S. union and congressional concern—even reaching the highest levels of the U.S. government—about the blatant violations of freedom of association in the factory. Within Mexico, the Han Young union had affiliated with the national Authentic Labor Front (FAT) to be able to call a union election. The new local won the support of the plant's workers and initial legal victories, but it later left the FAT, prioritizing cross-border over Mexican coalition partners. Han Young organizers did not participate in the new Mexican maquila organizing network. The cross-border Han Young campaign won important court and media victories, but the factory's workers lost on the ground. Their victories in court

proportion than in any other border network. Of the Mexican organizations that signed the final political declaration, eleven were affiliated with the CJM, six with SNEEJ, two were in both, and three were not in either cross-border network (interview, Carmen Valadez, Casa de la Mujer: Factor X, September 1999).

³⁸ "Principios éticos," August 20-21, 1999, Ciudad Juárez, distributed by e-mail (author's translation).

were ignored by the National Action Party (PAN) state government authorities, and all the pro-union workers were permanently replaced.

The Han Young case tested the limits of cross-border leverage. At least in this case, U.S. media coverage plus access to U.S. Representative Dick Gephardt and Vice President Al Gore seem to have had little effect on Mexican worker rights.³⁹ The Han Young case led to a claim filed through the NAFTA labor side agreement, but the process only produced a farcical public hearing on freedom of association in which impunity won out over dissident workers, who were beaten by thugs in the hearing room itself (Bacon 2000). Han Young is a cautionary tale, warning against assuming that broad-based, high-level, high-profile U.S. political pressure will be sufficient to influence decisions of the Mexican state.

U.S. and Mexican labor unions have held innumerable discussions, exchanges, and conferences that have led to frequent internationalist proclamations but relatively few consolidated partnerships. Some important U.S. unions have been divided over whether to pursue international or nationalist strategies, as in the case of the Teamsters, which ended up pursuing both at once during their period of reform leadership. The Teamsters' high-profile campaign against the implementation of NAFTA's trucking provision was remarkably successful. Indeed, it was the only case of a bottom-up U.S. protest that blocked part of NAFTA implementation. Together with border state politicians (such as Texas Attorney General Dan Morales), the Teamsters managed to frame the issue in terms of public safety and the threat of drug imports, rather than appearing to promote "special interests." In the process, they used media campaigns that many Mexican free trade critics considered to be anti-Mexican in tone.⁴⁰ At the same time, the Teamsters' internationalist wing pursued an organizing campaign in the Washington State apple industry that was sensitive to Mexican migrants, coordinated with the United Farm Workers (UFW), and involved significant participation by Mexican unions. This campaign also organized one of the broadest-based binational coalitions that pursued a worker rights complaint under the labor side agreement to NAFTA, which at least

³⁹ For details on the Han Young campaign, see H. Williams 2000; Hathaway 2000a, 2000b; *Coalition for Labor Rights* (www.summersault.com/agj/clr/); *Working Together* and *Mexican Labor News and Analysis* bulletins (www.igc.apc.org/unitedelect/alert.html). For an overview of border labor politics, see Bandy 1998, 2000.

⁴⁰ Interviews and plenary discussion at the conference "Trinational Exchange: Popular Perspectives on Mexico-U.S.-Canada Relations," Cuernavaca, Mexico, February 1996. For a recent U.S. critique of opening trucking, see Public Citizen 2001. Before the issue reached the headlines, Kourous (2001) argued convincingly that the U.S. groups opposed to NAFTA's trucking provisions continue to reflect nationalist biases.

drew some government attention to the issue.⁴¹ While seemingly contradictory, these two approaches within the Teamsters union reflect both the political diversity within the largest union in the United States and the pragmatic, short-term political calculations made by U.S. anti-NAFTA forces more generally.

The most notable binational union-to-union partnerships have been between relatively small, already progressive unions such as between the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) and the FAT, and between the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the Mexican Telephone Workers Union (STRM).⁴² The FAT-UE alliance was sustained by shared ideological commitments to internationalism and worker empowerment. This partnership helped to launch perhaps the most ambitious trinational union coalition so far, the Dana Workers Alliance, which brought together many industrial unions to defend freedom of association in a Mexican autoparts plant. This case, like many others, has wended its way through the extremely slow procedures of the labor side agreement. Along the way, the two U.S. unions most involved withdrew from leadership of the initiative. In the United States, the autoparts factory that was represented by the UE in the initiative was closed, and the Teamsters' reform leadership lost power.⁴³

The STRM-CWA alliance was especially unusual because the two unions came together to seek common ground despite their different positions regarding NAFTA. They formed a coalition to meet long-term challenges while "agreeing to disagree" over short-term political questions. Notably, the STRM-CWA alliance brought two charges of anti-union violation of freedom of association to the procedures of the labor side agreement. The first case was brought by a Mexican union on be-

⁴¹ Compa 2001 provides the most detailed account so far of the apple campaign. Among U.S. farmworker organizations—in contrast to the FLOC's long history—the UFW has not ventured beyond tentative gestures toward potential Mexican social organization counterparts. As noted in Brooks and Fox (this volume), local observers conclude that the UFW's lack of a binational worker-organizing strategy contributed to the failure of its three-year campaign to organize Mexican strawberry workers in the Pajaro Valley of Central California. Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United (PCUN), representing 4,500 farmworkers in Oregon, began off-season cross-border organizing a few years ago. See www.pcun.org.

⁴² See Alexander and Gilmore 1994; Alexander 1998; Cohen and Early 1999; García Urrutia, this volume; Rosen 1999; Sepúlveda 1998.

⁴³ Personal e-mail communication, Robin Alexander, UE, September 30, 1999. CJM director Martha Ojeda confirms that this campaign lost (personal e-mail communication, July 30, 2001). For background, see Dillon 1998.

half of U.S. workers' rights—Latina workers at Sprint who were fired for union organizing.⁴⁴

Since the Midwest-based Farm Labor Organizing Committee pioneered the strategy of bringing together unions representing workers employed by the same company in the two countries, remarkably few others have followed in its path. One recent exception involves an industry that is increasingly binationally integrated. According to the *Wall St. Journal*, "major U.S. airlines are rapidly turning Mexico into a domestic destination ... making travel to Mexico's hinterland easier than it has ever been" (Millman 1999). Delta and Aeroméxico have one of the most extensive corporate partnerships in the sector; in response, both companies' pilots' organizations recently formed an alliance "to protect wage structures and work distribution ... the first of its kind in Latin America" (Millman 2000).⁴⁵

In summary, cross-border union collaboration has brought some blatant violations of freedom of association to public attention, but so far with few tangible effects.⁴⁶ Indeed, some U.S. workers who supported their Mexican counterparts saw their plant shut down, allegedly in retaliation (Bacon 1998). Perhaps the most dramatic new trend is for Mexican unions to pursue trinational claims about the violation of free-

⁴⁴ CWA leaders note that the second case, against a border maquila plant, Maxi-Switch, led to "more success working together," involving active rank-and-file participation by workers at the border (including CWA's Tucson local). Nevertheless, U.S. union support was still not sufficient to protect Mexican organizers from being assaulted by factory supervisors (Cohen and Early 1999: 158–59). Compa notes that the independent union at least won registration, in response to the threat of a public hearing through the labor side agreement process (2001). According to Martha Ojeda of the CJM, however, the company disappeared before the union registration was officially granted. The Mexican Telephone Workers Union lost even though they placed their significant clout behind this campaign, which led them to focus more strategically on the border region.

⁴⁵ In addition, U.S. and Mexican flight attendants' unions filed a labor side agreement complaint in 1999 that charged violations of freedom of association, leading to a March 2000 public hearing in Washington and airport protest actions in support of Mexican flight attendants. This led the Mexican government to allow a vote on self-representation in another airline later that year (Compa 2001). The outcome remains open-ended, but so far the flight attendants' legal representative has concluded that "in many years of effort we have advanced very little toward achieving compliance with the principles of freedom of association" (Martínez 2001). According to Martha Ojeda of the CJM, "the results were the same as in the maquilas: firings, blacklists, the labor [court] processes are delayed, and finally they disappear from the map with no explanation" (personal e-mail communication, July 30, 2001).

⁴⁶ On union democracy in Mexico, the most comprehensive recent overview is Bouzas Ortiz 2001.

dom of assembly of workers in the United States—often Mexican-ofigin workers, as in the Sprint and Washington State apples cases. These efforts have contributed to more balanced coalitions by showing that the right to freedom of association is systematically violated in both countries, not just in Mexico.⁴⁷ This recognition contributes to more balanced political relations between U.S. and Mexican unions.

The North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC, or NAFTA labor side agreement) has been one the most tangible arenas for binational post-NAFTA union campaigning, and coordinated campaigns have constituted one of the most important ways in which unions have sought to sustain and deepen their cross-border coalitions. Having a shared institutional target clearly helps to focus coalition-building efforts. As close observer Lance Compa notes:

For labor rights advocates with patience and willingness to put it to the test, the NAALC has emerged as a viable new arena for creative transnational action. With its unusual "cross-border" complaint mechanism, the Agreement provides an opportunity for workers, trade unions and their allies in the United States, Mexico and Canada to work together concretely to defend workers' rights abuses by corporations and governments (2001).

Compa recognizes that the labor side agreement is not an enforcement mechanism, but he observes that it is one of the few levers available to unions under NAFTA. In some cases, the process of filing a labor rights claim played an important role in bringing diverse unions together within and between countries (as in the Washington apple industry), while in other cases, the labor rights claim process played a relatively small role in the coalition-building process (as in the Han Young case). After seven years and twenty-three complaints, however, the labor side agreement has produced very few tangible results in terms of influencing government policies or private employers, with complete defeats far outnumbering even partial victories (Human

⁴⁷ The Sprint claim led the labor side agreement process to hold public hearings and extensive studies on the subject (McKennirey et al. 1997). CWA leaders claim that this official study of threats of plant closings as a violation of freedom of association was first delayed and then watered down (Cohen and Early 1999). They charge that the final study downplayed the findings of one of the project's key researchers, Katherine Bronfenbrenner, of Cornell University, who found that "plant closing threats and plant closings have become an integral part of employer anti-union strategies" and that the rate of plant closings after U.S. union elections "has more than doubled in the years since NAFTA was ratified" (Cohen and Early 1999: 157).

Rights Watch 2001). While networking and coalition-building have led unions in both countries to develop more internationalist perspectives, cases of new leverage gained are few and far between, at least thus far.⁴⁸ Public hearings have raised the issue of freedom of association with governments, but they have generated little media or political attention and, therefore, little leverage. In the big picture, however, the dominant pattern is that the right to organize remains tenuous in both countries, and cross-national ties have been unable to offset labor's weak bargaining power within each respective set of national political institutions.⁴⁹

Environmentalists

As in the case of organized labor, binational environmental networking and advocacy have been marked by very significant differences within, as well as between, national movements. First, both U.S. and Mexican environmental movements are characterized by high levels of internal diversity, including groups that see corporate-led economic growth as the answer to environmental needs and groups that see unregulated economic growth as the problem. Second, the experiences and priorities of groups working directly on the border, in both countries, are often quite distinct from the larger national environmental organizations that have more access to the media and to policymakers. Third, striking differences emerge between *before* and *after* the government decision to sign the NAFTA agreement. The high-profile pre-NAFTA debate was

⁴⁸ The most important recent exception to this generalization is the Kuk Dong campaign (see Brooks and Fox, this volume; Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador 2001; and www.maquilasolidarity.org).

⁴⁹ For example, in Mexico, workers seeking independent representation at the huge Duro Bag factory in Tamaulipas found that the secret ballot was an elusive goal, despite support from the National Workers Union in Mexico City and from the CJM. After watching automatic weapons being brought into the factory, workers were forced by federal labor board officials to declare their votes in front of company foremen and PRI union leaders. This decision by Mexico's new labor minister violated an agreement negotiated between his predecessor and the former U.S. labor secretary, which grew out of the Han Young and ITAPSA cases filed under the NAFTA labor side agreement (Bacon 2001). Under Mexico's new government, U.S. union support for Mexican unionists continues to be officially considered a threat to national security (Aponte and Pérez Silva 2001). In the United States, Human Rights Watch has formally recognized that the threats to workers' freedom of association violate international human rights standards (2000). Bronfenbrenner's surveys report that U.S. "managers at 70 percent of factories involved in organizing drives threaten to close if workers decide to unionize" (Greenhouse 2001).

more the exception than the rule for binational environmental politics. Indeed, despite the central role that U.S. environmental organizations played on both sides of the pre-NAFTA debate, none of the major national environmental organizations in the United States devoted serious sustained attention to Mexico or to potential Mexican partners after the vote in the U.S. Congress (with the exception of the pro-whale campaign against Mitsubishi's saltworks in Baja California Sur; see below). This generalization even holds for the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and Defenders of Wildlife, the only large membership-based U.S. environmental organizations to oppose NAFTA. When Washington's short-term policy agenda moved away from Mexico, so did theirs.⁵⁰

It is not surprising that the major U.S. conservation organizations chose to follow the official logic that Mexico needed trade-led economic growth to generate the resources needed for (hypothetical) environmental investments. The major U.S. conservation organizations espoused "free-market environmentalism," and the boards of directors of the most powerful pro-NAFTA U.S. conservation organizations included prominent corporate representatives, some of whom were simultaneously active within the pro-NAFTA corporate lobby (Dreiling 1997).

Also beginning in the early 1990s, some large U.S. conservation organizations (Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, and Conservation International) received substantial U.S. government grants to promote the park approach to biodiversity conservation in Mexico. They collaborated with Mexican conservationist NGO counterparts such as Pronatura to create a large national funding organization, the Mexican Nature Conservation Fund, to channel donations from the Global Environment Facility to manage "protected natural areas."⁵¹

⁵⁰ The Sierra Club's 1998 internal referendum over whether to consider immigration to be an environmental problem attracted high levels of public attention (Clifford 1998), but the membership decisively defeated the proposition. Nevertheless, neither the internal nor the public debate had any immigrant or binational participation. Recently, the Sierra Club has taken up issues of environmental human rights, including the Guerrero case of a peasant anti-corporate logging activist (www.sierraclub.org/human-rights/Mexico; Eaton 1999; J. Ross 2000a). This campaign contributed to his winning the high-profile Goldman Prize for environmental activism (Dillon 2000).

⁵¹ See www.fmcn.org. The U.S. conservation NGOs tended to be quite close to the Mexican government. For example, Conservation International presented then-president Salinas with a "World Conservation Leadership Award" in New York City in October 1992, documented in a promotional video. For limited information on their activities in Mexico, see www.nature.org, www.conservation.org, www.wildlife.org, and www.ducks.org (Ducks Unlimited, involving hunters to protect wetlands, has activities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico).

tant breakthrough was led by Global Exchange, whose threats of a street protest campaign (shortly after Seattle, 1999) led Starbucks to sell shade-grown and fair trade coffees for the first time. For a partner in Mexico, Starbucks turned to the U.S. NGO Conservation International, which buys coffee from small co-ops in Chiapas's El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve. Overall, the alternative coffee campaign (fair trade, organic, and shade) has produced many meetings and networks, some increases in U.S. purchases, but few sustained binational coalitions.

Greenpeace, with its broad ecological critique, developed one of the few binational partnerships among the large international environmental membership organizations. In principle, this organization would appear to be a transnational social movement organization, but the "fit" with this concept in practice has been uneven. As part of an effort in the early 1990s to seek greater internal balance between its Northern and Southern affiliates, Greenpeace's international leadership sided with its Latin American branches on the controversial tuna-dolphin issue, in light of the fact that the Mexican tuna fishing industry had reportedly changed its technology.⁵⁸ This heterodox stance was perceived by Southern environmentalists as a blow against "eco-imperialism," but it provoked a powerful propaganda backlash by more nationalist U.S. ecological advocacy groups, such as Earth Island Institute (which lacked strong Mexican partnerships). Earth Island—a Greenpeace competitor in the direct-mail fundraising market—seized the opportunity to denounce its rival as anti-dolphin. Greenpeace International had been divided all along about whether and how to strengthen the political clout of the Southern affiliates within the organization.⁵⁹ Earth Island's attacks on Greenpeace USA because of its alliance with Latin American counterparts aggravated the organiza-

challenges, such as the difference between fair trade, shade, and organic coffees, see a 1999 report by Robert Rice and Jennifer McLean, accessible at www.consumerscouncil.org/coffee/pdf. This report provides extraordinary insight into the obstacles that have slowed the emergence of credible coffee labeling and consumer education efforts in the United States, but it does not highlight the role of independent producer organizations as actors. See also the coffee consumer studies commissioned by the Commission on Environmental Cooperation (www.cec.org).

⁵⁸ For broader context on the political economy of the tuna industry, see Bonanno and Constance 1996. On the Mexican tuna industry's response, see BRIDGES 2000 and Rose 1993, among others. On the transnational efforts to pursue a compromise, see Wright 2000.

⁵⁹ Interview with former Greenpeace International leader, December 1998. See also Bejarano (this volume), who notes that Greenpeace Mexico's main international counterpart was Greenpeace International, not Greenpeace USA. See the website www.greenpeace.org.mx/index.html.

tion's structural problems, which led to a significant loss of U.S. members during that period. In other words, one lesson is that balanced transnational partnerships can be politically charged when charismatic mega-fauna are involved.⁶⁰

Greenpeace Mexico has played a leading role in campaigning against the impunity of industry in its use of toxic materials, going beyond the mainstream "end-of-the-pipe" focus on managing toxics to stress the importance of reducing their use in the first place. Reducing the abuse of toxic chemicals in agriculture is the focus of the Mexico Pesticide Alternatives Action Network (RAPAM), which is part of a worldwide network. RAPAM has a long-standing and close relationship with the U.S. branch of the Pesticide Action Network, and they have campaigned together to influence the international policy regimes, such as the Montreal Protocol, that govern hazardous chemicals. Now they work together in the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) to influence the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs).⁶¹

The middle-of-the-road U.S. environmental NGOs appear to have bolstered the Mexican environment ministry's prestige and budget for dealing with biodiversity protection, but they have invested relatively little political capital in the issue of toxic waste in border industry (Hogenboom 1998). In contrast, the border's transnational public sphere has been occupied by an environmentally aware civil society that has been gradually thickening from below. Notable NGO coalitions that predated the NAFTA debate include the Environmental Health Coalition (Tijuana–San Diego), the International Sonoran Desert Alliance, the Tohono O'odham Nation and other cross-border tribal initiatives, the CJM's anti-toxics efforts, the Border Ecology Project, and the successful partnership between Chihuahua's Comisión de Solidaridad y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos and the Texas Center for Policy Studies to stop a World Bank logging loan in the Sierra Madre's indigenous territories in 1991–1992.⁶² These initiatives have been joined by the Alianza Internacional Ecologista del Bravo, the Red Fronteriza de Salud y Medio Ambiente, the Coalición Binacional Contra Tiraderos Tóxicos y Radio-

⁶⁰ This last point was developed by Tani Adams (1999).

⁶¹ See Bejarano, this volume; and www.panua.org.

⁶² The Environmental Health Coalition, for example, was launched more than two decades ago. See www.environmentalhealth.org. On Arizona Toxics Information, see www.primenet.com/~aztoxic/. For an environmental directory, see also www.borderecogweb.sdsu.edu/. On World Bank campaigns, see the trade and financial policy advocacy section below.

made to the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation (NACEC) about the non-enforcement of national environmental laws. Although thirty-three claims have been submitted since 1995, there is no independent confirmation that they have had any impact on actual enforcement activity.⁷⁰

The sensitivity of many border environmental organizations to interlocking human health and natural resource concerns facilitated cross-border coalition-building. U.S. and Mexican border groups also share their distance from—and, to some degree, their alienation from—national elites (opposition as well as official) in both countries. Border groups have also been willing to take on the difficult challenge of recognizing and overcoming cultural differences (Kelly, this volume). This commitment is crucial because—as the history of the border shows—proximity does not necessarily lead to mutual understanding.

Trade and International Financial Institutions Advocacy Networks

In the United States, the NAFTA debate focused on the domestic implications of the North-South relationship and on the nature of the United States' relations with the developing world in general and with Mexico in particular. In Mexico, the opposition to NAFTA before 1994 was more limited, but it served to generate a wide-ranging social and elite debate on relations with the United States.

The trade debates in Mexico and the United States had both transnational and multisectoral dimensions. Domestic constituency organizations often met their counterparts in the other country for the first time. The trade debate encouraged some groups to understand their counterparts' perspectives in order to engage in joint activities and contribute to each other's efforts. At the same time, because so many diverse actors saw their interests directly affected by NAFTA, unusual "citizen" coalitions brought together local, regional, and national organizations representing labor, farmer, environmental, consumer rights, immigrant rights, Latino, and human rights groups. Many of these organizations had either never worked with each other or had long histories of mistrust, if not outright antagonism.⁷¹

In the United States, the NAFTA opposition became a movement with somewhat disjointed nationalist and internationalist wings (Cavanagh, Anderson, and Hansen-Kuhn, this volume). Some of the

⁷⁰ See the procedures, mandate, and list of claims at www.cec.org. See Knox 2001; Mahant 2001; Markell 2000, 2001.

⁷¹ For example, on the case of the many binational exchanges between farmers and campesino organizations, see Lehman and Hernández Navarro, both in this volume.

anti-NAFTA forces perceived the economic integration process as one that threatened U.S. "sovereignty." Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, along with some environmentalists and trade unionists, explicitly stressed this nationalist approach, arguing that NAFTA would supersede the authority of local and national labor, consumer, and environmental laws and standards (Nader et al. 1993). These left populists were joined and then overshadowed by conservative nationalist populists, led by Ross Perot and Pat Buchanan.

NAFTA's proponents were caught off guard by the broad public challenge, and they became increasingly alarmed as the popular debate ultimately threatened the legislative survival of their project. The U.S. opposition was strong enough to oblige then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton to recognize the legitimacy of the notion of labor and environmental standards in trade policy for the first time in U.S. history. The U.S. administration designed side agreements that managed to divide the major environmental organizations and provided some political cover for labor leaders—who were privately divided over how intensely to oppose their ostensible ally Clinton on NAFTA (Mayer 1998; Audley 1997; Dreiling 1997). At the same time, an unusual Latino advocacy-environmentalist coalition also led to the creation of new binational institutions to buffer NAFTA's environmental and social costs on the border (Hinojosa-Ojeda, this volume).

The common campaign practice of building broad, often contradictory short-term coalitions around specific legislative conflicts dominated the U.S. process. U.S. critics found relatively few like-minded counterparts in Mexico, where unilateral trade opening had already occurred and even NAFTA critics limited their political investment in the fight because the outcome was perceived as inevitable. The nationalist wing of the U.S. NAFTA opposition also used insensitive rhetoric that discouraged binational collaboration.⁷² Nationalist U.S. critics of NAFTA found that the message of blaming foreigners was widely received; economic restructuring had generated widespread insecurity among industrial workers, and many U.S. employers systematically used the threat of flight to weaken union organizing and contract campaigns.⁷³ Some U.S. environmental and food safety campaigns were also intended to play on images of Mexico as a foreign threat, resonating with historically inherited popular cultural stereotypes of "dirty

⁷² For analyses of NAFTA debate discourse in the United States, see Kingsolver 2001 and Zárate Ruiz 2000. For a broader discourse analysis of U.S.-Mexican popular culture during this period, in historical context, see C. Fox 1999.

⁷³ See, for example, Greenhouse 2001; Human Rights Watch 2000; McKennirey et al. 1997.

Mexicans"—even though the most dangerous food safety threat to U.S. public health is clearly the domestic meatpacking industry (Perl 2000).

In contrast, the internationalist wing of the U.S. NAFTA opposition recognized that some kind of integration was inevitable, and it initially promoted the slogan "Not this NAFTA."⁷⁴ By the time of the NAFTA vote, however, the slogan "No to NAFTA" won out. U.S. internationalists worked closely with Mexican counterparts and anti-racist social movements in the United States, but their ambitious goal of mass economic literacy required sustained long-term political investments, whereas the legislative campaign momentum imposed a short-term political logic that privileged nationalist discourses.

Mexican critics coalesced around the Free Trade Action Network (RMALC), led by the FAT, human rights groups, environmentalists, and other NGOs. Despite domestic political limitations, this activist network was able to oblige senior government officials, and even cabinet ministers, to engage in an ongoing dialogue with them during the trade negotiation process, a previously unimaginable possibility. RMALC was bolstered by its partnerships with the Action Canada Network and the Alliance for Responsible Trade in the United States.⁷⁵

The overall pattern that emerges from a decade of trade policy debate is not a secular trend of ever-increasing levels of binational partnership and coalition-building. Instead, one sees an ebb-and-flow pattern in which both nationalist and internationalist trade advocacy efforts peaked during the debate preceding the NAFTA vote. NAFTA returned to the policy agenda in the United States because of the December 1994 peso crisis, when U.S. advocacy groups took a distinctively nationalist position. One noted left-liberal Washington-based advocacy economist even compared Clinton's 1995 financial bailout of Mexico to the Vietnam War (Faux 1995). This powerful image implied that the United States was entering a dangerous and violent quagmire, thereby reinforcing the "Mexico as threat" media tactic that often dominated anti-NAFTA campaigning.⁷⁶ Similarly, the U.S. opposition

⁷⁴ For example, a November 12, 1993, petition by three hundred U.S. religious leaders urged Congress to "Reject this NAFTA" (in a display paid for by the Commission on Religion in Appalachia and the United Church of Christ).

⁷⁵ On RMALC, see Arroyo and Monroy 1996; Lujan, this volume; RMALC 1994. On the broader context of NAFTA politics in Mexico, see Thacker 2000. On the Canadian trade movement, see Ayres 1998.

⁷⁶ The article, provocatively entitled "Mexico and Vietnam," contested other Washington commentators' military analogies about economic policy by claiming: "the better military analogy to the peso crisis was Lyndon Johnson's escalation in Vietnam ... [which] led the nation step-by-step into disaster. As in Vietnam, we are assured at each stage of the escalation that U.S. involvement in the Mexican economy will solve the problem" (Faux 1995: 169). The author—Jeff Faux, president of

to the 1997 renewal of fast track involved much less coordination with Mexican counterparts than during the NAFTA debate. Sustained U.S. labor and consumer advocacy opposition to the implementation of NAFTA's trucking provisions also relied on nationalist approaches, an issue that took on a very high profile again in mid-2001. Meanwhile, RMALC continued to monitor NAFTA's effects, but it focused its advocacy work on Mexico's free trade agreement with the European Union (EU) and managed to incorporate a significant democracy clause (Arroyo and Peñaloza 2000). The Mexico-U.S. trade advocacy coalition experience suggests that balanced cross-border civil society coordination is far from an inevitable dimension of the increasing international concern and protest about globalization.

Though trade policy advocacy has been much more prominent on the binational civil society agenda, Mexican and U.S. NGOs have also worked together to influence the World Bank. The 1990s opened with two successful campaigns to affect projects in Mexico. The first was the joint effort by the Texas Center for Policy Studies and the Chihuahua Human Rights Commission to stop a World Bank logging loan in the Sierra Madre's indigenous territories in 1991. This was the first World Bank project in Mexico to be canceled because of civil society pressure, setting an important precedent and creating the political momentum for a completely different community forestry project in Oaxaca.⁷⁷ Shortly afterwards, a very different kind of partnership set an equally important precedent. The independent regional indigenous movement of the Alto Balsas region of Guerrero built regional, national, and binational advocacy networks and succeeded in *preventing* the construction of a controversial dam. This was precedent-setting because—as in most of the world—previous Mexican protests against evictions by dams had emerged *after*, rather than before, actual construction, at which point the process becomes much more difficult to influence. In the United States, lobbying by the Environmental Defense Fund, the International Rivers Network, and concerned scholars helped prevent the World Bank from considering funding the dam project.⁷⁸

Since then, the World Bank has been the target of three different Mexican/transnational coalitions that emerged in the mid-1990s, all focusing more on social than on environmental issues. The Mexican

the Economic Policy Institute—had predicted the peso crisis, but the framing of his political response does not reflect evidence of consultation with Mexican civil society counterparts.

⁷⁷ See J. Fox 2000a; Lowerre 1994; Maldonado 2001.

⁷⁸ For a detailed history by participants, complete with copies of the original documents, see Díaz de Jesus et al. 1996. See also Arnith 1995; Good 1992; Hindley 1999.

NGO Equipo Pueblo and the Washington-based advocacy group Development GAP challenged the World Bank's macroeconomic policies and structural adjustment, and they collaborated in the worldwide Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (Heredia and Purcell 1994). More locally and regionally focused, the Mexican NGO *Transparencia* has worked with the Washington-based watchdog group Bank Information Center since 1995 in worldwide advocacy coalitions for World Bank accountability and public information access.⁷⁹ *Transparencia* works closely with indigenous organizations on World Bank-funded rural social and environmental projects in Oaxaca and the three-state Huasteca region, at the same time that it tries to inform congressional leaders and influence Mexico's representative on the World Bank's board of directors. The third principal Mexican civil society coalition, based in the national umbrella coalition *Milenio Feminista*, led the Latin America-wide "Women's Eyes on the World Bank" campaign (following the 1995 United Nations conference in Beijing) and focused mainly on Latin American partnerships.⁸⁰ By the late 1990s, Mexican civil society organizations were full players in the worldwide campaign to increase the accountability of the multilateral development banks.

Democracy and Human Rights

For anyone watching the Mexican elections of 1988 or 1994, it would have been very difficult to predict that in 2000 the U.S. presidential race would suffer from much more serious procedural flaws than the Mexican elections. During the most contested phase of Mexico's electoral transition, the main pattern of U.S.-Mexican societal relations involving democracy and human rights took the form of networks among professional political activists and analysts. As Dresser has shown, Mexico's "democracy network" provides an excellent illustration of the concept of transnational advocacy network (1996).⁸¹ In the terms of the framework proposed in this study, a few organizations went further to sustain coalitions, involving coordinated agreements to pursue joint campaigns.

⁷⁹ For details, see www.transparencia.org.mx and www.bicusa.org, as well as Fernández and Adelson 2000, and J. Fox 2001.

⁸⁰ Their main U.S. collaboration is reflected in L. Williams 1997.

⁸¹ Dresser notes that: "The Mexican democracy network includes domestic and international electoral observer organizations, international NGOs, private foundations, groups of scholars, international secretariats of political parties and some sectors of the national and international media.... Mexican prodemocracy social movements are key parts of this nascent network" (1996: 325).

U.S. civil society organizations concerned with democracy and human rights abroad began to focus on Mexico relatively recently. Though influential international human rights reports began to appear in the mid-1980s, even Mexico's 1988 electoral conflict did not lead to a sustained strategy of binational pro-democracy or human rights coalition-building.⁸² The NAFTA debate created a major opportunity to strengthen these civil society ties, but this was constrained by the narrow confines of the official policy agenda. Although most Mexican civil society organizations were wary of proposing direct pro-democracy or human rights conditionality on the trade agreement, the NAFTA debate made these issues more visible in the United States.⁸³ This political moment did not produce a major convergence between U.S. and Mexican human rights groups, however, with the exception of those organizations involved with election monitoring. While human rights groups were important actors in the Mexican coalitions dealing with trade, this had little relevance for most U.S. trade advocacy groups. According to one of Mexico's leading human rights activists, the issue was a low priority within the trinational coalition-building process (Acosta, this volume). Moreover, human rights groups in each country also had different views about the relationships between economic, social, and political rights.⁸⁴ Mexican national human rights organizations also pursued claims through international legal channels, such as the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. They were successful insofar as the Mexican government was issued several critical decisions, but only in one case did the Mexican government actually respond by complying with international law.⁸⁵

It took the 1994 rebellion in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas to make human rights in Mexico a major priority on the binational civil society agenda. A wide range of U.S. groups responded quickly, con-

⁸² Amnesty International published the first significant report (1986). The timing of its release coincided with the peak of Republican political criticism of Mexico from Washington. This significantly undermined the report's political impact, since the government could write it off as foreign intervention.

⁸³ For one exception—a Mexican effort to link NAFTA to Mexican democratization in the U.S. debate—see Castañeda and Heredia 1993. For a trinational overview, see MacDonald 1999.

⁸⁴ Note the changing themes in the more recent reports from Human Rights Watch (1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1993, 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000a). Over time, the scope of their definition of human rights broadened to eventually include gendered human rights among maquila workers.

⁸⁵ Interview, Emma Maza Calviño, international relations director, Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, April 2001. For details on Mexico's international human rights legal decisions, see Centro de Derechos Humanos 2000.

tributing to the international pressure for a political solution. Five years later, four distinct national U.S. organizations and networks, as well as many small local groups, had made Chiapas a priority (Stephen, this volume). Lack of coordination within the United States reflected different political cultures and constituencies, as well as different approaches among Mexican counterpart groups. Most U.S. support initiatives drew heavily on the legacy of the movements for peace in Central America in the 1980s, including both faith-based and secular left-wing political cultures and strategies.⁸⁶ This legacy bolstered Chiapas solidarity work in the short term, but it carried medium-term weaknesses, including the strategic limitations associated with interpreting Mexico through Central American lenses. This pattern began to change with the founding of the Mexico Solidarity Network in 1999, which involves seventy-five organizations and has coordinated several labor and human rights delegations to Mexico.⁸⁷

Many observers have pointed to the increased volume and velocity of the international information flow from Chiapas as strong evidence of "globalization from below," an indication of the power of international solidarity. This information flow to international sympathizers has irritated Mexican government officials, who have referred disparagingly to the Chiapas conflict as a (mere) "war of ink and internet." The actual contribution of the "Internet war" to the Zapatista cause remains an open question, however, since the conflict on the ground remained stalemated for years, information flow and international solidarity notwithstanding. Stephen (this volume) aptly questions the widespread assumption that more and faster activist access to information necessarily leads to greater impact.⁸⁸ Solidarity groups' focus on Chiapas, to the exclusion of other militarized regions and national-level democratization, also limited the impact of U.S. peace support efforts, according to one key U.S. strategist (Lewis, this volume). While U.S. civil society efforts for peace in Chiapas achieved widespread legitimacy in the United States, they did not penetrate and mobilize major U.S. civil society institutions.

⁸⁶ See Gosse 1988, 1995; Griffin-Nolan 1991; Nepstad 2001; C. Smith 1996.

⁸⁷ See www.mexicosolidarity.org.

⁸⁸ The widely assumed Internet linkage between the EZLN and the outside world has been overdrawn. For at least the first few years, the primary communication process involved two stages—first between the EZLN and *La Jornada*—and then between *La Jornada's* website and the rest of the world. For subsequent debate over the role of international solidarity with Chiapas, see Hellman 2000, 2001; Cleaver 2000; Paulson 2001. See also Schulz 1998. For a U.S. "national security" perspective, commissioned by the U.S. army, see Ronfeldt et al. 1998.

This contrasts with the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America in the 1980s, which generated broad-based mainstream participation in religious, civic, and trade union arenas, leading to significant influence in Congress. Back in the 1980s, Central American opposition and peace movements themselves made winning U.S. civil society allies a major strategic priority, whereas neither the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) nor the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) has made U.S. network-building a priority.⁸⁹ The contrast between the response to Chiapas in the United States and in Europe is especially striking. European support for Mexican indigenous rights was both broad and deep, most notably in Italy, France, and Spain. In Italy, for example, the EZLN inspired the 1997 formation of the large "White Overalls" nonviolent direct action contingent. This high-profile group, which emerged from Italy's vibrant network of alternative Social Centers, accompanied the EZLN on its March 2001 caravan to Mexico City after the Red Cross declined to participate, and it played a leading role in the 2001 Genoa Social Forum (Hernández Navarro 2001).

Direct U.S. indigenous solidarity with Mexican indigenous movements has also emerged, taking forms that range from a U.S. delegation to Chiapas and a rare U.S. visit of six CNI leaders to the National Congress of Native Americans (Pérez 2001) to alternative trade projects and debates over U.S.-style casino projects (Stoll 1997; Burke 1998). Overall, however, most of these relationships have involved networks rather than sustained coalitions.⁹⁰

The Chiapas rebellion focused the attention of U.S. pro-democracy groups on Mexico's 1994 presidential election. This was the high point of U.S. civil society interest in working with Mexican election observers, though some, like Global Exchange and the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), continued to work closely with Mexico's Alianza Cívica in their effort to monitor controversial state-level elections. In 1994, participants ranged from traditional human rights groups and universities to peace groups, Latino rights advocates, and trade unionists, accounting for a large fraction of the international observers. However, the entire U.S. observer contingent during the 1994 presidential election, including delegations funded by the U.S. government, numbered fewer than 600 (in contrast to the estimated 25,000

⁸⁹ For an analysis of why some radical movements in the South gain international allies while many others do not, focusing on the determinative role of their own strategies, including a comparison of the EZLN and the EPR, see Bob 2000.

⁹⁰ According to a member of the first CNI delegation to that U.S. Native American Congress, held at a huge casino in Connecticut, the culture shock was profound (interview, August 2001).

Mexican observers).⁹¹ For comparison, U.S. citizens' organizations alone sent 700 official observers to El Salvador's 1994 elections (Gosse 1995), reflecting the strong movement-to-movement ties that continued years after the end of the U.S.-funded war.

The largest single U.S. citizen contingent in 1994 was organized by Global Exchange, an NGO whose numerous "reality tours" to Chiapas later provoked government hostility; paraphrasing Dresser (1991b), one could call this a "neo-nationalist reaction to a neoliberal problem."⁹² Unlike most international observers, Global Exchange traveled to remote rural hotspots where violations were most probable.⁹³ Since then, Global Exchange has made a long-term, sustained political investment in working with Mexican partners, and it has been one of the Mexican democracy movement's most consistent U.S. civil society allies. For example, Global Exchange organized experienced U.S. observer delegations on much less fashionable missions, as in the case of Guerrero's municipal elections (in partnership with regional human rights organizations), and it continues to report regularly.⁹⁴

⁹¹ See Álvarez Icaza, this volume. Also see Hernández (1994a, 1994b), who notes that 67 percent of the total number of 775 accredited visitors were from the United States. His reports discuss the different U.S. observer stances regarding whether to pressure the Mexican government. Mexican independent election observer efforts are relatively recent, beginning in 1991. For background, see Aguayo Quezada 1998 and McConnell 1996. For Alianza Cívica, see www.laneta.apc.org/alianza. On U.S. efforts, see www.wola.org and www.globalexchange.org.

⁹² The Central American movement experience suggests that internationalist visits to zones of conflict can be crucial for turning sympathy into activist commitment, and as many as several thousand U.S. citizens may have visited Chiapas since 1994 (J. Ross 1999, 2000b; Sandoval 1999; Stephen, this volume).

⁹³ On the night of the 1994 election, however, under media pressure to make public statements, the logic of Global Exchange's mission led them to take a position before their Mexican host, Alianza Cívica, had decided what stand to take regarding the quality of the electoral process. Global Exchange exercised its autonomy, causing tension within the partnership; this tension was later overcome (personal observation and interviews, Mexico City, August 1994). The election's exclusionary practices turned out to be significantly different from what Alianza Cívica had expected (and more difficult to document). After processing their data for several weeks, Alianza Cívica came to the conclusion that, in effect, two different elections had taken place the same day, one relatively clean, the other marked by systematic violations of ballot secrecy and obligatory vote-buying (*coacción*). See J. Fox 1996.

⁹⁴ See Lewis, this volume. For an example of a less sustained but high-profile approach to cross-border human rights advocacy, note the bilingual fact-finding report of a small U.S. NGO that provoked initial changes in the treatment of mental patients in Mexican hospitals (see Mental Disability Rights International 2000; Thompson 2001a). This effort involved networking with Mexican groups of psy-

Several human rights organizations and Chiapas support initiatives formed sustained networks, and some of the campaigns with a more on-the-ground presence could clearly be considered coalitions (as in the cases of SIPAZ and the Schools for Chiapas project). The Global Exchange–Alianza Cívica partnership was the clearest case of a sustained pro-democracy/human rights coalition that addressed issues beyond Chiapas. In summary, however, one could argue that both U.S. and Mexican pro-democracy actors have lacked a sustained strategy for building partnerships that reach deeply into the other civil society.

Women's Rights Networks

Women's rights activists have carried out extensive binational networking, focusing primarily on bringing gender perspectives to broader social movements—most notably, supporting the empowerment of women workers and indigenous women. From the U.S. side, the American Friends Service Committee's maquila support program and the small NGO *Mujer a Mujer* both played pioneering roles. Sometimes these links between women's rights concerns and binational integration reached deeply into U.S. civil society. For example, the United Methodist Women, a progressive membership organization with more than one million members, was the first U.S. women's organization to publicly oppose NAFTA (Dougherty 1999).

Many of the binational women's movement experiences are remarkably similar to those in other sectors in terms of the distinction between mutual learning and exchanges, on the one hand, and sustaining coalitions and campaigns, on the other. As Teresa Carrillo observes in her insightful overview of Mexicana/Chicana movement relations: "the majority of contacts across the border have not yet reached a point of collaborative action, remaining instead in a beginning step of establishing contact and discussing common ground" (1998: 394). Carrillo notes that the lack of resources is not the only obstacle to binational coalition-building: "differences in central focus and agenda are also important; Chicanas and Latinas in the U.S. have focused on questions of race and ethnicity, while Mexicanas have focused on class issues and survival" (1998: 394). After reviewing a wide range of cross-border initiatives dating from the mid-1980s, Carrillo concludes that:

Time and again women showed a strong interest in making connections and taking a more active role in establishing the rules and regulations of the process of regional integration.

chiatrists and parents as well as a Mexican congressperson (personal communication, Brittain Benowitz of MRDL, May 2001).

The frustration voiced by both Chicana/Latina and Mexican women was that no one knew exactly how to take the next step in transnational network building after establishing initial contact. Women's movements lack a unifying focus or initiative around which groups can find a common ground and take collaborative action. On every front, the move from communication and contact to collaborative action was not clearly defined (1998: 407).

U.S. and Mexican women's rights activists have also shared a common effort to reframe policy discourse for women's organizing in terms of the broader umbrella concept of human rights. According to Maylei Blackwell, an analyst of U.S.-Mexican women's movement relations, because of the process of United Nations conferences on women, "human rights discourse has replaced discrimination as the principle in coalition-building for international women's politics.... For the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, there was a major campaign in Mexico 'Sin mujeres, los derechos no son humanos.'"⁹⁵ Similarly, U.S. human rights advocates also increasingly recognize gender-specific violations (see, for example, Human Rights Watch 1996b, 1998a, 1998b).

Probably the highest-impact area of binational women's movement collaboration involves reproductive rights. This was the result of two converging trends. First, feminist activists in the United States enlarged the frame for understanding reproductive rights to the broader concept of access to reproductive health more generally—a shift driven to a large degree by the mobilization of women of color within the United States.⁹⁶ Second, several large private U.S. foundations involved in Mexico became increasingly sensitive to feminist approaches to reproductive issues. As a result, since the 1980s U.S. foundations involved in reproductive issues in Mexico have invested many millions of dollars to bolster the capacities of civil society organizations that defend women's health rights, contributing significantly to the infrastructure of Mexico's women's movement more generally.

One of the most significant cases of binational feminist coalition-building has emerged from the reproductive rights movement. The relationship is very close between the U.S. and Mexican branches of Catholics for Free Choice (*Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir*).⁹⁷ Though

⁹⁵ Personal e-mail communication, Maylei Blackwell, February 2000. See also Blackwell 2000.

⁹⁶ Thanks to Maylei Blackwell for relating this observation.

⁹⁷ This paragraph is based on an interview with a U.S. Catholics for Free Choice activist with several years of experience working in Mexico with the Mexican chapter (Kathy Toner, March 2000). The origins of the Latin American branches of

each is an independent NGO, each also conceives of itself as providing voice for a very large, underrepresented constituency. Both emerge from and are extensively networked with diverse feminist movements in each country. The Mexican branch is also deeply embedded in national movements for human rights, Chiapas solidarity, and liberation theology. The U.S. and Mexican groups share a common mission and values, and they consider themselves part of a larger pro-choice Catholic movement. Both combine policy advocacy with efforts to influence broader public opinion. They also work together on joint campaigns, such as the effort to convince the United Nations to withdraw the Vatican's nation-state status, in the name of separating church and state. They also work together to infuse pro-choice Catholic perspectives in the international debates following the Cairo UN summit on population and development.

The U.S. and Mexican pro-choice Catholic groups clearly constitute a binational coalition. They also share many of the characteristics of a transnational movement, including, notably, a self-conceptualization as constituting a movement (thereby raising questions about the conceptual exercise above, which attempts to distinguish between binational coalitions and movements). As in many other cross-border partnerships, its density rests on the combination of a deeply shared ideology (feminism within the Catholic faith) with a strongly shared campaign target (the Church itself, perhaps the transnational civil society institution *par excellence*).

The most recent process of cross-border feminist convergence responds to the persistent wave of mutilation and murder of hundreds of young women in Ciudad Juárez. Until recently, the media in both Mexico and the United States tended either to ignore these atrocities or to sensationalize them. U.S. advocacy groups first tended to frame the problem as a consequence of the social dislocation caused by maquila industrialization. More recently, Chicana and Mexican feminists have reframed the issue in terms of international human rights standards and the Mexican government's responsibility to end impunity, successfully drawing the attention of United Nations and Organization of American States monitors to the problem for the first time.⁹⁸

this organization can be traced back to the late 1980s, when the founding U.S. organization set up a regional office in Uruguay. Now sister organizations are active elsewhere, including in Colombia, Argentina (two), Chile, and Peru; the strongest ones are in Bolivia, Brazil, and Mexico. The Latin American partner NGOs have their own autonomous regional board.

⁹⁸ Three documentaries address the issue, from different perspectives: Ursula Bieman's "Performing the Border" (1999); Saul Landau and Sonia Angulo's "Maquila: A Tale of Two Mexicos" (2000); and Lourdes Portillo's "Señorita Ex-

Chicano/Latino Civil and Immigrant Rights

Chicano/Latino leaders and activists played crucial roles in several of the movements discussed as other "sectors," including, most notably, labor and women's rights. For example, the AFL-CIO leadership's recent decision to support amnesty for undocumented workers was not simply "structurally determined" by the tight labor market and the need to organize immigrants; it was also the result of years of political work by Chicano and Latino trade unionists within the AFL-CIO.⁹⁹ This section, however, will focus specifically on relationships between civil and immigrant rights movements in the United States and Mexico.

Over the past twenty years, domestic U.S. public interest organizations have built broad and deep advocacy institutions and coalitions to defend immigrant rights in the United States. Until recently, however, these efforts developed largely without sustained exchange or collaboration with Mexican counterparts. Joint U.S.-Mexican efforts to develop binational civil society approaches to immigration issues came together organizationally relatively recently, with the formation of the broad-based Mexico-U.S. Advocates Network (Gzesh, this volume). Moreover, many of even the most consolidated immigrant rights coalitions, which are regionally based and nationally networked, have relatively little contact with either organized migrants or Mexico. Indeed, some major national immigrant rights advocacy leaders, after many years on the defensive, pursued in the early 1990s a "pragmatic" strategy of attempting to "demexicanize" the U.S. policy debate.¹⁰⁰ Since then, the array of actors has broadened dramatically, with organized migrants themselves playing an unprecedented role in advocacy campaigns.¹⁰¹

Binational constituency-based organizing among immigrants themselves has followed diverse paths, marked by the difficult choice of whether to participate primarily in U.S. or in Mexican arenas. More recently, however, organized migrants are transcending this dichotomy by participating in social and political movements in both countries at once. There is evidence that many Mexican citizens in the United States

traviada" (2001). For analysis of the different ways in which the Ciudad Juárez murders have been framed as an issue, see Fregoso n.d.

⁹⁹ For recent discussions of organized labor and Mexican immigrants, see, among others, Johnston 2001 and Milkman 2000. For historical context, see Delgado 1993 and Gómez Quiñones 1994, among others.

¹⁰⁰ Based on statements by Washington-based immigrant rights advocacy groups at the Mexico-U.S. Advocates Network Seminar, Carnegie Endowment, Washington, D.C., February 1999.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, Corchado 2000. The politics of this issue continued to broaden after Mexico's 2000 election and the opening of bilateral negotiations on immigrant "regularization."

remain engaged with Mexican civic life, and even though immigrants lack voting rights, Mexican political candidates have carried out open electoral campaigns in the United States for more than a decade.¹⁰² In contrast to the expectations raised by the wave of immigrant sympathy for Mexican presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1988, Mexican opposition political parties did not sink deep roots in immigrant communities. Nevertheless, many immigrants remained very engaged with national politics from afar.¹⁰³ Recently, some financially successful immigrants have even returned home to run for local office with self-proclaimed "American ideas" about how to govern, provoking mixed reactions (Cano 2001).

In response, the Mexican government has paid a great deal of attention to Mexican migrant associations, using its extensive network of consular offices to create semi-official channels for the growing cross-border participation (González Gutiérrez 1993, 1997, 1999). Some immigrant organizations respond vigorously to the opportunities to collaborate with Mexican authorities, while others prefer more autonomous paths.¹⁰⁴ Most hometown associations are quite engaged in "translocal" Mexican politics, but they remain relatively disengaged from U.S. politics—even during major moments of public debate, such as California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187 (see, for example, Zabin and Escala Rabadán 1998).

After the Mexican Congress granted its citizens abroad the right to vote—in principle—in 1996, Mexicans residing in the United States mobilized new advocacy networks to encourage the Mexican state to comply with its commitment. This first transnational advocacy network organized by immigrants to influence Mexican government policy toward them followed a mainly civic, rather than a partisan, opposition path (R. Ross 1999; Martínez-Saldaña and Ross Pineda, this volume). The Mexican state's strategy, in contrast, has been to encourage migrants to become U.S. citizens and participate in U.S. politics, rather than to extend the boundaries of the polity to include the entire national diaspora. In spite of widespread declarations of support, in practice the migrant advocacy network found relatively few allies within

¹⁰² See, among others, Dresser 1991a, 1993, 1996; Martínez-Saldaña 1993; Pérez Godoy 1998.

¹⁰³ A major independent Mexican commission that was convened to inform the national policy debate over the absentee ballot found that an estimated 83 percent of Mexican citizens in the United States would like to vote in the elections in 2000, if they could do so from the United States. The commission also estimated that between 1.3 and 1.5 million migrants in the United States already hold valid Mexican electoral registration cards (IFE 1998).

¹⁰⁴ See also the references in note 13.

the upper reaches of the Mexican political system. All the major parties were internally divided on the issue, and implementation of voting rights was postponed until well after the 2000 elections.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the fact that Mexicans abroad won their political rights—even if only in principle—has permanently redrawn the boundaries of the Mexican migrant civic arena, with quite open-ended consequences.¹⁰⁶

The migrant transnational advocacy network has had perhaps its greatest impact at the level of the public agenda and the ways in which issues are framed. At the very least, immigrant civic leaders now have access to the national media in Mexico for the first time. The March 1999 nongovernmental Mexican referendum provided a revealing illustration of shifts in the terrain of political culture. This referendum was called as part of an effort to break the political stalemate that followed the government's withdrawal from the San Andrés Accords for indigenous rights. One of the leaders of the *Coalición de Mexicanos en el Exterior Nuestro Voto en el 2000*, the principal migrant advocacy network, took advantage of his new access to the national press to appeal directly to Subcomandante Marcos, noting parallels in the ways in which both migrants and indigenous peoples are excluded from full citizenship rights (Martínez-Saldaña 1999). Apparently in response, the EZLN called for the addition of a fifth question to the referendum, on the migrant vote question. This fifth question was presented at polling sites in the United States, including four locations in California. Approximately 50,000 votes were tallied (more than two million voted in Mexico on the original four questions), with 8,000 of these reported tallied by the Binational Oaxacan Indigenous Front in the Fresno area. The FIOB is one of the few binational social organizations that can be considered a fully transnational social *movement*; its participants are part of a cohesive social subject, politicized *paisanos*, whether they are in the Mixteca, Baja California, Los Angeles, or the Central Valley (Rivera 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, and this volume).¹⁰⁷

Late 1999 witnessed the most tangible evidence so far of the growing political influence of organized migrants. The Mexican Treasury Ministry, in its effort to support its protection of the "national" (U.S.-dominated) auto production industry, decided unilaterally to crack down on the widespread practice of immigrants returning to Mexico

with used cars.¹⁰⁸ To discourage this practice, the Treasury Ministry announced that anyone—whether tourist or immigrant—who brought a car into Mexico would have to post a large deposit. This requirement was to go into effect shortly before the 1999 Christmas holiday, a season when millions of immigrants return home. The new government program provoked a broad wave of protests among the increasingly politicized Mexican community in the United States. Migrant leaders convinced the members of the Mexican Senate (members of the ruling party as well as the opposition) to pass a resolution to rescind the program, which was terminated after only two days in operation. In fact, the leaders at the Foreign Ministry reportedly had been critical of the plan from the beginning; apparently they had not been consulted in advance and had to bear the brunt of immigrant protests.

The controversy ignited by the car deposit program revealed the extraordinary disconnect between the worldviews of economic policymakers in Mexico City and the binational reality lived by as many as one in ten Mexican families. As a *New York Times* correspondent gently observed: "The plan apparently arose from some confusion within the government when officials failed to calculate the impact on Mexicans living north of the border. As many as two million are expected to come home for the holidays, many in their own cars" (Preston 1999). Though the deposit was supposed to be returned to car owners upon their departure from Mexico, Treasury Ministry officials clearly overestimated the credibility of the official promise to return the money.

The media and lobbying campaign against the car deposit is the most clear-cut success so far for binational immigrant organizing. It appears to have built directly on the previous year's unsuccessful effort to win for Mexicans living abroad the right to vote in the 2000 elections.¹⁰⁹ As the president of *Concilio Hispano*, a Mexican group based in

¹⁰⁸ The Treasury Ministry's efforts to keep (relatively less expensive) U.S.-purchased used cars out of Mexico was the result of trade protection for Mexico-based auto manufacturers. Illegally imported cars cannot be registered, and a significant fraction of Mexican cars are not, therefore, officially considered legal.

¹⁰⁹ This campaign also led the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) to nominate a Mexican immigrant voting rights activist (Raúl Ross) to its proportional representation list of congressional candidates. This nomination was not, however, an unequivocal reflection of a new awareness within the PRD of immigrants as participants with political rights as Mexicans. First, the decision was internally controversial; Ross appears to have been included as Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's only personal nomination (his son coordinated PRD liaison in the United States and remains an active advocate of immigrant voting rights). Second, it is very revealing that top PRD leader Jesús Ortega, when he reported this, referred to Ross as the "*compañero chicano*" (Cano and Aguirre 2000). Ross is from Veracruz and came to the United States as an adult. For Ortega to refer to him as Chicano

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Raúl Ross, American Friends Service Committee, Chicago, May 1999.

¹⁰⁶ For a comprehensive overview, see Santamaría Gómez et al. 2001.

¹⁰⁷ On the FIOB, see also: www.laneta.apc.org/fiob/. On the interaction between the immigration process and ethnic identity formation, see also Nagengast and Kearney 1990.

Chicago, put it: "This is the first time the Mexican community here managed to bring this kind of pressure on Mexico. It shows that we can use our power and make changes" (quoted in Preston 1999). Another recent cross-border immigrant campaign has focused on the claims of former braceros to wages that were deducted from their pay and sent to long-lost Mexican government rural bank accounts. In 1998 a California farmworker organizer uncovered records of the deductions among his grandparents' papers, and he went on to lead hundreds of elderly former migrant workers in public protests in Mexico (J. Ross 2001).¹¹⁰

The issue of immigrant rights has produced several different binational networks and coalitions. Some have cross-border targets, as in the cases of the car deposit, absentee voting rights, and immigrant rights policy advocacy issues. Other partnerships have actual cross-border constituencies, as in the case of the immigrant hometown associations. Among hometown associations, the degree to which the U.S.-based groups have actual hometown partner organizations varies significantly. In terms of the distinction between networks, coalitions, and movements, different hometown associations would vary across the spectrum, with the FIOB as the most clear-cut case of a transnational social movement organization.

ASSESSING BINATIONAL NETWORK AND COALITION IMPACT

It is always an analytical challenge to assess the impact of social movements and public interest advocacy initiatives, and looking at cross-border partnerships complicates matters by increasing the number of possible factors involved. There are three main questions to be answered in the assessment process. First, was there some clear change

Chicano underscores the degree to which even leftist Mexico City politicians see immigrants as "not quite Mexican" once they cross the border.

¹¹⁰ Through archival research, immigrant rights activists discovered that the Mexican government received from the U.S. government, and then retained, 10 percent of Bracero worker wages from 1943 to 1950, ostensibly for worker pension funds and farm loan programs. Government bank officials deny responsibility, and a class action suit has been filed in the United States. Back in the 1940s, some policy-makers conceived this wage deduction program as an innovative cross-border community investment program, but government agencies apparently simply kept the money. The organizations involved include the Red Internacional en Defensa de los Derechos Plenos de los Trabajadores Migrantes y sus Familias, which claims 20,000 members; the Unión Campesina y Emigrantes Mexicanos (UCEM); the Unión Sin Fronteras; and Alianza-Braceroproa, which claims over 100,000 members in both countries. For details, see J. Ross 2001, Salinas 1999, and Belluck 2001, among others.

that might be attributed to civil society actors? Second, how important were civil society actors in terms of explaining that change? Third, within the broader set of civil society actions, how important were cross-border networking and coalitions?

What "counts" as making a difference? This question needs to be unpacked. There are both intentional and unintentional impacts (for example, one impact of transnational campaigning could be to provoke an unintended repressive backlash). Then there are both tangible and intangible impacts (changes in the actual behavior of powerful public and private institutions versus changes in official discourse). When do policy reforms represent meaningful changes, given that powerful institutions may or may not actually change their behavior to follow promised policy reforms? There is also the risk that discursive reforms and weak institutional commitments may serve to divide or distract civil society actors, weakening pressures for accountability. We should recognize as well that civil society actors often disagree over what kinds of concessions "count" as significant. Cutting across this tangible/intangible change distinction is the problem of "counterfactual" analysis. What would have happened without binational campaigning? Perhaps the state of human rights violations did not get much better, but then again maybe it would have gotten worse in the absence of transnational campaigning. There is also an important distinction to be made between impacts on "targets" and external movement goals versus campaign impacts on the movements themselves, such as changes in organizing strategies or political cultures.¹¹¹

This section will sketch out a preliminary assessment of binational civil society network and coalition impacts, focusing on the issue areas of the environment, labor rights, and human rights. Among these three issue areas, cross-border civil society activism has had the highest degree of impact on environmental policy, especially in Mexico. The issue became make-or-break for the approval of NAFTA in the United States, and in Mexico the state responded by making major policy and discursive commitments. This included the creation of Mexico's first environmental policy ministry, led by a credible, nonpartisan expert. The power of U.S. and Mexican environmental NGOs clearly led to the NAFTA environmental side agreement and the border investment institutions. Even though the side agreement has had little impact in practice, NADBank and BECC are beginning to increase their level of activity. Though the degree of possible public participation is higher than is customary in Mexico, the U.S. and Mexican policymakers that have led NADBank so far have not fully pursued its promise of innova-

¹¹¹ For useful overviews of analytical issues involved in assessing movement impact, see Earl 2000; Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1999.

tion.¹¹² Mexico-U.S. NGO partnerships have had notable impacts on biodiversity-related projects and policies in Mexico, ranging from the defeat of the threat to the whales of the San Ignacio Biosphere to sustained support for increased funding and improved management for protected areas.¹¹³ Cross-border campaigns against industrial pollution associated with the maquiladora industry, in contrast, have had little impact. In addition, free trade has also posed major challenges for Mexico's most consolidated sustainable rural economic initiatives—the organic coffee and community forestry movements—and they have lacked strong cross-border partnerships. In summary, cross-border environmental coalitions have produced both some of the most dramatic breakthroughs and some of the most clear-cut defeats in civil society leverage.

The issue of labor rights has involved a more consistent pattern of defeats. Labor rights briefly gained public prominence as an issue during the NAFTA debate, though this issue never won as much legitimacy or attention as the environment. The most significant examples of labor's political leverage were the 1997 defeat of fast track and President Clinton's 1999 electorally driven discursive support for labor rights during the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), but neither case involved significant cross-border partnerships. Large U.S. environmental organizations also contributed to the fast track defeat, but they were not part of significant cross-border coalitions either. Mexican labor continues to lose ground and has yet to win any significant foothold in the maquiladora industry. The Han Young campaign was a clear test of the limits of cross-border leverage; it revealed that solidarity from the highest levels of the U.S. political system

¹¹² See Hinojosa-Ojeda and Boudreau 1998; Kelly, Reed, and Taylor 2001; Kourous 2000.

¹¹³ For especially striking evidence of the political incorporation of a binational coalition of mainstream conservation organizations into Mexico's new regime, see the prominent paid ad in the *New York Times*, "A Message to Mexican President Vicente Fox: THANK YOU for your Commitment to Protect 'the World's Aquarium'" (July 27, 2001). The *desplegado* recognized Fox's official promises to take measures to protect the Gulf, without mentioning earlier environmental concerns raised by the Tourism Ministry's plan to encourage a massive increase in boating tourism in the region (see Spalding 2001). The ad was illustrated with jumping dolphins, the president's portrait, and a map of the Gulf. Organizational sponsors of the ad were binational, including Conservation International, Fondo Mexicano para la Conservación de la Naturaleza, Fundación Mexicana para la Educación Ambiental (principal sponsor), National Wildlife Federation, Pronatura-Baja California, San Diego Natural History Museum, Nature Conservancy, Unidos para la Conservación, and World Wildlife Fund. This coalition overlaps little with the organizations most involved in the campaign to stop the proposed saltworks on the other side of the peninsula.

could not produce the enforcement of basic court decisions. The enforcement of Mexican labor law continues to be determined almost exclusively by national political dynamics.

Human rights is an issue area where many analysts assume that international campaigns have impact, but their track record in Mexico is actually quite mixed. For example, Keck and Sikkink claim that, "from 1988 to 1994, the international network in collaboration with recently formed domestic human rights groups provoked a *relatively rapid and forceful* response from the Mexican government, contributing to a *decline* in human rights violations and a strengthening of democratic institutions" (1998: 116, emphasis added). Two steps in this argument require further evidence. First, it is far from clear that human rights violations dropped during this period, and their indicators are very limited. A lack of consistent baseline data makes systematic analysis of change over time difficult, but it is widely known that, for example, the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) reports that more than six hundred activists were assassinated during this same period.¹¹⁴ The second step in the argument assumes that international factors were primary in the government's (largely symbolic) response. This may hold for the creation of the official National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), which is one of Keck and Sikkink's principal indicators of impact.¹¹⁵ Whether the CNDH then made a significant contribution to the prevention of human rights abuses in Mexico, however, is widely questioned. The clearest way to assess its impact is to review government responses to its official "recommendations" (the official CNDH findings that government agencies violated human rights). Here, according to one of the new government's top appointees to the CNDH, the general pattern was one of impunity (Ballinas 2001). The dominant trend was for government agencies nominally to "accept" CNDH recommendations but then do little in practice. Even in the clear-cut case of the Guerrero "peasant-ecologist" political prisoners, strong protest from both national and international human rights campaigns did not prevent the Mexican legal system from sentencing these

¹¹⁴ The situation appeared to improve somewhat in the late 1990s, though whether that was because of international pressure or a post-1994 decline in the electoral threat from the left is not clear. What is clear is that serious and systematic human rights violations persisted, and not only in Chiapas. On Guerrero, see Gutiérrez 1998. During the 1996–August 1998 period alone, the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center documented 115 disappearances (1999).

¹¹⁵ While Acosta (this volume) contends that the CNDH was created largely in response to a major Americas Watch report, the analysis of the creation of the CNDH in Sierra Guzmán et al. 1992 barely refers to international factors.

individuals to long jail terms on trumped-up charges (they were not released until well into the Fox administration).¹¹⁶

The impact of cross-border civil society partnerships on Mexico's democratization process is also easy to overstate. Mexico's pro-democracy movement received remarkably little international support, and there is little evidence that such support made a qualitative difference (for example, in ensuring that the 1994 elections were as relatively clean as they were). The critical turning point in favor of electoral reforms was the inter-party agreement of late January 1994, and many Mexican observers agree that the government was pushed to the bargaining table by the delegitimizing effect of the Chiapas rebellion.¹¹⁷

The Chiapas rebellion itself is probably the clearest example of the importance of international factors, which contributed directly to veto a full-scale military response to the EZLN in mid-January 1994. For the U.S. media, which had been entranced by President Salinas, the rebellion produced an "emperor has no clothes" effect, leading to the immediate rejection of Salinas's claim that the rebels were illegitimate and foreign-inspired. International human rights protests certainly helped, though they were effective largely because both the U.S. government and the U.S. private sector were unenthusiastic about their new NAFTA partner pursuing a televised bloodbath. Indeed, NAFTA had

¹¹⁶ This case is very revealing of how the "boomerang effect" described in Keck and Sikkink operates in practice. The two political prisoners, Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera, were first arrested in May 1999. In August 1999, a local human rights organization in Guerrero (La Voz de los sin Voz) brought their case to a major national human rights NGO, the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center (interview, Emma Maza Calviño, international relations director, Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center, April 2001, and J. Ross 2000). They, in turn, brought the case to Amnesty International, which finalized their decision to consider Montiel and Cabrera prisoners of conscience in March 2000. The Sierra Club led an international campaign in the fall, followed by the awarding of the Goldman Prize (the "environmental Nobel") and high-profile support from Ethel Kennedy and Hillary Rodham Clinton. This international legitimacy helped to make the case more prominent nationally, including a jailhouse visit by the new environmental minister and sympathetic statements by the president. At the same time, the new government's attorney general had occupied a similar position within the military before taking his civilian cabinet post, during the period when the army was involved in making the charges against the two prisoners. The prisoners remained in jail (along with sixty-seven political prisoners remaining in the state) until their lawyer, Digna Ochoa, was shot and killed in her downtown Mexico City office (Thompson 2001b). For updates, see www.sierraclub.org/human-rights/ and www.sjsocial.org/PRODH/.

¹¹⁷ Former leading cabinet member Manuel Camacho argued that the EZLN made possible Mexico's 2000 political transition, since the uprising directly provoked the January 21, 1994, inter-party political accord (Becerril 2001).

contradictory effects in January 1994, contributing to the rebellion in the first place and then helping to stay the president's initial military response.

At the same time, national factors are often downplayed in this discussion. Mexican civil society mobilized for peace very quickly, and key national political elites threatened to break with Salinas. (Most notably, then-foreign minister and one-time presidential "pre-candidate" Manuel Camacho threatened to resign if the government did not cease fire.) Disentangling the relative weights of national and international factors is always a challenge, but many analysts simply assume that the international (and, specifically, civil society) factors were primary, rather than consider them in national context.

Among the various relevant international factors, it is also important to consider the growing weight of European civil society and government human rights protests. The Zapatista support movement in Europe appears to be significantly broader and deeper than in the United States. President Ernesto Zedillo signed the San Andrés Accords in 1996 just before he was about to travel to Europe to promote the free trade agreement with the European Union. This did not stop him from backing out of the accords later, however. This reflects a more general pattern, in which international protest about human rights violations in Mexico is sufficient to lead to partial and symbolic concessions, but not enough to break, for example, the political stalemate on indigenous rights and peace in Chiapas. As demonstrated by the March 2001 national Zapatista caravan to Mexico City and the Zapatistas' unprecedented televised address to the Congress, the political stalemate was broken primarily by the combination of national democratization and sustained political initiative by Mexico's indigenous movement and civil society allies.

Binational campaigns appear to have had more impact on U.S. trade policy. Since the implementation of NAFTA, the U.S. government has not moved forward from its very limited recognition that environmental and labor standards are legitimate issues for trade policy to address, but then again, nor has it been unable to backtrack very far. Because of widespread public skepticism about the benefits of free trade, so far it has been impossible for either Clinton or George W. Bush to reconfigure the jerry-rigged coalition that allowed NAFTA to win a congressional majority. In terms of the issue posed in this study, however, one faces the challenge of disentangling the specifically binational dimension of this process. Binational coordination of trade advocacy coalition work peaked with NAFTA, then took steps backward with the more unilateral U.S. campaign that blocked fast track's renewal in 1997. Even in Seattle in 1999, widely seen as a peak in terms of the influence of U.S. civil society trade critics, there was little evidence of Mexican

participation or binational collaboration. A handful of Mexican maquiladora worker organizers made the WTO protests a priority (they could drive up to Seattle from the border). Indeed, the Seattle protests—though widely framed in the press as a breakthrough for international civil society—were overwhelmingly a U.S. phenomenon. Mexico's main trade advocacy coalition, RMALC, made Quebec and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) a much higher priority (see Brooks, this volume).

Immigrant rights provides a much more clear-cut example of an issue area where state policies in both countries have been strongly influenced by cross-border civil society networks and coalitions. After having long been treated as either targets or victims of national policies, in recent years organized Mexican immigrants have been recognized as relevant actors in the immigration policy process in both countries, just as immigrant rights campaigns have become increasingly binational (see Martínez-Saldaña and Ross Pineda, this volume; Gzesh, this volume).

This brief overview suggests that any analysis of the impact of transnational network and coalition politics will only be convincing if it is contextualized in terms of national actors and dynamics. In the Mexico-U.S. context, most binational coalitions have had some degree of impact on official discourse and policy commitments, but so far they have had relatively little impact on the actual behavior of powerful public and private institutions. Some of the most important have been counterfactual—things that did *not* happen because of binational campaigns. This may change with Mexico's new government's recognition of Mexican NGOs and immigrant civic organizations as legitimate constituencies, as well as the government's outreach to U.S. NGOs and social organizations as potential allies. For example, the Mexican government's high-profile recognition of U.S. trade unions to build support for the regularization of undocumented immigrants is unprecedented, symbolized by Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda's extraordinary speech to the national convention of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union. At the same time, when it comes to maquiladora workers, Mexico's much more conservative labor minister continues to deny them access to the secret ballot and vilifies U.S. unions as subversive interlopers, while millions of migrant farmworkers who do not cross the U.S. border remain disenfranchised within Mexico.

CONCLUDING PROPOSITIONS

This final section steps back from the cases to draw out several propositions for discussion, involving both network and coalition dynamics and their impact. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, these

propositions refer only to the subset of civil society actors that seek increased participation and public accountability; cross-border partnerships that seek to reinforce the status quo may generate different lessons.¹¹⁸

- *Networks often need shared targets to become coalitions.*

Mutual sympathy or shared concerns are usually not enough for networks to become coalitions, in the sense of agreeing to sustain joint campaigns. Shared political ideologies help, but they are not necessary; if they were, then the list of existing binational coalitions might be much shorter (or at least different). Classic Latin American solidarity movements are strong examples of shared ideologies, insofar as many participants explicitly share ideological commitments across North and South. Take, for example, the U.S. support groups for Central American revolutionary movements—and, more recently, for the EZLN—that self-consciously “take direction” from their Latin American counterparts. Here the shared target was U.S. foreign and military policy. Similarly, there are the liberation theology activists, who share their own deeply rooted internationalist worldview. Some currents within the very politically diverse worlds of feminism and environmentalism could also be considered to share ideologies across borders, but not simply because each supports women's rights or the defense of the environment. The notion of shared ideology goes far beyond broadly shared goals, to include comprehensive visions of desirable futures based on political cultures and values.

In short, because ideologies are rooted in political cultures, few are shared across borders. Sometimes exchanges of experiences, mutual support, and joint action can generate shared political values, cultures, and ideologies, but that is the result of the process of cross-border action, not the starting point. To explain most cross-border collective action, therefore, one must look beyond shared ideologies.

Shared targets make joint campaigns possible, though not all shared targets are either obvious or predetermined. They can be “politically constructed” in an institutional sense—as in the case of the NAFTA side agreement institutions. Tangible targets can also be politically constructed in a social, everyday sense. Until recently, one's choice of coffee was not seen as a political act. Shared targets can create a tangible “political opportunity structure” that can make (specifically *joint*) collective action seem at least potentially effective.

¹¹⁸ Thanks to Heather Williams for her suggestions about how to sequence these propositions. She proposed going “from cautionary notes and depressing realizations to optimistic assessments” (personal communication, August 2001).

For targets to be shared, they need to involve more than shared problems or shared but faraway, diffuse threats (like "capital mobility" or "Wall Street"). For example, as Carrillo's study of Chicana/Mexicana political exchanges showed, sharing racial, gender, and class oppression was not enough to generate sustained joint action (1998). Shared targets can range from policymakers about to render specific policy decisions that affect both countries (such as congressional trade votes); shared transnational corporations (such as Campbells, Ford, Hyundai, or Nike); entire sectors (maquiladoras); specific products (organic coffee); shared watersheds (Rio Grande/Río Bravo); a militarized border; migrating whales, butterflies, and birds; and international institutions such as the BECC, NADBank, the trilateral labor or environmental commissions, the World Bank, and even the Catholic Church.

At the same time, different actors can target the same institution without any coordination—or even necessarily any affinity. For example, during the war in Indochina, the Viet Cong and the U.S. peace movement shared a target—U.S. military intervention—but they did not coordinate their actions. Similarly today, U.S. public-interest drug war critics, human rights organizations, and Colombian guerrillas may share a target—U.S. military aid to the Colombian government—but they certainly are not "on the same side." Despite the old saying, the enemy of one's enemy is *not* necessarily one's friend. In contrast, coalitions are defined (here, at least) by specifically joint action, which often requires shared targets to be sustained and effective.

- *Some key struggles on the front lines of globalization lack binational partners.*

The map of Mexican and U.S. civil society organizations that have managed to establish and sustain cross-border partnerships with social counterparts only overlaps partly with the array of actors that are confronting the effects of globalization on the front lines. For example, one might think that Mexico's broad-based campesino and indigenous coffee co-op movement would be a leading candidate to form dense transnational partnerships. The struggle for sustainable agriculture and fair trade represents a promising alternative approach to globalization. Coffee is one of the few traded sectors where poor people are among the direct export producers and, therefore, have at least the potential to benefit from globalization. As leading actors in both the protection of rural natural resources and the promotion of democratization and accountable governance in militarized regions, they are strong candidates for partnerships with U.S. environmental and human rights organizations. In recent years, U.S. consumers have increased their consumption of fair trade and shade coffee, but total amounts remain minuscule

compared to what Mexican co-ops produce, obliging them to sell the rest of their harvest at rock-bottom prices on the conventional market. Though a few U.S. private foundations have provided funding to some co-ops, few U.S. social organizations or public interest groups have strong partnerships with independent Mexican coffee co-ops.¹¹⁹

The drug war is another issue that is inherently cross-border, though it is often left out of both the moderate and radical critiques of globalization. In both countries, this strategy jails thousands of low-income, ethnic minority youth for nonviolent crimes. Social actors and public interest groups, as well as human rights groups in rural areas of Mexico, do question the dominant approach, including ballot initiatives and grassroots campaigns against the prison-industrial complex in the United States. Although the two governments have recently managed to increase their level of cooperation and trust after more than a decade of tension, civil society actors in both countries remain largely disconnected from each other.

- *Broad-based organizations that have sustained cohesive partnerships tend to "think locally to act binationally."*

The classic formulation of global environmental philosophy, "think globally, act locally," does not help to explain why relatively few broad-based social organizations sustain cohesive binational partnerships. Accountability may be more important than ideology. Mass-based social organizations governed by their members are under more pressure than NGOs to be accountable to organized constituencies. Therefore, they must allocate resources based on perceived tangible benefits for their members. To justify resources invested in binational coalition-building, social organizations usually need to be able to make direct connections to local results. For example, the Teamsters Union reached out to immigrants and worked with Mexican unions in the apple campaign because such a strategy would increase their bargaining power. Mexican trade advocacy networks put up with some degree of nationalist rhetoric on the part of U.S. NAFTA critics because those relationships increased their leverage. The U.S. and Mexican telephone workers' unions joined forces in 1992 in spite of deep differences over the upcoming NAFTA vote because they perceived that such an ex-

¹¹⁹ An estimated 300,000 Mexican coffee farmers have recently left their lands (La-Franchi 2001). As the coffee price crisis deepens, the binational dimension of the issue broadens to include accelerated out-migration from states that had previously sent few people to the United States. Several of the fourteen Mexican migrants who died in a highly publicized tragedy in the Arizona desert were from a coffee village in Veracruz, a state that has experienced a dramatic increase in out-migration.

change would reinforce their respective bargaining powers in the longer term, with or without NAFTA. Both U.S. and Mexican environmental organizations on the border seem willing to make serious investments in the difficult process of dealing with cultural differences because they increasingly share the view that the local is binational, and vice versa. Binational ideological convergence, though rare, can help to sustain such "*thinking locally, acting binationally*" because it allows a longer time horizon for assessing local benefits. Shared alternative ideological visions can also sustain long-term alliances, such as the UE-FAT, whose tangible victories so far have been limited.

- *Binational networks and coalitions have had significant impact on official policy discourse, but they have only rarely gained tangible increases in public or private accountability.*

Policymakers and corporations now have a much more difficult time dismissing the *presence* of social actors in the Mexico-U.S. policy arena than they did only a dozen years ago. The degree of political and financial investment now dedicated to "incorporating" or "consulting" the views of social actors involved at the binational/transnational level is one indicator of their success and effectiveness. In Seattle, then-president Clinton publicly legitimized labor and environmental demands (to the dismay of his staff and the private sector). Since his election, President Vicente Fox often refers to social actors as an integral part of the bilateral relationship (and visits Teamsters and NGOs). Thus social actors, whether or not they have a coherent and viable position, are now an inevitable part of any bilateral discussion at the elite level.

However, consultation and discursive legitimacy is one thing; tangible impact on the policy process is another. The experience of human rights, labor, and environmental coalitions suggests that there is a wide gap between their influence on public discourse and more tangible kinds of impact. Aside from several clear-cut campaigns, mainly on the border, assessing impact is methodologically problematic, especially when some of the most important kinds of impact involve counterfactual assumptions ("the situation would be even worse if not for..."). Alternative, counterfactual scenarios, such as a more obvious full-scale military assault in Chiapas or the fall of Mexico's reformist environmental policymakers, have been avoided. But even in those counterfactual scenarios, it is difficult to assert conclusively that transnational factors or binational relationships were of primary importance. In terms of potentially bolstering more reformist policies or qualitative changes in actual state behavior—such as increased authority for Mexican environmental reformers to reduce unregulated toxic waste, noticeable increases in the rights of unions to organize in either country, or the im-

plementation of the San Andrés indigenous rights accords to resolve the Chiapas conflict—binational partnerships have not had much impact thus far. The border environmental institutions are the main exception to this generalization, and their impact to date has been quite limited compared to their mandate. The environmental campaigns that defeated the proposed Sierra Blanca and Mitsubishi projects are quite significant, but each had a very unusual characteristic (nuclear waste in one, whales in the other) that limits their generalizability. In summary, binational networks appear to have much more influence on public agendas and official discourse than on what their target actors do in practice.¹²⁰ This should not be surprising; where their main levers are informational and symbolic politics, targeted actors can respond with symbolic concessions and trinational commissions that produce information.

- *Some civil society critics now have a seat at the table, but partial concessions from powerful institutions can be two-edged swords.*

As powerful institutions respond to the critics of globalization with partial concessions, movements face the challenge of figuring out which ones are important cracks in the system and which ones are window dressing, or "green-washing." As the list of efforts to provide social and environmental "certification" grows, the risk of fake or distorted certification also increases.¹²¹ For example, the NAFTA side agreements and related institutions were the most tangible response to partly binational, mainly U.S. campaigning before the NAFTA vote. Because these reforms were mainly at the level of official discourse, however, one could ask whether these partial concessions were steps toward further change, or did they somehow divert pressures for more substantial reform? Either way, it is clear that the environmental side agreement made congressional support for NAFTA possible in a context when its political fate was in serious doubt. Some of the large U.S. environ-

¹²⁰ This hypothesis resonates with the World Bank campaign experience, where transnational networks were crucial for explaining why the Bank decided to make environmental and social reform commitments, while national factors tended to determine the degree to which states met those commitments in practice (J. Fox and Brown 1998).

¹²¹ Nike is one of the clearest cases of distorted and biased sweatshop certification contracted to top business accounting firms. The flaws in Nike's monitoring were exposed in detail by Dara O'Rourke (1997, 2000), obliging a shift to more reliable monitors. See also Vickery 2001. More recently, U.S. student movement/labor rights pressure induced Nike to oblige its Korean supplier in Mexico to rehire hundreds of fired workers in the Kuk Dong case (Campaign for Labor Rights 2001; Thompson 2001c).

mental organizations that supported NAFTA in 1993 chose to oppose fast track in 1997.¹²²

In the current debate over the social and environmental costs of globalization, many of the concessions offered by powerful institutions involve some degree of increased official transparency. For example, given that the side agreements' track record demonstrates they lack "teeth," some degree of transparency appears to be the most that they have to offer. Transparency is widely assumed to lead to accountability. In practice, however, it is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Analysts are only just beginning to consider the conditions under which partial transparency concessions create openings for further change. It may be useful to distinguish, for example, between "clear" and "fuzzy" transparency (or perhaps "hard" versus "soft" versions). Clear transparency sheds public spotlights directly on those responsible for failing to meet minimum human rights and environmental standards, for example, providing the reliable, accessible, and focused information needed to target advocacy campaigns with precision and to legitimate public interest critiques. Fuzzy transparency, in contrast, is unfocused, fails to reveal the mechanisms through which basic standards are violated, and may be unreliable or biased. Examples would include the large accounting firms first hired by Nike to do social audits of factories and Mexico's (until recently) voluntary reporting system for toxic waste. Not only does fuzzy transparency fail to serve as a guide to action, it may divert attention from the need for more serious reform efforts. Perhaps flawed elite-led monitoring concessions are today's version of Sullivan principles, the employment standards promoted by U.S. corporate elites to provide a pretext for not divesting from apartheid South Africa in the late 1970s. Fuzzy transparency poses a similar challenge in terms of dividing moderate from radical critics (as in the case of the environmental side agreement). Transparency reforms need to make very clear who is doing what to whom if they are to discourage abuses, weaken abusers, and empower advocates.¹²³

¹²² As Barbara Bramble, senior strategist for the National Wildlife Federation, put it, "we saw ourselves as being marvelously consistent, and not changing our position at all. We sought (and still do) environmental safeguards of various kinds in any and all trade agreements and the related legislation.... We got some basic entry-level environmental assurances in NAFTA, which were sufficient for us to support it. Then we were very clear that those were the minimum, the floor as it were, and we could accept no less in future. In fact, we wanted much more for the Fast Track and other U.S. laws and the related international agreements.... [W]e declined to support the WTO as well for the same reason" (personal e-mail communication, July 24, 2001).

¹²³ For one example of a partial institutional reform that creates the potential for clear, rather than fuzzy, transparency, note the experience of the World Bank In-

- *National and border trends in binational relationships have tended to follow two distinct paths since 1994.*

Binational networks and coalitions have not followed any one single trend over the past decade. Instead, border and national trends seem to have followed two different paths. Border environmental and labor coalitions have gradually increased their density and cohesion, starting well before NAFTA and continuing after the vote, while national-level networks and coalitions have followed less consistent patterns. In several key sectors, the pace of off-border binational social and civic relationship-building slowed after 1994, as in the case of many environmental, human rights, and labor organizations in both countries. For example, the 1997 U.S. fast track debate involved significant "backsliding" in terms of binational coordination, compared to the high point reached in 1994. This should not be surprising insofar as groups closer to the border have binational integration in their face every day, in contrast to groups focused on the ebbs and flows of national policy agendas in Mexico City or Washington, D.C.

The Gramscian political concepts of "war of movement" and "war of position" may be useful here. The images contrast rapid cavalry strikes with slogging trench warfare. The first refers to struggles that involve dramatic waves of mobilization; the second captures the inherently gradual and costly tactics that characterize other kinds of political strategies—especially those that involve changing the way large numbers of people think. Looking back, the NAFTA vote and the initial phase of the Chiapas rebellion provoked upsurges of binational political action and a certain sense of "war of movement," creating the expectation and hope that binational coalition-building might be broadened and deepened. Instead, as the preceding case and sectoral discussions show, most of the key coalitions that have actually sustained coordinated relationships have pursued more of a "war of position." This should not be surprising, given the extensive investments in internal and public education that balanced binational coalitions require.

By April 2001, the broad movement against corporate globalization reached the border, with the first large-scale binational mass protest and educational actions at the Tijuana–San Diego border, sponsored by environmental, labor, and human rights groups. Reportedly more than two thousand people from the southwestern United States and northern Mexico rallied in solidarity with the Quebec anti-free trade actions and against the militarization of the border. Post-Seattle strategists were seeking to sink more local roots, as well as to build bridges be-

spection Panel, a relatively autonomous body that receives complaints from people directly affected by the World Bank's noncompliance with its own social and environmental standards. For an assessment of its first five years, see Fox 2000b.

tween organizers on the border and elsewhere (in Los Angeles, in particular). This led to internal coalition debates that were resolved in favor of a commitment to nonviolent, legal tactics and a strategy session for future follow-up (Lee 2001).¹²⁴

- *Binational coalitions are long-term investments with uncertain payoffs.*

Networks that do more than exchange information from afar require human and material resources. Coalitions, because of their higher levels of coordination—according to the definition used here—require even more resources to sustain. While some organizations can afford to invest such resources without a short-to-medium-term costs-benefit analysis, organizations that are less well endowed must carefully weigh the trade-offs involved. Airplane tickets aside, every week that an activist spends in another country is a week not spent organizing on the ground at home. Coalitions can also involve certain risks, insofar as one set of partners may or may not consult before making decisions that could be politically costly for the other. On the positive side, investments in networks and coalitions often generate social capital—resources for collective action embodied in horizontal relationships—and social capital can produce often unpredictable multiplier effects. But precisely because the empowering effects are difficult to assess, political investments in coalitions compete with much more pressing demands and with alternative investments that promise more immediate results.¹²⁵

- *Grassroots struggles can empower their participants even when they lose.*

Assessing movements' impact is always an analytical challenge, especially when they do not reach their explicit goals. Ricardo Hernández, veteran analyst of grassroots movements on the border, recently

¹²⁴ This last step was especially important since, in the words of one of the organizers: "Historically, it has not been a problem getting American activists to promise to help Mexican organizers. The difficulty is getting the Americans to stick around for a while to implement those promises" (Lee 2001: 36).

¹²⁵ For many organizations, networks may make more sense than coalitions because of the lower levels of commitment involved in the former. Relatively few binational interlocutors can draw "strength from weak ties," serving as resources when their organizations need them. In this scenario, relatively low-cost binational networks can exercise leverage at key turning points, as long as they link organizations that have some degree of influence in their respective societies. On the "strength of weak ties," see Granovetter 1973. For an application of this concept to transnational advocacy networks, see J. Fox and Brown 1998.

chronicled campaigns by the Comité Fronterizo de Obreras (CFO, a grassroots Mexican workers' organization) to win back wages for workers in "Maquilatitlán." The CFO's campaign had support from UNITE (a textile industry union) and used access to financial information from the United States concerning the employer. In the end, the corporate owners got away with not paying the back wages, but in the process worker leaders gained a vast amount of political experience. Hernández (2001) concludes his reflective account by asking:

How is success measured?

Sometimes one hears that foundations and international aid agencies like to receive funding proposals that include verifiable indicators of achievements and quantitative measures of success. The more concrete, the better, like building a new irrigation canal or reforming a specific law. Nevertheless, the huge task of challenging the forces that dominate global capitalism is often quite intangible, almost invisible. It is not only expressed in the streets of Seattle, Cancún, or Quebec. Nevertheless, those efforts reach deeply into the lives of those most affected by the negative impacts of capitalism.

What Juany and Paty learned about their own power and capacity to make themselves heard, to denounce injustice, was very important for them and their *compañeros*.... Positive changes flow from the intimate perceptions of one's own dignity and self-respect that come out strengthened from a battle, quixotic as it may seem.

Juany Cázares and Paty Leyva know that they will never get back what was so dishonestly swindled from them and their folks, but they are proud of having struggled in the best way they could. And that tastes like victory (author's translation).

To sum up, so far, binational civil society networks and coalitions have had much more impact on *themselves* than on the broader processes and targets that provoked their emergence.¹²⁶ Organized constituencies in each civil society have gotten to know their counterparts better. Greater mutual understanding is very likely to have empowering effects, at least in the long term. Broad-based actors in both civil societies are qualitatively more open to and experienced with binational cooperation than ever before. This accumulated social capital constitutes a potential political resource for the future. Whether and how national civil society actors will choose to draw on it remains to be seen.

¹²⁶ For a related effort to broaden the criteria and scope for assessing social movement impact, see Alvarez 1997.

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Postscript: After Quebec 2001

David Brooks

Behind all the tear gas in Quebec City in 2001—and before that, in Washington, D.C., and Seattle—stands an astonishing array of trade unionists, farmers, environmentalists, supporters of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), human rights activists and students fighting for labor and environmental rights, and throngs of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that continue to grapple with the issue of a social response to economic integration. This is, in part, the next generation of a dialogue that began among and between forces and social actors in Mexico and the United States as they confronted the formalization of elite-led economic integration.

That dialogue is now becoming hemispheric—and transnational. The essential challenge of these encounters among social forces remains the same as when they began at the end of the 1980s: the democratization of the transnational political and economic arena that is referred to as "globalization."

"N30," the protest that exploded on November 30, 1999, in Seattle as a response to the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), was the public manifestation of diverse organizing efforts and grass-roots campaigns that had been building momentum for years. It was also the harvesting of seeds planted over the previous decade in what arguably might be the most impressive mass popular education on international economic policy ever undertaken in the United States—the fight against the top-down North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the social response to long-standing economic integration with Mexico. N30, this unprecedented social mobilization in response to that most abstract of issues—international economic policy—forged a perhaps momentary alliance among U.S. social constituencies that had first come together around the issue of integration with Mexico. This civil society response was empowered by its diversity: the joining of students, labor unions, environmentalists, farmers, and NGOs to reject a "corporate agenda" for economic integration and to demand full social participation in transnational economic policy.