INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

Border Crossings:
Transnational Movements for Alternative Development and Radical Democracy in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Joe Bandy

Committee in Charge:

Professor John Foran, Chairperson

Professor Richard Appelbaum

Professor Richard Flacks

July 1998

June 1998

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UMI Number: 9910491

Copyright 1998 by
Bandy, Joe H.

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 9910491
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.

This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The dissertation of Joe Bandy is approved

Committee Chairperson

June 1998

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

June 1998

Copyright by

Joe Bandy

1998

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The text that follows and the research it represents is heavily indebted to the contributions of many institutions, colleagues, and friends. Without the financial support of the Department of Sociology, Environmental Studies Program, the Program on Global and International Studies, the Graduate Division of the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the generous confidence of the Fellowship Program at the University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UCMEXUS), none of the following research would have been possible.

In the conception and execution of the research design, the instructive commentary of the following people has been invaluable: Arturo Escobar, Richard Hofrichter, Dan La Botz, Barry Carr, and Andrew Szasz. My committee members Richard Appelbaum and Richard Flacks have been of the utmost influence through their compassionate encouragement as well as their examples of academic integrity and activism. Further, my advisor and friend, John Foran, has been the definition of mentor and without his faithful understanding and meticulous criticism I am sure my academic life would have come to an end long ago.

I am indebted also to many colleagues and friends who have provided moments of profound inspiration, love, and support when I needed them most, while never failing to entertain a sardonic rant. To Rob Caputi, Dana Collins, Julie Shayne, Rani Bush, Will Hull, Jay Stemmle, Ted Coe, Glyn Hughes, Laura Holliday, Ralph Armbruster, John Mohr, Kum-Kum Bhavnani, Connie McNeely, and last, but never least, Mark Juergensmeyer, please know that you are always in my thoughts and I am never far away. Also, I would like to thank Suzanne Lawrence for the many hours of work and care you spent helping me transcribe interviews.

To the many enduring activists of the Associated Student Employees/UAW at UCSB, your commitments to teaching, your politicization of the workplace, and your campaign for justice made the most trying times bearable. Be sure, you have my undying support in the work for radical democracy and social movement unionism.

No one person, however, deserves more gratitude for her loving criticism and ubiquitous support than Carolyn Coleman, my life partner and dearest friend. Without you this project would be incomplete, as would I.

Most of all, I would like to acknowledge all of the participants in this research. You gave me the privilege to know you and you opened your lives so that others may learn to make their own border crossings. My only hope for this work is that it may serve you in your resistance to neoliberal regimes and your dreams of a new America. Your strength and commitment are undying inspirations. ¡Solidaridad a todos, siempre!

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

VITA

Joe Bandy

BIRTHPLACE and DATE

Nashville, Tennessee, USA
August 30, 1967

EDUCATION

University of California, Santa Barbara
Department of Sociology
Ph.D. Degree (1998):
"Border Crossings: Transnational Movements for Alternative Development and Radical Democracy in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region"

University of California, Santa Barbara
Department of Sociology
Masters Degree (1993):
"Pan/ic Environmentalism: Radical Biocentrism in a Postnatural Era"

Rhodes College, Memphis
Departments of Anthropology/Sociology and Psychology
B.A. cum laude with honors in Anthropology/Sociology and Psychology (1989):
"A Content Analysis of the Feminist Stereotype"

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

March 1993—December 1997
Teaching Associate/Lecturer. Department of Sociology, UCSB
Courses prepared and discussed: Sociology of Community and the Environment (twice), Interethnic Relations (twice), Personal Identity, Social Psychology

January 1995—June 1997
Teaching Assistant. Global Peace and Security Program, UCSB
Courses prepared and discussed: Global Peace and Security, A (twice); Global Peace and Security, B (twice); Theories and Practices of Non-violence; The Sociology of Terrorism

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

September 1990—April 1998
Teaching Assistant. Department of Sociology, UCSB
Courses prepared and discussed: American Myths and Cultural Representations, Sociology of Law, Statistics, Social Organizations, Social Psychology (five times)

September 1991—June 1994
Teaching Assistant. Program of Environmental Studies, UCSB
Courses prepared and discussed: Environmental Argument/Critical Thinking, The Social Environment (twice)

June 1986—September 1988
Statistical Consultant. Program Evaluation Laboratory, Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville
Duties: Statistical advisor for graduate students in social psychology and policy as they completed policy evaluation projects and personal theses

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Sociology of Development
Sociology of the Natural Environment
Social Psychology
Social/Environmental Movements
Mexico
Interethnic Relations

PUBLICATIONS

"Reterritorializing Borders Transnational Environmental Justice Movements on the U.S.-Mexico Border." *Race, Gender, and Class*. 5(1):80-103. 1997.

"Managing the Other of Nature: Sustainability, Spectacle, and Global Regimes of Capital in Ecotourism." *Public Culture*. 8(3):539-66. 1996.

"Green Guerrillas." Book Review. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. 8(2). 1997.

"Ecological Democracy." Book Review. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. 8(1). 1997.

"Gender, Environment, and the Discourse of Development." Book Review. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*. 7(3). 1996.

"Institutional Racism: A Conflictual Perspective." Pp. 5-6 in *Confluence: A Forum of Culture and Society*. Memphis: Rhodes College. 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

PAPERS PRESENTED

"Transnational Coalitions on the U.S./Mexico Border: Globalization from Below." Plenary Session, "Social Movements Across Borders," The Social and Political Responses to Globalization in Latin America Project (LAREGLO) and Latin American Studies Program, California State University, Los Angeles. Los Angeles. April 15, 1998.

"Labor Rights on Mexico's Northern Border." Amnesty International Event: "Human Rights Focus on Mexico: From Tijuana to Chiapas and the U.S. Connection." Santa Barbara. March 11, 1998.

"Laboring under Neoliberalism: Grassroots Challenges to the Economic Restructuring of North America in the U.S./Mexico Borderlands." Society for the Study of Social Problems. Toronto. August 9, 1997.

"Reterritorializing Borders: Transnational Movement Coalitions Across the U.S./Mexico Border." American Sociological Association. New York. August 19, 1996.

"Spectacle or Sustainable Development? Global Capital and the Management of Nature in Ecotourism." Pacific Sociological Association. Seattle. March 21, 1996.

"Transnational Environmental Justice, New Social Movements, and the Practice of Identity." American Sociological Association. Washington, DC. August 21, 1995.

"Bridging the Divide(s): Grassroots Strategies for Global Networking in the Context of Transnational Capital." Southern Sociological Society. Atlanta. April 7, 1995.

"Managing the Other of Nature: Sustainability, Spectacle, and Global Regimes of Capital in Ecotourism." American Sociological Association. Los Angeles. August 8, 1994.

"Pan/ic Environmentalism: Radical Biocentrism in a Postnatural Era." Stone Symposium, Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction. Knoxville. March 21, 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"(Post)Natural Environments: Potential Futures for Environmental Perspectives." Earth Day Address, Santa Barbara. April 20, 1992.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

May 1995—June 1998
Dissertation Research. Department of Sociology, UCSB
Drs. John Foran (chair), Richard Appelbaum, and Richard Flacks
Duties: Literature review, research design, data collection, data analysis, writing, publication

January 1997—June 1998
Research Assistant. Department of Sociology, UCSB
Instructional Development Grant, Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation
Dr. John Foran, principal investigator
Duties: Writing a case study for instruction on the relationship between movements on Mexico's Northern Border and the EZLN

January 1996—June 1998
Research Assistant. Department of Sociology, UCSB
The Future of Revolutions in the Third World
Dr. John Foran, author and principal investigator
Duties: Editing, bibliographic research, reading, note taking, reporting

September 1996—December 1996
Research Assistant. Community Organization Research Inst. /Global Studies, UCSB
Global Media Policy Project
Drs. Barbara Herr Harthorn and Richard Appelbaum, principle investigators
Duties: Investigating national policies of media content regulation, for one hundred eighty nations

September 1995—June 1996
Research Assistant. Department of Sociology, UCSB
Instructional Improvement Grant for the Sociology of Development
Dr. John Foran, principal investigator
Duties: Collection of lecture materials and the development of slide programs

January 1991—March 1993
Master's Research. Department of Sociology, UCSB
"Pan/ic Environmentalism: Radical Biocentrism in a Postnatural Era."
Drs. Avery Gordon (chair), John Foran, Jon Cruz, and Harvey Molotch, advisors

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Duties: Literature review, construction of research design, data collection, data analysis, writing, and oral presentations

July 1991—December 1991
Research Assistant. Department of Sociology, UCSB
Ghostly Memories: Rituals of Writing the Feminist Text
Dr. Avery Gordon, author and principal investigator
Duties: Probing literature, acquisition of relevant texts, screening information, note taking, reporting, theoretical discussions with author

September 1988—May 1989
Honors Research. Anthropology/Sociology and Psych., Rhodes College, Memphis
"A Content Analysis of the Feminist Stereotype"
Drs. Susan Kus (Anthropology/Sociology) and Chris Wetzel (Psych.) supervisors.
Duties: Literature review, construction of research design, data collection, data analysis, honors writing

June 1986—September 1988
Statistical Consultant. Program Evaluation Laboratory, Vanderbilt University
Teacher and Principal Effectiveness Study, Professor Evaluation Project, and Holocaust Preparation Project
Dr. Leonard Bickman, principal investigator
Duties: Data entry and data analysis using SPSSX, SPSSXPC, and SAS statistical programs

LANGUAGE ABILITIES

Spanish, fluency
French, basic

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

American Sociological Association, member (1992-present)
Society for the Study of Social Problems, member (1996-present)
Southern Sociological Association, member (1993-present)
Pacific Sociological Association, member (1995-present)
Institute for Policy Studies, member (1994-present)
Center for Political Ecology, UC Santa Cruz, member (1992-present)

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

SERVICE

Global Peace and Security Program, UCSB, Program Coordinator (1994-6)
Capitalism Nature Socialism, editorial consultant (1992-present)
Journal of World-Systems Research, editorial consultant (1996-present)
Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras, member (1994-present)
Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers, member (1996-present)
UC Affirmative Action Coalition, member (1995-8)
Associated Student Employees/UAW, organizer and founding member (1992-8)
UC Santa Barbara Concerned Students, founding member (1992-3)
Sociology Global Studies ad hoc committee, member (1994-5)
Sociology/Environmental Studies faculty Hiring Committee, member (1993-4)
Sociology Graduate Program Committee, graduate student representative (1992-3)
Confluence: A Forum of Culture and Society, Rhodes College, chief editor (1988-9)
Confluence: A Forum of Culture and Society, Rhodes College, asst. editor (1987-8)
Shelby County Govt. (Memphis), "Free the Children" welfare project, intern (1987-8)
Committee for Political and Social Action, Rhodes College, Divestment (1986-9)

AWARDS

University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC MEXUS), Dissertation Fellowship, University of California, Riverside, 1996-7
Graduate Division Fee Fellowships, UCSB, 1996-7
Department of Sociology Research and Travel Grants, UCSB, 1996-7
Academic Senate Research Grant, UCSB, 1997
Graduate Student Assoc., UCSB, Excellence in Teaching Award, Nominee, 1996-7
Honors Distinction, B.A. in the Departments of Anthropology/Sociology and Psychology, Rhodes College
Mortar Board (National Honors Society) member
Psi Chi (National Honors Society in Psychology) member

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ABSTRACT

Border Crossings:
Transnational Movements for Alternative Development
and Radical Democracy in the U.S.-Mexico Border Region

by

Joe Bandy

This project uses extended interview methods to study the means by which community-based movements for labor and environmental justice along the U.S./Mexico border – especially in the San Diego/Tijuana area – have interpreted and resisted neoliberal forms of North American economic integration, specifically in the maquiladora sector. It begins by historicizing the theories and practices of economic development and their social effects, tracing them to the current period of neoliberal restructuring globally – defined by "globalization," intensive foreign investment, export manufacturing, privatization, labor discipline, and free trade. Subsequent chapters reveal the subaltern analyses presented by borderland activists of neoliberalism and its lived everyday effects; the strategies and discourses of movement organizations as they resist neoliberal development agendas; and the hegemonic dilemmas of repression, incorporation, and internal disunity that constrain these organizations. The findings of this research suggests that export manufacturing in the region has been linked closely with many rapid changes – increasing urban growth, poverty, human rights violations, environmental injustice, shifting gender relations, cultural imperialism, and the disempowerment of government vis-à-vis corporate capital – all of which have prompted many new community-based labor and environmental movements to make sense of the new conditions of development and offer popular alternatives. Further, this project has found that the strategies and identities of border social movements, although beleaguered by various problems, are uniquely instructive in their opposition to neoliberalism and a capitalist transnationalism, by clearly defining a radically democratic and populist idea of social movements, by facilitating transnational and trans-issue coalitions among diverse constituents, and by articulating an anti-imperialist and feminist vision of global citizenship.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Table of Contents

Chapter One – Introduction ... 1
Fragments ... 1
Introduction to the Problem ... 3
Theoretical Beginnings ... 8
Development and Neoliberalism ... 9
Modernization ... 11
Dependency ... 14
World-Systems ... 17
Gender and Development ... 20
Environment and Development ... 25
Development, Post-colonialism, and the Post-structuralist Turn ... 31
The Changing Face of Resistance in the Americas ... 40
Neoliberalism, New Social Movements, and Radical Democracy ... 42
Globalization from Below ... 56
New Labor Internationalism? ... 60
Transnational Environmental Justice ... 70
Bordering on New Movements ... 78

Chapter Two – Research Questions and Methods ... 86
Questions and Methods ... 86
Chapter Outline ... 98

Chapter Three – Subaltern Critiques of Neoliberalism in the Borderlands ... 102
On the Border of Under/Development ... 112
Laboring under Neoliberalism ... 120
Gender on the Frontier of America ... 130
Toxics, Sustainability, and the *Chupacabras* of Free Trade ... 144
Conquest on the Border of the 21st Century ... 159

Chapter Four – Strategies of Resistance ... 180
Situated Knowledges: Action Research and Pedagogies of Empowerment ... 185
Coalition Building: Becoming a TransAmerican *Red* ... 203
Transforming the State ... 226
Climbing the Corporate Barricades: Transnational Labor Solidarity ... 261
Concluding Remarks ... 285

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Five – Hegemonies in Movement....... 288
Counter-Mobilization and Structural Dilemmas of Resistance....... 290
The Case of Han Young....... 290
Transnational Corporate Institutions and the Defense of Neoliberalism....... 304
Repressive State Apparatuses and Subordinated Unionism....... 319
Mechanisms of Incorporation....... 327
Coalitional Challenges across the Borders of Race, Gender, and Nation....... 345
Resource Poverty....... 369
Concluding Remarks....... 374

Chapter Six – Conclusions: Towards a Radical Transnational Democracy....... 376
Overview....... 376
Topics for Further Research....... 390
Crossing the Borders of a New America....... 395

Appendix One: List of Acronyms....... 411

Appendix Two: Table of Interviews and Conferences....... 414

Bibliography....... 419

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 1
Introduction[1]

Fragments

> NAFTA was more than a trade agreement, because of the circumstances surrounding its debate, it was a defining moment in our modern history. It was ratified only after a principled and momentous debate over how the United States should enter into the post-Cold War era.... Would we hunker down, turn away and ultimately, in my view, suffer a slow and steady decline in our living standards, or would we, instead, take a different path? Would we build new walls where old walls had crumbled, or would we embrace eagerly the challenges of a new and rapidly changing economy?.... Our vote on NAFTA was our answer to that question. We chose to embrace the world. It is for us now to shape what kind of world we will live in.
>
> – U.S. President Bill Clinton, 1994

> When people talk about this period in history...they talk about the capitalist revolution sweeping in the world. They witness a growing awareness worldwide that states cannot direct economic activity, but must rely on private markets and competition to find the way forward. People will continue to speak with tremendous optimism about this period. They will marvel at how, if this capitalist revolution continues, this will have been the era during which three billion people got on a rapid escalator to modernity. When the history books are written that change will rank with the industrial revolution, and with the renaissance, in terms of its significance to human affairs. Because the Mexican model has been so widely watched, and so widely emulated, and is so salient in the minds of investors, what happens in Mexico has implications that go far beyond Mexico, or even Latin America.
> – former Chief Economist for the World Bank, Lawrence Summers, 1993[2]

---

[1] Parts of this dissertation have appeared previously in a published article (Bandy 1997) and presentations by the author.
[2] Henwood 1995: 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

If maintaining profitability in today's global marketplace is turning your company upside down, take a look at McAllen, Texas/Reynosa, Mexico. Many large and medium-sized companies find wage rates in Mexico dramatically curb costs....Now that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is a reality, Foreign Trade Zones are making more sense than ever by providing unique cost reduction features and operational flexibility. Smart companies utilizing the McAllen Foreign Trade Zone have a competitive edge in the race to trim overhead and multiply profits.... Join the ranks of companies like Zenith, National Medical Care, Delco and Sony which produce, assemble, manufacture, package, process, label, grade, repair, warehouse and/or re-export foreign merchandise at McAllen's FTZ without paying U.S. Customs duties.

– web advertisement, McAllen Economic Development Corporation, McAllen, Texas, 1996

All of Latin America is experiencing a difficult time of the redefinition of its identities in the midst not only of democratic reappraisal but also of brutal and strange transformations that tie it to a new (the old) post-industrial and programmed world, to a modern world in decline and perhaps to another emerging postmodern world: that is, to a world that simultaneously tends to a greater production of wealth and to a growing social marginalization and terrifying cultural homogeneity, a world of increasing noncommunication between races, of cages, more legal than legitimate, of pastiche and of schizophrenia, which ends to completely negate the search for liberating identities.

– Fernando Calderón, 1993[3]

We are aware that in this time of postmodern dissemination and democratizing decentralization the most concentrated forms of the accumulation of power and transnational centralization of culture that humanity has ever known are also growing. The study of the heterogeneous and hybrid cultural bases of that power can bring us to a somewhat better understanding of the oblique pathways, full of transactions, in which those forces come into play. It allows us to study the diverse meanings of modernity not only as simple divergences among currents but also as a manifestation of unresolved conflicts.

– Nestor Canclini, 1995[4]

---

[3] 1993: 60.
[4] 1995: 11.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Introduction to the Problem

In an often cited concurrence, January 1, 1994 was the date of two events that, together, signified a moment of transition and restructuring for North America: the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect, and the Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional (EZLN), or Zapatistas, initiated its campaign of resistance. On that day, Mexican and U.S. policy-makers heralded NAFTA as the beginning of a new era of cooperation and prosperity that could restore the global competitiveness of U.S.-based capital while assisting Mexico to enter the "First World," all through enhancing the conditions of unfettered investment, production, and profitability throughout the continent. Simultaneously, the Zapatista insurgency in Chiapas warned that the predicted prosperity of neoliberalism or "free trade" would not be realized for the indigenous and working peoples of the continent, and that NAFTA would be a "death sentence" for all Mexicans.[5] They also underscored the emergence of a new revolutionary politics focused on radically democratic governance, an open civil society or public space, and economic autonomy from neoliberalism. Indeed, on one day, we saw a dramatic demonstration of a basic conflict that continues to define the political crisis of neoliberalism in Mexico, and arguably, the entire hemisphere at century's end.

Neoliberalism may be defined as both an ideology that articulates the classical capitalist precepts of an undistorted global free market, and a development practice

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that remodels national and regional economies through a variety of economic agendas: transnational outsourcing, export-oriented industrialization in Third World nations,[6] market solutions to social problems, state privatization, deregulation, and fiscal austerity through instruments such as tax cuts, decreased social spending, currency devaluation, and wage freezes. It therefore represents an encompassing project of development that is reshaping entire social formations of the continent. But insofar as this restructuring entails a political shift away from the nation-state as a sovereign guarantor of social well-being, and towards client states that service the needs of capital, already existent social problems have deepened for much of the Americas. Democratic governance is eroding under the weight of capital interests; generalized economic welfare is receding behind decreasing real wages and stifled social spending; development is limited to new dependencies on export production with arguably little long-term returns; environmental health and sustainability are

[5] Subcomandante Marcos in Benjamin 1995.

[6] The terms often used to designate those nations or regions which historically have been subject to waves of colonialism, dependency, and modernization, such as *third world*, the *South*, *underdeveloped*, *less developed*, and *periphery* all are inadequate. *Third World* denotes a tertiary class status in the world system, often with pejorative and homogenizing connotations. Geographical terms such as the *South* are equally inadequate given they reference a vague and even North-South structure of wealth, homogenizing many nations and excluding the inconsistencies between geography and development such as the East Asian tigers. *Underdeveloped*, *less developed*, and *periphery* also reference by exclusion a globally normative stage of development traditionally defined by a core of Western modernized nations and each therefore possesses colonial overtones. Thus, despite its inadequacies, throughout this and subsequent chapters *Third World* is used, except when referencing the particular theoretical schools from which the other designations derive. This preference for *Third World* is because, more than the others, it historicizes the global structure of colonial relations that have shaped the current period and it signifies a diverse bloc of nations that are more than mere objects of imperialism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

jeopardized by toxic enterprises and unchecked growth; and everyday life is subject to greater cultural homogenization and commodification.

Although many sites throughout the hemisphere have experienced these crises, arguably the U.S./Mexico border is home to the most intensive experiment with neoliberal development and is thus a significant place of contestation. Nowhere else in the world does a land border join a post-industrial nation to a developing country, allowing for so many conflicts and transgressions. In today's world of porous boundaries, and especially after NAFTA, the U.S./Mexico border represents a site of metamorphosis, due to extensive transnational exchanges of capital and people, and thoroughly transformative investments in export manufacturing. In the last twenty years, the border's rapid growth of export-processing zones and *maquiladoras* – export manufacturing plants – has caused immigration, industrialization, and urbanization to skyrocket, while governments, especially those in Mexico, struggle to meet basic needs. Meanwhile, a multidimensional division of labor is becoming ever more polarized, with relatively unskilled work being concentrated in the most socially marginalized sectors of the continent's work force – especially south of the border, where *mestizo* im/migrants and women have performed the greatest proportion of the arduous work in agriculture and assembly. And as the region imports industry, it is host to corporations seeking ever new means of externalizing costs, which, compounded by deregulation and poor law enforcement, has caused many border residents to experience worsening environmental and living conditions. Thus, on the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

margins of both nations, the experiment with neoliberalism has given a relative few greater productivity and profitability, but for most, liberalization has meant a more generalized social and environmental crisis.

These social dynamics of neoliberalism in the Americas, and especially on the U.S./Mexico border, have been the subject of much literature in recent years. Neoliberalism has become a buzz word, along with terms such as "globalization," for the ideologies and practices of political-economic restructuring throughout the world; and its litany of impacts on Latin American states and societies have been well-documented and theorized. Likewise, the U.S./Mexico border has been like Borges's "Aleph" – a "place on earth where all places are" – since it has been all things to all people, and the representative site of many global changes.[7] Whether it has been an exemplar of a new global village or a new imperial order; whether it has been an arbitrary marker of national and ethnic identity, or a militarized barrier of xenophobic repression; whether it has been a harbinger of new diasporas and new inter-cultural conflicts, or an esoteric literary sign of hybridity, the border has occupied a prominent place in current social science and humanities literature. But one domain of research that has received relatively little attention is that of the various social movements in the region, which have been symptoms of a general social crisis of development and alternative voices within the growing hegemony of neoliberalism.

[7] in Soja 1989: 222.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, it is the driving hypothesis of this study that, to understand the everyday social conflicts that surround neoliberal development in the borderlands, and in the changing economy of the Americas in general, it is imperative to listen to the local voices arising from the social movements of this paradigmatic region. More specifically, this study hypothesizes that the various social movements of the border, especially the active community-based endeavors of labor and environmental organizations, have much to teach all North Americans about the worst prospects of neoliberal development and the radically democratic methods by which transnational coalitions may be forged to resist them. Thus, this study seeks to investigate the environmental and labor conflicts that are central to neoliberal development on the border, as well as the counter-hegemonic worldviews and strategies local movements are using to articulate new visions of a democratic, transnational civil society. Surprisingly, despite the journalistic reports,[8] testimonial volumes,[9] policy documents,[10] and some academic studies of border movements,[11] none have focused both on the context of neoliberal development and the transnational collaboration of environmental and labor movements of the border. And even fewer have chosen this study's unit of analysis – the environmental and labor organizations in the San Diego/Tijuana region, an area that is especially significant in the border's current

---

[8] Fox 1988; Gomez 1993; Thorup 1993; McGinn 1994; Bacon 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Denman 1996; Rosen 1996; Cook 1997.
[9] Nathan 1991; Küppers 1994; Dwyer 1995.
[10] Cavanagh et al. 1992; Bowdish 1995; Gregory 1996; Human Rights Watch 1996; the journal *BorderLines* .

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transformation, since it is the fastest growing border area, home to fifty percent of the border population, with the most maquiladoras of any border city, the most trafficked border crossing in the world, and the fastest growing city in Mexico.[12]

To evaluate this hypothesis, this chapter argues that the theoretical approaches of two pertinent domains of research need to be articulated with the specific historical setting of the border to form a comprehensive but flexible analytical framework. First, drawing from various schools of development – modernization, dependency, world-systems, gender and development, environment and development, and post-development – this chapter will contextualize the current advent of neoliberalism within various historical and theoretical concerns of development thought. Second, both in the U.S. and much of Latin America, this rise of neoliberalism noncoincidentally parallels a transformation in social movement politics, which this chapter addresses by combining the insights of research on new social movements, transnational labor solidarity, and environmental justice research. In combination, these two predominantly theoretical discussions will ground the research questions raised in Chapter Two and the subsequent empirical investigations.

Theoretical Beginnings

---

[11] Ruiz and Tiano 1987; Kidder and McGinn 1995; Armbruster 1995; Gabriel and MacDonald 1994; Peña 1997.
[12] Tong 1996; Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994; Martínez 1996; Clifford and Sheridan 1997: 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Development and Neoliberalism

Shaped largely within modernist traditions of social science and political economy, the significance of development discourse lies not merely in its interpretation of the world, but in its influence in constructing national and transnational institutions that circumscribe the everyday lives of the world's peoples. From legacies of colonial expansion in the previous century, through the shifts in global political dependencies of the immediate post-war era, to the current reorganization of the world-system, the discourse of development has been the site of various wars of position over the distribution of global economic power. In the "long" nineteenth century (1786-1917),[13] the modern discipline of political economy was a site of conflict between (neo)classical liberalisms that rationalized the consolidation of European capital, and Marxisms that contested capitalist crises and imperialist ventures throughout the globe. The mid-twentieth century saw the continued expansion of capitalist crises to the South, the rise of socialist experiments, and a succession of wars over the distribution of global political and economic power. The latter especially led to European restructuring and the growth of a new hegemon, the United States, which significantly shaped the ideologies and institutions of global economic management and foreign intervention during the Cold War. It is within these legacies of economic change and imperial conflict that "development" came to be a "god-term" denoting modern progress and the global consolidation of capitalism

---

[13] Arrighi 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

over and against other alternatives. In the late twentieth century, however, the advent of decolonization, Western economic crises, a shift towards post-Fordism, newly industrializing countries (NICs), mass consumerism, new technologies, and thoroughly transnational production has prompted more or less complete modifications of dominant development theories, and the emergence of altogether new domains of inquiry.

Today, development has become a multivocal term, flexibly representing a range of political orientations (from modernization to anti-imperial feminism), methods (from economistic materialism to discourse analysis), and units of analysis (from local communities to the entirety of the world-system). Certainly, it is beyond the scope of this or subsequent chapters to address all the debates and historical legacies of each school of development; it will be more expedient to tease out only those threads that could weave a critical framework for understanding American neoliberalism. It is clear that practices such as fiscal austerity, denationalization, and export-oriented production constitute the policies of neoliberalism, and these have well-documented effects on the everyday lives of the world's peoples, but exactly which practices are most important in defining neoliberalism and what the significance of these are in our changing world order, depends on one's community of interpretation. Thus, the following is an exploration of various schools of development and their potential contributions to a broad understanding of neoliberalism and its significance for the U.S./Mexico border.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Modernization

Possibly no tradition of development thought has had as much direct impact on neoliberalism as the modernization school. Originally, modernization emerged as a prominent discourse for U.S. policy in the immediate post-War context when the U.S. was rising as a global superpower, former European colonies were seeking independence, and a worldwide communist movement provided anti-capitalist development alternatives. Drawing from evolutionary and functionalist sociological thought, modernizationists such as Smelser, Levy, McClelland, Coleman, and Rostow viewed society as a systemic whole that changed along universally progressive and unidirectional paths toward a differentiated modernity.[14] This posited Western societies, especially the U.S., as more fully developed and the exemplars of progress – due to technological advancements, complex divisions of labor, differentiated markets, and ostensibly plural political systems – while non-Western or Southern nations were depicted as backward and in need of foreign economic intervention to enable their "takeoff" into modernity. Arguably, these Eurocentric and imperialist tendencies have found rearticulation in successive waves of liberal economic policy – foreign and domestic – whenever Euro-American states and capital have been threatened.[15] If the 1970s represented a recessionary period marked by the challenges of continued decolonization and fiscal crisis, the 1980s saw a renewed discourse of

[14] Apter 1987: 54-5; So 1990: 19, 21-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

liberalization and progress under Reaganism, combining deregulation at home and austerity abroad with staunch nationalisms based in anti-communism, Christian "family values," and the discipline of individual responsibility. In the 1990s, the liberalizing economic orientation of modernization theory arguably has found rearticulation in authors as diverse as Michael Porter and former Clinton Labor Secretary, Robert Reich, as they clearly affirm nation-states to be the clientele of global capital as they vie for investments in a world market; as they naturalize transnational class hierarchies in their advocacy of U.S. dominance in an international division of labor; as they relegate imperial effects of capitalism and Western modernism to the past; and as they assume modern progress to be unavoidable.[16] Indeed, despite today's very distinct differences in the organization of states and the global economy, and despite a post-Cold War shift in U.S. national identity, Porter and Reich resuscitate the immediate post-WWII ideals of a thoroughly capitalist world economy in which working people and nations succeed according to their service to capital.

These precepts have been evident in U.S. policy towards Latin America since the 1940s, when there was advocacy of the policies that foreground today's neoliberalism: the opening of foreign economic markets to U.S. imports and investments through denationalization and deregulation; the opposition to organized

---

[15] Apter 1987: 54-5.
[16] Porter 1990; Reich 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

labor; and the conversion of populist states to limited, corporatist democracies.[17] In the 1950s and early 1960s, as the reformist strategy of import substitution industrialization failed (ISI was a policy of limited industrialization in developing countries for increased national autonomy and fewer import dependencies), it created greater resource extraction and national debt.[18] As this indebtedness increased throughout the recessions of the 1970s and 1980s, a resurgent modernization legitimated the efforts of U.S. financial interests, especially those in lenders like the World Bank and the IMF, to use national debt as a lever to restructure much of Latin American society. This was done largely through monetarism, a combination of fiscal austerity, free trade, and export-oriented industrialization (EOI is the result of local and national efforts to attract foreign direct investment so as to obtain capital and "spill-over" effects that could enhance domestic development). But far from accelerating a "takeoff" into a generalized economic development and political differentiation, these forms of liberalization have created greater class polarization, poverty, and resource depletion, as well as diminished national sovereignty. Ultimately, it was this general set of contradictions between economic liberalization and anti-democratic geopolitics that has typified the emergence of neoliberal policy, described above, from the depths of modernization theory. Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and now Mexico – especially the border – have been the most intensive sites of experimentation with modernization orthodoxy, and the late twentieth century

[17] Blomström and Hettne 1984: 165; Nef 1995: 85-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

social and political crises of these countries have been no mere coincidence.[19] But, it would be left to dependency theories to articulate what modernizationists had not articulated at all: the contradictions of modernization and their political effects on Latin America.

Dependency

If modernization theory has represented the voice of superpowers and transnational capital, dependency theorists drew from nationalisms, (neo)Marxist anti-imperialisms, and Latin American political-economic crises to represent "the voices of the periphery."[20] While modernizationists have explained poverty and underdevelopment as the result of insufficient liberalization or social integration, dependency theorists like Frank, Dos Santos, Amin, and Cardoso and Faletto have suggested they are due to lasting "dependencies" of Third World nations on the import of foreign capital, commodities, and foodstuffs – all made possible by the converging structural interests of dominant national and international elites. This creates a "form of dependence when some countries (the dominant ones) can expand and can be self-starting, while other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion."[21] Further, they argue that because there has been a forced underdevelopment via the transfer of resources, capital, and labor value from

---

[18] Nef 1995: 85-8.
[19] Blomström and Hettne 1984: 166.
[20] Kay 1989: 188; Blomström and Hettne in So 1990: 91.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

less- to over-developed regions – a super-exploitation – the accumulation and development of dominant nations has occurred at the direct expense of dependent ones, and this occurred despite some limited technological and industrial modernization on the periphery. Indeed, the structure of global capitalism throughout its many phases has been reliant upon this dependency and the international division of wealth and labor it has sustained – Amin's "unequal development."[22] But the most sociologicaly sophisticated dependency theorists have been Cardoso and Faletto,[23] who have argued that development is not reducible to mere economic phenomena but may also include the state, popular movements, and cultural traditions. They have used a structural, historical, and dialectical framework to suggest that underdevelopment and dependency always have been mediated by dominant local classes and state actors in an "associated-dependent development."[24] Further, drawing from revolutionary anti-imperialists, they spurred continuing attention to the relationships between popular or revolutionary movements and processes of development throughout Latin America. Thus, from the perspective of dependency theory, the ideologies and policies of neoliberalism are highly contested endeavors to continue the long legacy of uneven development in a late capitalist world system, creating both new global dependencies and resistance efforts.

---

[21] Dos Santos in So 1990: 98-9.
[22] 1976: 104.
[23] 1979.
[24] 1979: xv-xviii, 139-41.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It has been no accident that dependency theory speaks to Latin American experiences, since it was in this region that it emerged and continues to have relevance. As the early 1970s brought greater limitations to U.S. economic power, Cardoso and Faletto argue neoliberal foreign policies, in effect, have recreated U.S. hegemony and its dependent relationships with Latin American states, and they have led to increasingly powerful transnational corporations.[25] Despite the attempts of "developmentalist states" like Mexico to overcome centuries of colonial extraction through independent industrialization, they argue that ISI required foreign investments that ultimately revived earlier colonial dependencies, resulting in a reliance on capital imports and less redistributive national policies, as well as an incorporation of popular movements and unions into state development agendas – a practice known in Mexico as *charrismo*. Such "corporatism" has been enabled by a nationalist populism that pervaded many Latin American states throughout this century,[26] but recent neoliberalism has had many transformative impacts. Indeed, since 1982, various authors[27] have chronicled how the Mexican state has experienced different crises and shifts: Salinas's abandonment of the nationalist economic policies of the revolution in favor of foreign investment and trade; a significant dismantling of state patronage and, arguably, the technocratic authoritarianism of the Partido

---

[25] 1979: 180-7; Kay 1989: 147.
[26] 1979: 128-32.
[27] Gentleman et al. 1987; Gilly 1990; Meyer et al. 1990; Roett 1993; Centeno 1994; Cook et al. 1994; Cornelius et al. 1994; Castañeda 1995; Morris 1995; Warnock 1995; Aitken 1996; Oppenheimer 1996; Otero 1996; Bruhn 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Revolucionario Institucional (PRI); and the extensive privatization and decentering of the state. All of this has resulted in lowered wages, fewer state services, greater corporatization, increased unemployment, and more state repression of dissent – which have contributed to an intensifying legitimation crisis for Mexico's ruling factions, evident in the Zapatista rebellion and the recent electoral challenges to PRI rule.[28] This signals that Mexican economic autonomy is challenged by state clientelism which remakes Mexico into a set of agricultural and industrial enclaves for foreign capital, and diminishes state capacities to be the guarantor of a revolutionary political culture, much less a generalized economic well-being. Indeed, the export processing zones of the U.S./Mexico border represent possibly the largest and most controversial industrial enclave in Latin America, and as NAFTA is extended, it may be a harbinger of things to come for much of the hemisphere.

World-Systems

For further understanding of this context, it is necessary to take a detour through world-systems analysis. Drawing from Marxist political economy, French *Annales* historicism, and dependency theory, world-systems theorists such as Wallerstein provide influential contributions to development, the most relevant of which for this study are two. First, world-systems theory has provided a clearer historical interpretation of the global capitalist transformations that have shaped

[28] Teichman 1997: 131; Nash 1995: 156.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

uneven development and imperial relations between core and periphery, including economic cycles that help shape everything from new production processes and technologies to war and colonialism. Authors such as Arrighi,[29] Chase-Dunn,[30] Gereffi,[31] and Dicken[32] have traced the evolution of new apparatuses or regimes of global development, such as free trade agreements, transnational corporations, and global commodity chains. Each emphasize how this is creating a world system in which political and economic conditions are less stable, global production is increasingly reliant on export enclaves, and the power of transnational corporations vis-à-vis states and working people is extreme. Second, many influenced by world-systems theory have theorized that the latest cycle of crisis and reassertion of global capitalism is marked by a new international division of labor (NIDL), in which imperialism seems reborn as peripheral proletariats are relegated predominantly to low skilled production and have little room for upward mobility. Most notably, Fröbel, Heinrichs, and Kreye reinvigorated the world-systems paradigm with an analysis of global class relations – an absence for which both world-systems and dependency theory have been much criticized – by revealing the many lived effects of export-oriented industrialization (EOI): stagnant wages and rising inflation, increased underdevelopment, poor working conditions, a devastation of domestic capital, rising un- and under-employment in core nations, and importantly, the extensive use of

---

[29] 1994.
[30] 1989, 1997.
[31] 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

women's work in export manufacturing.[33] This corresponds with the work of Sivanandan who argues that EOI has created export processing zones (EPZs) – "new colonies" – which repatriate profits to developed nations, creating an uneven distribution of wealth accompanied by sectoral imbalances – "distorted development."[34] Although the NIDL thesis rightly has received criticisms for reinvoking somewhat dichotomous models of global class conflict, its relevance lies in the emphasis on production relations in a field dominated by theories of exchange, and in the analysis of the lived effects of EOI and neoliberalism. Both of these insights from world-systems theory have been extremely relevant to understanding neoliberalism in Latin America generally, and specifically on the U.S./Mexico border, which may be understood as the site of a reasserted international division of labor in this hemisphere.

Clearly, the increasing power of transnational corporations and the polarization of a new international division of labor is evident in a variety of contexts. But within the last twenty years regions like the U.S./Mexico border have been subject to the development of EPZs, which has prompted much research.[35] Mostly writing during the exponential growth of maquiladoras in the 1980s, each describes an enclave of imported Fordism subsidized by the parallel efforts of the Mexican state

---

[32] 1992.
[33] 1980: 17-23.
[34] Sivanandan 1980: 26-30.
[35] Fernández-Kelly 1983; Tiano 1984; Ruiz and Tiano 1987; Stoddard 1987; Kamel 1988; Sklair 1989; and Peña 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to attract foreign investment, and of capital to lower costs, primarily labor. Globally, EPZs employ a minority of the world's export workers and account for a fraction of trade, and clearly, the informal, service, and agricultural sectors are no less problematic. But they have received much attention due to the increasing prominence of EPZs in the neoliberal growth strategies of newly industrializing countries (NICs), their indication of the expanding powers of transnational corporations, and the ways they have changed the gender composition of national workforces.[36] Arguably, EOI has contributed to the development of some domestic capital, a small middle class, and relative improvements in employment and wages,[37] but on the border these generally have been more than offset by a generalized underdevelopment: decreased real wages, lack of advancement, sexual harassment or abuse, import dependencies, toxic work and living conditions, and de-funded government services.[38] As Kamel states, the "maquila economy ... is one of the institutions that derives from the meeting of two countries on such unequal terms."[39]

Gender and Development

One of the principal constitutive features of border industrialization, as it is in other export processing regions, is the prevalence of women in low-skilled manufacturing such as apparel and electronics (sixty percent of the maquila

[36] Benería 1989: 246-8; Fernández-Kelly and Sassen 1995: 100.
[37] Lim 1990: 101, 107.
[38] Ward and Pyle 1995: 39-45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

workforce).[40] Indeed, the majority of maquila workers are unmarried women between seventeen and twenty-five years old, who earn the primary income for their families and perform most of the domestic work as well.[41] This has occurred in EPZs largely due to corporate beliefs that women are more productive due to the dexterity of their "nimble fingers," less likely to resist poor wages or conditions through unionization, and more flexible in accepting temporary contracts.[42] Thus, drawing from Fröbel et al., Fernández-Kelly and Tiano argue that although women often have been able to experience some independence from the domestic sphere, the new international division of labor is merely a different form of patriarchy that exploits women through a segmented labor market and the systematic devaluation of women's work and wages.[43] "Capitalism benefits from the exceptional. As long as women's role as wage-earners may be viewed as the exception rather than the rule ... women will continue to be liable to sexist and discriminatory policies in wages."[44] Aihwa Ong, in her studies of gender relations in Malaysia's EPZs, finds developments similar to those in Northern Mexico, providing more evidence for an international gendered division of labor: the proletarianization of rural populations, the emergence of a small middle class, the preference for docile women workers, the young woman's role as family bread-winner, familial strategies for survival, the migration to the EPZs, and

[39] 1988: 17.
[40] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 8-10; Warnock 1995: 62; Tong 1996.
[41] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 50-1.
[42] Benería 1989: 251; Safa 1995: 130.
[43] Tiano 1984: i; Fernández-Kelly 1983: 90.
[44] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 85.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

exploitative work conditions.[45] These phenomena have many effects, many of which go beyond mere local conditions of misery to generate disparities between nations of the core and periphery, revealing the material force of gender in the global political economy.[46] But beyond the continued immiseration of women's lives, this patriarchal division of labor places downward pressure on development and living conditions for all Mexicans, not to mention other workers throughout North America – highlighting the ways in which unequal gender and labor relations can have a synergistic and negative impact for all working people.[47] However, to understand this context further, it is essential to explore the historic ways in which gender relations have been constitutive of development politics – an issue which has been conspicuously absent from the above schools of thought.

Indeed, current development theory has reached an "impasse,"[48] partly due to the global challenges posed by a post-Cold War economic order, but equally a result of how the predominant schools of development have participated in a marked exclusion of ethnicity, neo- or post-colonial discourse, social movements, environment, and gender as central issues of inquiry. However, in response to this impasse, many new areas of research have begun, of which one of the most significant for the context of neoliberalism has been the study of gender and development.

---

[45] Ong 1987: 23, 42, 74, 100-7, 148, 154.
[46] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 71-2, 79, 81, 144.
[47] Tiano 1984: i; Sklair 1989: 219, 229.
[48] Schuurman 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Beginning with Boserup's "women in development" (WID) agenda[49] and proceeding with authors such as Charlton,[50] Young,[51] Momsen,[52] Kinnaird and Momsen,[53] and Blumberg,[54] many have discussed the ways in which modernization – and by extension neoliberalism – has excluded women in developing nations from education, jobs, social services, development loans, and productive technology, relegating them to more disempowered, labor-intensive, and domesticated roles.[55] For these authors, the solution generally has been greater participation of women in the workforce and women's greater control over wealth and development planning. Although this offers basic remedies, others such as Kabeer[56] and Gordon[57] argue that this has reproduced a modernizationist exclusion of the full diversity of Third World feminist voices. Further, it does not sufficiently problematize the ways in which modernization, new or old, has Westernized existent patriarchies of the South to yield greater conditions of profitability in a capitalist world-system.[58]

Those such as Mies,[59] Kabeer,[60] Bunch and Carrillo,[61] Bose and Acosta-Belén,[62] Ward and Pyle,[63] and Gordon[64] discuss how the practices of modernization

---

[49] 1970.
[50] 1984.
[51] 1989.
[52] 1991.
[53] 1993.
[54] 1995.
[55] Charlton 1984: 32-4, 84, 86, 88-90, 108; Momsen 1991: 1-2, 9-17, 50-60, 74-5.
[56] 1992.
[57] 1996.
[58] Gordon 1996: 5-11; Kabeer 1992: 102-6, 108-11.
[59] 1986.
[60] 1992.
[61] 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and development in general are in need of more thoroughgoing feminist critique. Indeed, women's movements throughout the developing world have argued that patriarchal development planning has been intimately bound not only to diminishing life chances for women, but also to the construction of environmental exploitation, war, alienating technologies, and the normalization of Western masculine ideologies of instrumental rationality, the superiority of science, and linear notions of progress.[65] Further, they suggest that development institutionalizes and rationalizes neo-colonial relations of power insofar as its racialized, ethnocentric, patriarchal, and capitalist practices intersect to produce a web of mutually reinforcing economic dependencies and socio-political marginalizations.[66] Yet, when these long-standing problems find articulation in a contemporary economy made more flexible by informalization, homework, and subcontracting, it is clear that the wages and work conditions of Third World women are facing an especially tremendous downward pressure.[67] Thus, these authors propose democratic and nationally autonomous development policies focused on meeting sustainable needs globally, as well as a feminist redefinition of labor as non-instrumental, playful, and purposeful.[68] In sum, during the recent decades of liberalization, gender and development studies have articulated needed critiques of

---

[62] 1995.
[63] 1995.
[64] 1996.
[65] Bunch and Carrillo 1990: 71-5.
[66] Mies 1986: 120-41; Bose and Acosta-Belén 1995: 4.
[67] Ward and Pyle 1995: 38.
[68] Mies 1986: 216-29; Bose and Acosta-Belén 1995: 2; Ward and Pyle 1995: 46.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the ways lingering practices of modernization define and depend on the exploitation of unequal gender relations.

Environment and Development

However, if gender and development studies reveal the complex and problematic dimensions of neoliberal modernization, environmental critique has enabled us to see deeply into its contradictions. Clearly, the revival of modernization in the politics of neoliberalism parallels a multifaceted global environmental crisis, which has led to multiple endeavors to theorize the relations between the two rooms of our *oikos* (Greek for "home" and the root of "eco-"): economy and ecology. This includes endeavors of U.N. commissions, governments, NGOs, and entire new academic fields (such as sustainable development or political ecology), each commenting on the extent to which the modern project of capitalist development is compatible with environmental health and the sustainability of nature. First, there are those champions of capital who regard nature, or "natural capital stock,"[69] as fully compatible with economic growth, and who have faith in the self-regulating character of capitalism as they offer free market solutions to environmental problems.[70] For example, Panayotou has argued for the privatization of natural resources, deregulated pollution and pricing, as well as the rationalization of nature within cost/benefit

[69] Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya 1990: 2-3.
[70] Turner 1988; Archibugi and Nijkamp 1989; Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya 1990; Jacobs 1990; Rothschild 1990; Costanza 1991; Tisdell 1993; Panayotou 1993; Carley and Christie 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

accounting.[71] Indeed, these endeavors to incorporate environmental concerns within the structure of a resurgent global capitalism represent the green face of neoliberalism. Second, there are the market-based eco-Keynesian strategies of political figures such as Vice President Albert Gore and his "Global Marshall Plan," which propose some minimal resource regulations, tax incentives for private conservation, and publicly subsidized corporate research and development of new production technologies, all designed and imposed via U.S. leadership.[72] Here, government clientelism and U.S. models of green development do not veer significantly from the eco-modernization principles insofar as they promote a renewed U.S. imperialism under the guise of green liberalism, and the institutionalization of capitalist models of development with minimal abilities to safeguard the environment. Third, there have been more sophisticated and much publicized discussions of "sustainable development" such as those of the U.N.[73] which have posited that the fundamental cause of global ecological problems and environmental health dilemmas is a world-system that promotes economic desperation in the peripheral regions and overconsumption in the core areas. Yet, even as these reports advocate radical goals (greater global regulation of consumption and production, firm limits on growth, the eradication of poverty, redistributive capital flows, and a global enforcement system

[71] 1993: 107-10, 143.
[72] 1992: 295-360.
[73] Such as the Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future* (1987), or the Rio Conference's *Agenda 21* (1992).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

similar to the Bretton Woods organizations),[74] they fail to problematize how these goals – which have received little favor in the dominant nations and their financial institutions – can be met in a capitalist world system that is in contradiction with sustainability and normalizes Western models of modernization.[75]

However, throughout the twentieth century, opposition to the modern apparatuses of environmental exploitation has found resonance with critiques of the capitalist world economy – especially Western Marxism, dependency theory, and feminism – yielding a contemporary set of theories that argue capitalist social relations are historically bound to the domination of nature.[76] And at a time of global capitalist resurgence through neoliberalism, these theories may have more relevance than ever. Indeed, Martinez-Alier and Guimarães suggest it is the history of capitalist development and the current legacy of Western imperialism that has subjected the environments of the developing world to the exploitation of resources and toxic pollution.[77] That is, for "eco-Marxists",[78] the structure of capitalism itself, with its growth orientation, short-term planning, profit-driven extraction, and mass consumerism, is in direct contradiction with environmental health and resource sustainability. Not only does capital contribute to regional contexts of poor

[74] UN 1992: 17-21; WCED 1987: x.
[75] de la Court 1990: 13-15.
[76] Merchant 1980; Brokenshaw et al. 1980; Riddel 1981; Redclift 1984; Smith 1984; Martinez-Alier 1987; Shiva 1988; Adams 1990; Goodman and Redclift 1991; Grundmann 1991; Sontheimer 1991; Anand 1992; Ghai and Vivian 1992; Faber 1993; Pepper 1993; Foster 1994; Ghai 1994; M. O'Connor 1994; Dore 1996.
[77] Martinez-Alier 1987: xi; Guimarães 1991: 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environmental health, but it fosters an intensifying economic and environmental crisis globally. Further, echoing anti-imperial Marxism and dependency theory, it may be argued that the general prosperity of the West throughout the last two centuries has been founded on the acquisition, transformation, and degradation of non-Western ecosystems.[79] Adams states,

> The creation of degraded environments cannot be seen as simply an unfortunate by-product of the development process. It is an inherent part of that process itself and the way in which development projects are planned and executed. Poverty and environmental degradation, driven by the development process, interact to form a perilous and unrelenting world for the poor.[80]

Borrowing from Andre Gunder Frank, Smith also asserts that at every spatial level of the capitalist world-system, growth is based on uneven development, promoting structurally-embedded tendencies towards uneven environmental health.[81] Certainly, state socialist models of development, such as China and the former Soviet Union, have been no better in their environmental policies or in their tendencies towards regional imperialism. Indeed, state socialist models ironically have represented a mirror image of capitalism insofar as they have prioritized unmitigated industrialization, nonsustainable resource use, centralized political power, and systematic ecological destruction of their own regional peripheries. Thus, many offer solutions that emphasize the suspension of imperial forms of development – socialist

---

[78] Parsons 1977; Smith 1984; Grundmann 1991; J. O'Connor (founder of the journal, *Capitalism Nature Socialism)*, Pepper (1993), M. O'Connor (1994), and Foster (1994).
[79] Foster 1994: 91.
[80] 1990: 113.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

or capitalist – and an invigoration of more radically participatory, democratic development planning that simultaneously is inclusive of transnational cooperation and sustainable local management of resources.[82]

This has a special salience on the U.S./Mexico border, where forced underdevelopment and dependency have made it a site of an intensifying environmental meltdown.[83] In the last thirty years, Mexican governments have made the border the centerpiece of export oriented industrialization at the expense of environmental conditions, providing "havens" for U.S. corporations escaping environmental regulations.[84] Meanwhile, U.S. foreign economic policy has favored the expansion of U.S. capital in Mexico through liberalization, enabling greater foreign control of Mexican resources and environmental conditions.[85] Currently, the border environment resembles an ecological ground zero for neoliberal policy and it is arguably the most devastated of Mexico's regions.[86] It possesses the most polluted water sources in North America;[87] abnormally high incidents of infectious diseases (such as hepatitis and tuberculosis) and birth defects (including anencephaly, a condition in which infants are born without brains);[88] overpopulation due to migration

---

[81] 1984: xi.
[82] Brokenshaw et al. 1980: 4, 6-7; Adams 1990: 199; Ghai and Vivian 1992: 50-1.
[83] Faber 1993: 47-51.
[84] World Bank in Bary and Sims 1994: 3; Bullard 1993: 19.
[85] Barry and Sims 1994: 3-4.
[86] Farquhar 1995: 1.
[87] Lewis, Kaltofen and Ormsby 1992: 68.
[88] Farquhar 1995: 1; Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 171, 176, 187.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

from the south;[89] occupational health and safety problems related to toxic exposure and disfiguring work;[90] countless *colonias* (unchartered communities) with dilapidated infrastructure incapable of withstanding natural disasters; few and overburdened sewage and water treatment facilities;[91] and extensive maquiladora dumping of toxics, especially in the chemical and electronics industries.[92] Despite some variation of perspective among those who have studied environmental dilemmas on the border, there is wide agreement as to the general effects and causes. Most argue that, despite some post-NAFTA regulations and commitments to regional sustainable development by government organizations (the EPA, Mexico's Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales, y Pesca, the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission, or the North American Development Bank),[93] (inter)governmental oversight and enforcement has been underfunded and understaffed, and many charge they address only symptoms, not causes.[94] Four years after NAFTA, little has changed.[95] In the words of Mary Kelly, director of the Texas Center for Policy Studies, NAFTA has relegated "border environmental issues to a high-profile sideshow, long on promises, but very short on meaningful changes and

---

[89] Ganster 1997; Weeks 1997.
[90] Shields 1995: 22.
[91] Shields 1995: 22; Ganster 1997.
[92] Barry, Browne, Sims 1994: 186-8,200-1; Treviño and Fernandez 1992; Shields 1995: 22; Environmental Health Coalition 1994: 1.
[93] Magraw and Charnovitz 1994.
[94] Spalding 1997; Hinojosa-Ojeda 1997.
[95] Clifford and Sheridan 1997: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

enforceable commitments to action."[96] Further, if Faber is correct above, deteriorating environmental conditions throughout Mexico have created ever more desperate and exploitable pools of labor on which the maquiladoras depend; and via competition, other North American peoples and ecosystems are subject to the same downward pressures.[97] This is especially true for the women of Mexico, increasingly forced into labor-intensive and unsafe work in the informal and export sectors of urban areas, implicating environmental degradation in a polarized gendered division of labor.[98] Lastly, it is a truism along the border that toxic rivers and air currents are not stopped by the Border Patrol, nor do they respect national sovereignty. Indeed, the border environment reveals how the exploitation of natural conditions in developing countries have recursive, self-destructive effects that only now are being fully understood, whether they be global warming or acid rain, toxic foodstuffs or contaminated drinking water.

Development, Post-colonialism, and the Post-structuralist Turn

As these and previous authors consider the multiple social and environmental problems that surround neoliberalism, it is no accident that they see the necessity of infusing development theory with critiques of colonialism and the deathly impacts Western modernity has had in the Third World. Clearly, the post-Cold War economic

---

[96] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 173.
[97] Faber 1993: 61-3.
[98] Sontheimer 1991: ii, 10-12; Shiva 1988: xiv, 5, 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

order has enabled the resurgence of a global capitalism somewhat reminiscent of the nineteenth century, but with intensifying environmental crises and distinctly postmodern features of advanced technology, new diasporas, global media, and mobile capital. Thus, as many argue the politics of colonialism has all but gone, there have emerged needed inquiries into the (dis)continuities of Western power and cultural identity in the world system, most notably "postcolonial" critique and subaltern studies. Rather than discuss the many complex epistemological and political concerns these raise, the following will explore the ways in which they have impacted development thought. Of greatest significance here, especially for Latin America, is the work of Arturo Escobar. Interpellating a variety of influences,[99] Escobar has defined development as more than mere material processes but always and already a discursive apparatus that has constructed the Third World as an object or Other, by "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it ... in short ... dominating, restructuring and having authority over [it]."[100] That is, development economics is a discourse through which Western cultural codes are inscribed in the practicalities of late twentieth century political economy – ordering our institutions and producing subjects disciplined by custom, law, and market. With an epistemology that suspends false

---

[99] Anti-imperial Marxism, Gramsci, dependency theory, the poststructuralism of Foucault, Fanon's anti-colonial critique, the postcolonialism of Bhabha and Mudimbe, Said's theories of Orientalism, Mohanty's Third World feminism, Latin American postmodernism, and regulation theory such as that of Lipietz and Arrighi.
[100] Said in Escobar 1995: 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dichotomies between materiality and knowledge or economy and culture. Escobar has not only influenced a new area of development thought and cultural studies,[101] but he has offered more expansive critiques of a neo-imperial project of development.

For him, this development apparatus posits one universal capitalist model for the global economy while paternalistically producing an archetypal Third World subject – often a feminized person of color – possessing no history or agency, and endowed with only problems to be solved through modernization.[102] To explain the current context, Escobar turns to a genealogy of modernization that focuses upon the institutionalization of modernism within a U.S.-influenced politics of liberalization and market discipline (pioneered in the World Bank's policies of "structural adjustment"), which ultimately constructed the hegemonic advent of neoliberalism.[103] Consequently, the "abnormalities," "distortions," and "problems" to be remedied in the Third World became objects of a rationalized scientific management and technological expertise:[104]

> It has often been said that classical political economy was the rationalization of certain hegemonic class interests: those of a capitalist world economy centered in England and its bourgeoisie. The same can be said of development economics in relation to the project of capitalist modernization launched by the core nations after the Second World War. Indeed, the set of imperatives the United States faced after the war… to consolidate the core, find higher rates of profit abroad, secure control of raw materials, expand overseas markets for

[101] E.g., Crush 1996; Cowen and Shelton 1996.
[102] Escobar 1995: 9, 62.
[103] Escobar 1995: 165.
[104] Escobar 1995: 45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American products, and deploy a system of military tutelage – shaped the constitution of development economics.[105]

Similarly, Gill has borrowed from Foucault to argue that U.S.-sponsored "disciplinary neoliberalism," through its panoptic technologies of capital globalization and social control, has disciplined its own and other states in the creation of a renewed American hegemony.[106] Here, the messianic fervor that sponsored early colonialism has been rekindled in the conviction that development will be the modernist salvation of the Third World from a backward and wretched past. Thus, as a legitimating discursive apparatus, development establishes the neo-colonial conditions for the continued Westernization and exploitation of Third World cultures, nations, and environments. Indeed, development may be considered the logic of late capitalism's global gaze. Sivanandan agrees when he argues that imperialism still exists today, albeit in new forms: it possesses a new liquidity in international production and finance; an automation of many tasks in the global economy, causing unemployment to rise in all but those sectors requiring skilled or "value-added" labor; a centralization of ownership and a dispersal of production; and, an integration of exchange and production circuits so as to cause a conglomeration and "convergence" of entire industries.[107]

By way of summary, Escobar's contributions to development thought are present within the term "post-development," which has at least three intertwined

[105] Escobar 1995: 84.
[106] 1995: 1-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

definitions: 1) it is a method of development critique informed by poststructural epistemology, postmodernist theories of late twentieth century social change, and inquiries into shifting identities in (post)colonial states and diasporas; 2) it is a condition of new colonial relations and new post-Fordist regimes of accumulation that older schools of development have been less able to theorize; and 3) it is a context in which resistance movements against this new colonialism are gradually shaping a new "hybrid modernity," or, a conflicted but empowering combination of subaltern development agendas and modern social forms.[108] It is this hybridity and political miscegenation that Escobar sees as typical of our current global order and, although it is marked by multiple hegemonies, it is potentially liberatory in its transgressions against modernist logics of Western development. If any region embodies the rapidly changing character of this global order as well as the potentials and problems of a "hybrid modernity," it is the U.S./Mexico border.[109]

If the Americas represent the prime border for the first wave of colonization and the beginning of the modern world-system, the U.S./Mexico border has represented an experimental site for the an expansive neoliberal phase of global capitalism. Indeed the border represents many phenomena in the New World Order. First, as with Escobar, the border is regarded by its residents and scholars as a region in which conflict and hybridization are features of everyday life. As in other regions

---

[107] 1980: 32-7.
[108] Escobar 1995: 215-17, 219, 223.
[109] Escobar 1995: personal communication.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the world system, the border is a place in which nationalisms and ethnicities continue to be the product of colonial power, and thus the resultant hybridity is one of internalized difference, ambivalent vision, and dialogue – both forced and chosen.[110] The border itself is a violent marker of difference that has divided peoples and cultures, and it has defined a powerful hegemon and a Third World Other. Economically, the borderlands are a hybrid economic zone, displaying features of pre-modern labor relations in agricultural and sweatshop sectors, modern Fordist industrialism in the development of Taylorized mass assembly, and post-industrial/post-fordist forms of flexible production, communications technology, and hyper commercialism.[111] But it also is a place in which cultural and economic hybridity is displacing older frameworks of power based on static distinctions between the U.S. and Mexico, the self and Other – where difference is embraced as an inclusive strategy of solidarity and democracy.[112] Therefore, at the level of political identities of resistance, these hybrid forms are evident in Anzaldúa's "mestiza consciousness," which highlights both the anguish of living in the existential absurdities of a new colonialism, and an empowering as well as inclusive tolerance for contradictions, ambiguity, and paradox.[113]

---

[110] Arteaga 1994: 2; Rabasa 1993: 14.
[111] McCaughan 1993: 16-18.
[112] Niranjana 1994: 40; Giroux 1994: 29; Grewal and Kaplan 1994: 5; Barrera 1996: 189.
[113] Alarcón 1994: 133; Anzaldúa 1987: 79.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Second, the border is a "laboratory"[114] for a much discussed postmodern condition which has revealed its globalizing tendencies – and thus it has been discussed as the center of a "North-South axis" or as a "nomad center."[115] The border's rapidly changing economic context, as well as a general Mexican disenchantment with the promise of modernity and the revolution, have made modernist ideals of stable national identities, total systems, and rationality more difficult to maintain – making it a representative site of postmodern life.[116] Further, the historical movement of the geographic border itself is an example of the ultimately fluid and arbitrary basis of nation-states and nationalism, intensifying current speculation about the significance of these entities in our "imagined communities."[117] However, although this instability permits more flexible and critical identities to arise from the creative articulation of difference, and although there are forms of postmodernism that are attentive to popular political empowerment, postmodernism in the Americas may be the "cultural logic"[118] of an invasive neoliberalism. Indeed, in many cultural and political processes, postmodernism may be the way the American Dream colonizes the world. Neoliberalism and postmodern thought converge in various ways: postmodernism, particularly North American forms, often supports uncritically a diversity and hybridity that are compatible with a

[114] Canclini in Barrera 1996: 191.
[115] Barrera 1996: 192.
[116] Barrera 1996: 195-7.
[117] Anderson 1994.
[118] Jameson 1991.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

global capitalism proliferating via multicultural appropriations of difference, while maintaining highly centralized structures of power;[119] its incorporation into Latin American studies often functions to consecrate and redeem cultural imperialism;[120] its emphasis on personal desire and creative play are often commensurate with a consumerism and liberal individualism; its critiques of essentialism and ideology often hastily dismiss or prohibit any coherent and transformational analysis of culture, and especially political economy; and its theory of the collapse of the modernist nation-state may serve to legitimate continued privatization and the de-funding of social services.[121] Further, in trying to understand postmodernism in Latin America, the phenomena of dependent development, continued centralization of state regimes, and the clearly failing record of modernization beg the question, how can the border be postmodern when it has not even achieved modernity?[122] One useful response is that of Canclini who reminds us that, if postmodernism exists in Latin America, it is evident only in combination with modern and traditional social forms, and in spite of a world system that promotes unequal development: "we conceive of postmodernity not as a stage or tendency that replaces the modern world, but as a way of problematizing the equivocal links that the latter has formed with the traditions it tried to exclude or overcome in constituting itself."[123] With these qualifications regarding

---

[119] this is discussed in the critical postcolonialism of McClintock 1992, Miyoshi 1993, Ahmad 1994, Dirlik 1994.
[120] Richard 1993: 159.
[121] Hopenhayn 1993: 95-100.
[122] Klor de Alva 1995: 244.
[123] 1995: 2-3, 9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

postmodern thought in Latin America, it is possible to understand more about the current cultural conflicts, ambivalences, and possibilities that exist in the U.S./Mexico borderlands, as well as how they are both causes and effects of a complex apparatus of neoliberal development.

The above perspectives on development paint a general picture of political economic change in this century, and they build a foundation on which we may begin to explore current neoliberal transformations in the global distribution of power. Indeed, we have found that neoliberalism may be interpreted as a resurgence of modernization theory through which U.S. political, economic, and cultural hegemony may be re-secured, at least in the western hemisphere. And despite new, highly differentiated structures of global capital, it is clear that the basic conditions of colonialism, dependent development, and a globally unequal division of labor remain. Conditions of fiscal austerity, export-oriented production, and the relative withering of the state have converged to create a vacuum of popular representation and increasing economic exploitation. Further, new polarizations of wealth between regions and classes parallel new patriarchal orders, as evidenced in a renewed gender division of labor globally. Moreover, in vicious cycles, forced underdevelopment and environmental deterioration are depleting and toxifying much of the Third World, and as it expands to global environmental dilemmas we can see the endpoint of continued liberalization might be quite apocalyptic. Insofar as the U.S./Mexico border has been an experimental zone or "laboratory" for these social changes associated with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

neoliberal development, it represents an extremely relevant and intensive site in which to explore the social conflicts of this new hemispheric order. Yet the uniqueness of the border rests in the resistance of many popular movements which refuse to be mere experiments or objects of some expansive exploitation. As Escobar has discussed, for us to understand the changing orders of development, it is imperative to peer into the full range of social conflicts that exist in and around them. Specifically it is essential to listen to those subaltern voices of resistance as they speak of contradictions and alternatives. Hence, the following section will be an introduction to those perspectives on social movements that have relevance to the social dilemmas of neoliberal development.

The Changing Face of Resistance in the Americas

It is almost a truism within social movement literature that structural contradictions in a society provide opportunities and impetus for social movements to emerge, and during a period in which neoliberalism confronts us with the ideals of modernization and the realities of economic inequality, it is thus no accident that movements – left and right – are proliferating. Yet in development thought structural analyses of political economy are predominant and discussions of social resistance or movements are more marginal. However, as the regimes of neoliberalism or post-Fordism are changing radically the face of political policy, everyday economic well-being, technological innovation, and social stratification, movements are emerging

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

throughout the globe to challenge the new world order, and hence discussions of movements and development are multiplying.[124] Indeed, as neoliberal late capitalism has redefined development at the end of the century, it is no accident that we have experienced a concurrent transformation of social movements from "old" to "new" – that is, from mass-based movements focused on the state, national publics, and total ideologies, to nomadic forms rooted in decentralized power, cultural resistance, fluid identities, and radical democratic process. New ethnic-religious populisms and the postmodern politics of the Zapatistas are attempting to redefine revolutionary nationalism; gay/lesbian and student movements are providing new visions of public space and democratic participation; environmental movements and human rights organizations are articulating visions of global citizenship and transnational responsibility. Meanwhile older movements such as labor are finding it necessary to transform ideological appeals and mobilization strategies, embracing more transnational, inclusive, and self-reflexive practices. Among many other examples, these suggest there is an obvious if multifaceted reaction to the power dynamics of (post)modern society and the global capitalist economy, creating an emergent form of globalization from below. Hence, if we wish to examine critically the contradictions and dilemmas our world system poses, as well as the possibilities that exist for new democratic orders at the turn of the century, one vital task would be to investigate

[124] Amin et al. 1990: 10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

those symptomatic movements that struggle to offer insights from the margins and subaltern visions of global justice.

Neoliberalism, New Social Movements, and Radical Democracy

Of primary importance in this investigation, however, is to elaborate on the interactions between neoliberal development regimes and the "new social movements" that characterize the late twentieth century Americas. Indeed, there are many interactions between development and movements, and the now extensive literature on new social movements has no shortage of structural explanations for their emergence. It is dangerous to collapse many different movements into this "new" category, since one risks eliding their uniqueness and the internal conflicts that define the left today, but it does reference broad social shifts useful for this discussion. Many refer to new social movements as those that have become focused on issues of identity over ideology, multiple democratizing processes over purely class-based liberation, cultural more than state-based forms of social participation, non-instrumental visions of social change, a planetary consciousness, and decentralized mobilization strategies.[125] Authors such as Melucci[126], Touraine,[127] and Aronowitz,[128] among others, argue that a transition to postindustrial or post-Fordist society in the developing world has created movements that are necessarily more

[125] Melucci 1989: 5; Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994: 5-8; Jordan 1994: 101.
[126] 1989: 3-5, 11-12, 21.
[127] 1985: 756-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

focused on issues of representation, reflexivity, cultural experimentation, and lifestyle. Here, the post-1968 interrogation of class ideology and state-oriented movements by the traditions of poststructuralism and post-Marxism is embedded within a structural shift towards an information economy, technocratic or "programmed" society, a legitimation crisis of the state, new diasporas, and the rising prominence of consumer culture.[129] This globalizing social formation and its resistance movements have been primary subjects of study for members of the Regulation School.[130] This is a domain of political-economic theory that argues that the capitalist world-system has functioned historically through state-capital alliances which constitute "modes of regulation" over different historic "regimes of accumulation," and that the current period is one of a transition from Fordism (mass production, nationally-based capital, industrial technology, Keynesian policy) to post-Fordism (flexible production, transnational capital, information technology, neoliberalism) – provoking unique social movement responses. Although regulationists like Touraine,[131] Melucci,[132] Steinmetz,[133] and Mayer and Roth[134] focus more on post-Fordism than neoliberalism,[135] these two structures are deeply intertwined insofar as the institutions of post-Fordism in the developed world have

---

[128] 1993: 16-18.
[129] Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 163; Aronowitz 1993: 17; Mayer and Roth 1995: 301-2; Foweraker 1995: 14-15.
[130] Steinmetz 1994; Touraine 1997; Lipietz 1992; A. Amin et al. 1994 .
[131] 1997.
[132] 1989.
[133] 1994.
[134] 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

arisen in the global neoliberal agendas of market expansion (especially in the developing world), the communications infrastructure this requires, and state downsizing. However, regulation theory and the new social movement literature, in discussions of the dialectics between political economic structure and resistance efforts, focus primarily on Western contexts and post-Fordism, and thus are of limited assistance in examining the relations between neoliberalism globally, the exportation of Fordism to the periphery, and new movement forms in the developing world. But if globalizing tendencies are afoot, it is necessary to do just such an analysis.

According to Wignaraja, "these new movements are emerging out of the peculiar contradictions within societies and cultures in transition.... from contradictions and weaknesses that are appearing in the role of the state and/or in the particular division of labour resulting from the intervention of transnational capital."[136] It is indeed no accident that a plurality of new social movements which consistently have turned away from the state and its totalizing modern ideologies has emerged at a time in which the state has suffered delegitimation as a guarantor of both social well-being, and more generally, the modern project of progress and emancipation.[137] Indeed, there are new "political opportunity structures"[138] within neoliberal regimes of accumulation since the role of the state is changing. As neoliberal development is transforming (or returning) the state from a liberal mediator

---

[135] Mayer and Roth 1995: 307.
[136] 1993: 19.
[137] Garner 1994: 430-1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

between capitalist accumulation and public need, to a client of capital, many nations have experienced greater poverty and political instability, a lack of national cultural cohesion, and nonsustainable relations with nature. Further, as Habermas has argued,[139] as capitalist institutions penetrate the societies they occupy, more and more of everyday lifeworlds become colonized, creating new resistances against bureaucratization, cultural homogenization, and consumerism. Additionally, new social movement disinterest in the state has been sponsored by widespread critiques, liberal and Marxist, of Stalinist state socialism which, after the reorganization of the socialist bloc, also makes Marxist alternatives seem more remote.[140] As Amin has argued, "Today, in the three parts of the world – West, East and South – the models of managing social life embedded in these organizational forms [capitalist and state socialist] seem to have exhausted their historical effectiveness."[141] Clearly, the neoliberal foreclosure of the state as a target of social movements has generated new methods of protest, new claims for power, and in many cases, especially where the developmentalist promises of the nation-state have never been fulfilled, it has reinvigorated older religious and ethnic identities seeking cohesion and direction.[142]

Indeed, there are many similarities between new social movements in developing and developed nations of the Americas, but there are clear distinctions

---

[138] Tarrow 1994.
[139] Habermas 1989.
[140] Wignaraja 1993: 5, 19.
[141] 1993: 76.
[142] Amin 1993: 94.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that may refine the analytical discourse of new movements.[143] Countries throughout the Americas have experienced structural transitions that have initiated new movement forms, including fiscal crises of the state, mobile capital, and government downsizing. However, if in the U.S. new movements also arise from a context of post-industrialism and consumer culture, in Latin America they – sometimes referred to as "urban popular movements" – have emerged from a setting of uneven peripheral Fordism, urbanization, intensified imperialism at the end of the Cold War, military authoritarianism, dependencies on foreign capital, cultural Westernization, and market penetration.[144] The types of movements therefore are more varied than the usual litany of those in the West (women's, gay/lesbian, ecology, student's, etcetera), including in addition local peasant groups, ecclesiastic base communities, neighborhood associations, human rights organizations, millenarians, and anti-war/anti-imperial movements.[145] Thus, in the interest of not repeating a theoretical form of colonialism, it is necessary to qualify European or U.S. new social movement theories when discussing the developing world, despite similarities. Many Latin Americanists have discussed how the region's changes over the last twenty years – particularly the penetration of market economies – thoroughly have transformed Latin American societies, necessitating new forms of resistance and a new orientation

---

[143] Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994: 6.
[144] Foweraker 1995: 26-35; Calderón, Piscitelli, and Reyna 1992: 24-7.
[145] Slater 1985: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

towards the state.[146] This crisis has offered new opportunities to broaden socio-political citizenship to transnational arenas and to ever new political concerns, while expanding movement concerns to the realm of collective identity, critical negotiations of difference, and democratic process. By way of summary, Chantal Mouffe has stated, "What is new is the diffusion of social conflict into other areas and the politicization of more and more relations."[147] While earlier movements in Latin America were centered on modernizing or overcoming dependency through working class and agrarian efforts at national liberation, today's movements recognize the multiplicity of actors and public spaces in which democracy and justice may be sought.[148] And like in the West, these new movement forms interrogate the contradictions between the ideals of modernity (especially nationalist visions of progress) and the realities of neo-imperialism.[149] Thus at a time in which imperial power is taking new forms, new less nationalist anti-imperialisms find articulation in Latin American social movements, creating flexible and multiple identities in the pursuit of new civil societies and strategic global coalitions.[150] As Amin concluded, "The real imperatives of our time thus imply the reconstruction of the world system on the basis of polycentrism."[151] However, more than in the U.S., Latin America's widespread poverty and more open state repression have caused new movements to

---

[146] Slater 1985: 2; Escobar and Alvarez 1992: 4; Calderón, Piscitelli, and Reyna 1992: 22-5.
[147] in Slater 1985: 3.
[148] Castells 1983: 327-8; Slater 1985: 6-7; Escobar and Alvarez 1992: 3; Calderón, Piscitelli, and Reyna 1992: 24-6; Wignaraja 1993: 6, 26; Escobar 1993: 34; Foweraker 1995: 24-5.
[149] Schuurman 1993: 188, 200-2.
[150] Hellman 1995: 167-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

have direct ties to working class struggles for democracy as well as a direct challenge to the authoritarianism and limited services of the state, resulting in more continuity between new and old movement forms and less distinction between revolutionary and new social movements.[152] Indeed, revolutionary movements like the Zapatistas are revealing less nationalist and vanguardist interests in ideology, but instead more multivalent visions of radical democracy with broad popular appeals to many constituencies.[153] Therefore, despite the ways in which neoliberal development and globalizing social forms have created similarities among movements in the Americas, the realities of dependency and the legacies of imperialism have given new movements of Latin America a more global focus and political critique.

In both developed and developing nations, one latent theory in new social movement research is that – despite many movements abandoning proletarian ideologies and nationalisms – their new forms are, in part, frustrated expressions of class-based concerns which have no ear in the age of a withering state.[154] Of all new social movement theorists, Klaus Eder has been the most direct in attempting to "bring class back in" and contesting culturalist accounts of movements by arguing that the logic of (post)modernity towards social differentiation, despite multiplying arenas and methods of social conflict, does not prevent class groups from acting

---

[151] 1993: 89.
[152] Slater 1985: 9; Comacho 1993: 37, 41; Foweraker 1995: 33-5.
[153] Comacho 1993: 37-9.
[154] Amin 1993: 94; Scott 1990: 139-41; Escobar 1993: 31.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

through new sensibilities, identities, and lifeworlds.[155] Yet, he does suggest that new social movements shy away from class concerns in their new rearticulation of romantic subjectivism and anti-rationalism, as well as in their populist hostilities towards the status-quo and intellectualism.[156] In a more dismissive tone, Samir Amin has discussed the ultimately alienated ways in which ethnic and religious movements, especially in the developing world, are displaced attempts at nation building which now refuse to challenge capitalist power, despite their nascent class interests. Further, he has criticized new movement tendencies to retreat to the local and to jettison universal discourses of emancipation.[157] Certainly, to argue that new social movements are reducible to class interests is to engage in an ahistorical discourse that delegitimates the many critical and expansive contributions these movements have made in recent history. However, it is worthwhile to take seriously the charge that new social movements and their cultural forms are often expressive of new class structures and interests.[158] Further, especially in the West, it is necessary to consider that these movements often are grounded in middle class pluralism, culturalism, and anti-statism that can promote atomized social protest and quietism, or at worst they can be conservative in their opposition to coalitional agendas and structural political change. And throughout the world, there are hegemonic articulations of neoliberal capitalism with the politics of postmodern movements. Movements, like global

---

[155] 1993: 3-9.
[156] Eder 1993: 103-7.
[157] Amin 1993: 94-6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

capital, are not immune to political limitations of acritical multiculturalism, fragmented organizations, the play of cultural representations, and anti-statism. Thus, there is good reason to question any *a priori* celebration of diversity and postmodern social forms. But one central criterion that has emerged from movement literature as a starting point of any critical appraisal of resistance is whether movements promote "radical democracy."

Among students of new social movements, there is a common recognition that they represent a positive shift towards a broad decentralization of political power, radical inclusiveness, multidimensional analysis, and an optimal combination of global consciousness and local accountability – best encapsulated by the term "radical democracy."[159] Richard Falk has summarized this positive affirmation,

> the new social movements seem at present to embody our best hopes for challenging established and oppressive political, economic, and cultural arrangements at levels of social complexity, from the interpersonal to the international.... The new social movements, and the theorizing that accompanies their emergence and evolution, reconstitute our understanding of "the political" and "the global." ... Both by enlarging our sense of "the political" and insisting that everyday practices contain an element of "the global," new social movements are dramatically altering our understanding of what the pursuit of a just world order entails in a variety of concrete situations.[160]

Indeed, authors such as Foweraker have argued that if new social movements have any long-term impact on the redistribution of social power, it probably will be through

---

[158] Jenkins 1995: 14; Wallace and Jenkins 1995: 96.
[159] Slater 1985: 4-10; Evers 1985: 44-5, 61.
[160] 1992: 125-6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cumulative and gradual processes of democratization.[161] A growing number of social theorists of the West[162] as well as of Latin America[163] have regarded radical or participatory democracy as a central defining feature of contemporary social movements and as a primary means of creating unity in diversity throughout broad segments of the left – the "plural universalism"[164] of Aronowitz, or the "egalitarian imaginary" of Laclau and Mouffe.[165] Democracy, of course, has been a hegemonic signifier denoting political forms and processes from Athens to the contemporary West, and in the recent post-Cold War era, it has been a popular teleology for events as varied as the reorganization of the socialist bloc, the movement of Tienanmen square, the processes of liberalization throughout the Americas, and the endeavor of Operation Desert Storm.[166] Clearly, in this form the term possesses prominent traces of Eurocentrism and imperialism. But radical democracy differs from its liberal counterparts insofar as the latter merely references formal political participation and often conflates democracy with capitalism, while the former offers a thorough redistribution of political, economic, and cultural power to maximize public

[161] Foweraker 1995: 112.
[162] Aronowitz 1993; Fraser 1997; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Frank and Fuentes 1990; Laclau 1990, 1996; Lummis 1996; Mouffe 1993, 1995; Touraine 1985, 1997; Trend et al. 1996; and West 1995.
[163] Mattiace and Camp 1996; Karl 1996; Canclini 1995; Chalmers et al. 1997; Chilcote 1990; Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Chinchilla 1992; Foweraker 1995; Jaquette et al. 1994; Jelin et al. 1990; Jelin and Hershberg 1996; Halebsky and Harris 1995; Harris 1992; Holm and Sørensen 1995; Lechner 1981; Miller 1991; Slater 1985; Vellinga 1993; Wignaraja 1993.
[164] 1993: 27.
[165] 1985: 168.
[166] Trend 1996: 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

participation and social justice.[167] Beyond a general inclusiveness and redistributive justice, one reason this discourse has gained favor is that it has articulated features of both Marxism and liberalism/neoclassicism for a post-Cold War era in which polycentric forms of resistance are seeking autonomy from state-based ideologies and centralized economic planning.[168] In fact, insofar as the problems of development and democracy are mutually embedded,[169] radical democracy arguably may be a global and multidimensional form of politics best suited for resisting neoliberalism.

Movements from a wide range of origins, political orientations, and organizational forms are finding room for coalition building through the principles of radically participatory political praxis. For Laclau and Mouffe, probably the most cited proponents of radical democracy, its power lies in its open, indeterminate vision of society, its absence of any *a priori* subject of resistance, and its extension of democracy beyond state capitalist institutions.[170] Hence, the discourse of radical democracy defends against a defeatist liberalism with all of its historic links to capital, as well as atomistic forms of identity politics in which fragmentation inhibits critical dialogue necessary for structural change.[171] In the Latin American context, Laclau suggests radical democracy also sidesteps the three ideological discourses that have haunted the region and prevented democratic rule: modern liberalism with its

[167] Trend 1996: 8-9; Mouffe 1996: 19-20.
[168] Amin 1990: 97-8; Chinchilla 1992: 49; Wignaraja 1993: 10-12; Aronowitz 1993: 35.
[169] Touraine 1997: 180.
[170] Laclau 1985: 33; Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 111-4, 167.
[171] Touraine 1997: 192, 196.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

imperialist contradictions, populist nationalism with its oligarchic and authoritarian governance, and state socialist flirtations with totalitarianism.[172] That is, while radical democratic platforms rearticulate the discourses of liberal democracy, redistributive justice, and Marxist economic critique, they refuse to fall into the theoretical and political pitfalls of functionalism, teleology, class reductionism, or ideological essentialism.[173] Thus, this discourse lies at the core of what some hope will be an inclusive politics of identity and a critical combination of class with a broad social agenda.[174]

The hopes for a radical democratic renewal hinge upon the ability of new social movements to create coalitions with a diversity of old and new left agendas, which goes to the core of debates regarding the "newness" of new movements and their abilities to address class-based interests for structural economic change. When one examines the structural economic and social conditions of North America, where the hopes of modernity have gone unfulfilled for most, and of Latin America, where "hybrid modernities" reveal an incomplete and contradictory embrace of modern, much less postmodern, social forms, it is clear that there is no clean break between modernity and premodern periods, much less between modernity and its numerous posts. Insofar as movements reflect and resist these structural conditions, we may raise serious questions about the arbitrary character of new/old distinctions and the

---

[172] Laclau 1985: 39-41.
[173] Steinmetz 1994: 176.
[174] Aronowitz 1993: 45; Touraine 1997: 179.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

continuities between new and old that much of the literature neglects. Indeed, despite some very clear shifts in movement politics, intellectual culture, and social structure over the last thirty years,[175] there are many continuities between new and old movements that may serve as the basis for broader left coalitions, even transnationally, at the end of the century. First, mass-based, revolutionary, class- or state-oriented movements of the past have had no fewer debates regarding the politics of identity, cultural hegemony, coalition building, or spaces of democratic representation. Thus, as many have argued,[176] new social movement literature often is ahistorical in homogenizing all older movements and it is not uncommon to posit a repressive character without qualification. Second, as Scott claims, the new social movement preference for strategic or nomadic organization versus older ideological absolutisms may be regarded as part of a "fundamentalist/pragmatist tension" that has been common to movements from various eras.[177] Third, many new social movements in the last thirty years – especially environmental and religious/ethnic movements – have had obvious and extensive relations with the state, nor have they been strangers to universal ideologies of social transformation. That is, new social movements often have formed loose but significant networks with the state and with older more established movements, but this has received proportionally little

---

[175] Scott 1990: 153.
[176] Scott 1990: 154; Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 1994: 26; Foweraker 1995: 14; Hellman 1995: 171-2.
[177] 1990: 155.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

attention.[178] In Latin America unlike the U.S., new social movements have had greater historic ties to state institutions, ideologies, and class relations,[179] due to the fact that nation-states and their ideologies of class have often been strategic bulwarks against the diverse social impacts of imperialism. This is clear in Mexico within the overt political orientation of student, women's, and independent labor movements, and in the "postmodern" revolutionary politics of the Zapatistas. Even in the U.S., the advent of neoliberalism at the turn of the century has raised the specter of widespread crisis in the national political-economy once again, causing many within older and newer social movements to create strategic coalitions that better oppose mutually reinforcing social problems. Three crucial examples include 1) environmental justice movements which provide social critiques of race, gender, and class to ecological movements; 2) new labor organizations which are making gestures towards greater transnational, racial, gender, and sexual equality in economic processes; and 3) the powerful coalition of interests – labor, environment, women, immigrant, human rights – that emerged to oppose NAFTA. These examples suggest that there is increasing reason to doubt the distinctiveness of "new" social movements, but more importantly they demonstrate how the processes of radical democratization can improve the everyday lives and transnational development prospects of the Americas simultaneously.

[178] Klandermans 1990: 122.
[179] Foweraker 1995: 42-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Globalization from Below

Indeed, because the processes of democratization and redistributive justice have been inhibited by the local effects of transnational capital and neoliberal agendas, contemporary movements find it imperative to recognize the ever more extensive interpenetration of the local and global. And consequently, despite the still very important roles states play in shaping the world economy and in providing powerful voice to popular movements,[180] there is a growing number of locally or nationally based movements that now embrace transnational identities, organizational networks, and campaigns. Certainly, throughout world history there have been periods of global expansion, but the current wave of globalization reveals a gap in political representation that exists between, on the one hand, the declining power of nation states vis-a-vis transnational capital, and on the other, the relative infancy and thus inadequacy of transnational regulatory apparatuses. Thus, a variety of movements have recognized the global dimensions of their given issue and have subsequently engaged in transnational mobilizations to resolve them. Variously termed "international nongovernmental organizations" (INGOs), "global social change organizations" (GSCOs),[181] or "transnational social movement organizations" (TSMOs),[182] these movements have included peace/human rights associations,

[180] Morss 1991: 55; Tilly 1995: 4-5; Evans and Korzeniewicz 1994: 2-3.
[181] Boulding 1991: 789.
[182] Webber 1994: 395.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

women's organizations, labor unions, economic justice networks, environmental groups, immigrant rights organizations, and religious institutions. Clearly, this is a limited list of all of those efforts to resist the effects of transnational capital and neoliberalism. Here, we arguably could include the many riots against IMF austerity plans for lowered social spending;[183] ethno-nationalist and revolutionary movements seeking national autonomy; paramilitary and terrorist organizations waging war against new forms of imperialism;[184] millennial and new religious tendencies to envision alternative world orders; neo-populist and communitarian groups seeking local sustainability; squatters movements; democratic economic organizations such as cooperatives, micro-lending institutions, and debtors groups; and many more too numerous to mention here. However, among movements that are explicitly transnational there are unique and challenging features that enhance new social movement the discourse.

First, all transnational movements to some degree must address new and more complex relations of difference in the facilitation of networks and strategies that meet the interests of a variety of different global strata. As many who study and participate in these movements will argue, this work is just beginning and difficult, since it requires intensive intercultural education for critical dialogue and mutual trust. This work therefore has the potential to generate conflict and agreement across many markers of difference, transforming individual identities and entire movements alike

---

[183] Hamilton 1993: 36-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as they become socialized in new arenas of political action. Further, as these organizations create webs of interest and communication throughout the globe, they assist in the creation of a democratic global civil society – globalization from below.[185] However slowly and piecemeal, these movements are helping to expand and redefine citizenship through dialogue and principles of solidarity,[186] creating the basis for replacing relations of imperial dependency and underdevelopment with radical democracy and a "differentiated globalism."[187] Second, and more practically, this is done by creating common long-term visions, lobbying for constructive and just foreign policy, educational fora, expertise in transnational comparative politics, and information networks.[188] Organizationally, transnational movements have been characterized as typically nonhierarchical, decentralized, and participatory, thus mobilizing in ways that have been fluid and flexible. This is enabled not only by technological and organizational innovations present within the post-Fordist institutions of capital, but also by the value-commitments to anti-authoritarianism and difference in unity. The latter is best exemplified in the endeavor of transnational movements to engage in a critical articulation of different local and national histories with current commonalties that have become ever more salient and numerous in the global economy.[189] Hence, transnational movements, in spite of great scope, often

---

[184] Castells 1996.
[185] Boulding 1991: 789.
[186] Waterman 1993: 1, 45, 53, 57.
[187] Boulding 1991: 798.
[188] Boulding 1991: 789, 794, 798.
[189] Webber 1994: 395-6, 398.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

have embraced grassroots organizing, community-based organizations, and local cultural identity. More than merely living by the addage "think globally, act locally," in which consciousness is global but action is local, transnational movements have worked towards both a critical consciousness and practical strategy that is simultaneously global and local. The typical model includes movement fragments rooted in local concerns but connected via information and strategy networks, creating flexible differentiated structures best suited for the realization of radical democracy in the current era.[190] Certainly this model is based on the flexible negotiation of conflicts that emerge between localities within a transnational network, but it is best to explore these difficulties within the specific histories of two prominent examples of transnationalism: new labor internationalism and movements for global environmental justice.

Of all the movements with transnational goals and interests, why these? Certainly, it is not because either labor or environmental justice movements offer an essential or total refusal of the forces of transnational capital and neoliberal development. However, both have been prominent voices in the discourse of a new globalization from below, and both have had direct formative involvement in the political resistance to neoliberalism in the Americas. More specifically, labor movements have had a long history of internationalism that, however fitfully, has worked to address directly the economic security of working people in a global

---

[190] Garner 1994: 431.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

economy. Further, for multiple reasons explored below, labor internationalism is changing by embracing self-reflexive critiques of various internal contradictions and by finding coalition with new social movements, providing an interesting case of social movement change within new structural economic conditions. Likewise, environmental movements have had, from their outset, a clearly global orientation towards sustaining the basic conditions of life on the planet. From global networks of sustainable development organizations to local environmental justice groups, environmental movements have theorized and resisted the contradictions between capitalist development and healthy, fulfilling human environments. Therefore, both offer unique cases of old and new social movement coalitions as well as new transnational resistance to neoliberal predicaments. And most importantly for this research, both have been crucial to the representation of working communities along the U.S./Mexico border, since they have offered invaluable alternatives to the political economic hegemony of foreign investment, export manufacturing, and deregulation in the region.

New Labor Internationalism?

To talk of labor internationalism as an exemplary case of a new transnationalism is misleading insofar as strategies of union solidarity internationally predate Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, the First International Working Men's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Association, and the first May Day in 1890.[191] Indeed, as theorized by Marx in *Capital*, one guiding principle of internationalism has been that the structural impetus of capital towards globalization would necessitate transnational labor solidarity to prevent the negative effects of capital flight, such as strike breaking and job competition between national working classes. However, although internationalism has continued through the present, its history has been one of ebbs and flows, diminishing during times of war and nationalism, and reemerging during periods of capital globalization. The current moment of GATT, NAFTA, the EC, and global corporate networks signifies that the transnationalization of capital is reaching unheard crescendos. As development theorists currently argue, capital institutions of production, finance, transport, and communication are more thoroughly global than at any previous time in history.[192] And North America, like other regions, is undergoing an intensive but "silent integration" in long term flows of trade, investment, and population.[193] But labor is not equally as global as capital, therefore labor movements throughout the world face new and intensified dilemmas, including global assembly lines and contingent workforces with more fragmented solidarity, sectoral shifts towards new non-unionized enterprise, declining membership, union-busting, and a weakening of Keynesian and populist states with their legal/regulatory compromises

---

[191] Press 1989: 28-9.
[192] Dicken 1992: 3-4.
[193] French, Cowie, and Littlehale 1994: 17.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

between capital and labor.[194] In combination these problems make it extremely difficult to organize union members, to wage successful campaigns or strikes, and therefore improve wages and working conditions. However, workers from different regions and nations are finding more in common than possibly any other era, and consequently labor movements worldwide are engaging in heated discussions over the new needs for, and increased possibilities of, a revived and invigorated internationalism.[195] But to create a radically democratic and effective transnational solidarity in North America, it is necessary to first explore the obstacles that historically have prevented a dynamic internationalism from emerging.

Despite recent economic developments and the ensuing dialogue regarding the necessity of transnational solidarity, both the U.S. and Mexico suffer from different legacies that have limited its realization. Unlike Europe and other regions with histories of greater working class consciousness and international dialogue, the U.S. labor movement has been haunted by nationalism and an American exceptionalism that has short circuited any new cross-border solidarity from arising. Indeed, the failure to embrace new social movement politics in any substantive or holistic form has weakened the U.S. labor movement domestically, thus limiting its abilities to enter into transnational solidarity. Insofar as the U.S. labor movement has been plagued with various degrees of bureaucratization, cooperation with corporate capital and the Democratic Party, anti-communist red-baiting, racist and sexist exclusion of

---

[194] Bognanno and Kleiner 1992: 4, 6-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

people of color and women, and non-democratic organizing strategies,[196] it has become unable to face the challenges of a new global economy successfully. Probably the most limiting obstacle, however, has been the politics of nationalism displayed in the U.S. labor movement's historic support for protectionist policies, promoting in effect a "labor aristocracy" or working class imperialism in the Americas.[197] This phenomenon, which is arguably an effect of the ideological hegemony of U.S. capital, was especially true during the period of 1945-80 when the U.S. economy was in crisis, and labor movements consequently sought protections from foreign labor or industrial competition.[198] Throughout this period, the AFL-CIO has supported mass deportations of immigrants, trade policies that favor import dependencies abroad, campaigns against capital flight and thus jobs creation in other nations, consumer boycotts of foreign imports, and repressive labor organizations including Mexico's Congreso del Trabajo (CT), the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM), and the CIA-backed American Institute of Free Labor Development's (AIFLD).[199] In short, the AFL-CIO pursued protectionist economic responses to transnational capital and actively worked against democratic unionization in other countries. Although limited internal critiques are culpable here, one may argue that protectionism is a hegemonic discourse of nationalism perpetuated

[195] Panitch and Swartz 1993: 4.
[196] Aronowitz 1992: 193-6, 251, 333-8.
[197] Lembke 1988: 71.
[198] Burgoon 1995: 11.
[199] Cockroft 1982: 57; Weinrub 1987; Cantor and Schor 1987: 41-5; Spalding 1988: 267-75; Press 1989: 34-5; Barry 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

by corporate and government actors which disrupts working class critiques of, and resistance to, transnational capital, much less any identification with foreign workers.[200] A central component of this hegemony is the corporatization and bureaucratization of union movements, reproducing oligarchic and anti-democratic tendencies: as Don Thomson has argued: "The contempt for working class intelligence and abilities is the common thread that runs through much of present day union internationalism. Sadly – and too often – it has been those least able to defend themselves, the often illiterate and impoverished Third World working class, who have had to bear the consequences."[201] As a result, despite AFL-CIO reforms in the last twenty years,[202] an air thick with distrust and suspicion still lingers in current attempts at international solidarity.

Mexican unionism also has experienced difficulties with internationalism north of the border. Subsequent to the 1910-20 revolution, Mexico's political ethos was one of revolutionary nationalism in which foreign capital investments were prohibited or highly regulated and many of Mexico's primary industries such as oil and telecommunications were nationalized. Since there have been not only ties of cultural nationalism, but direct ties of patronage between the ruling Partido de la Revolución Institucional (PRI) and the CTM, the nationalist politics of the Mexican government has had a direct impact on trade union policy. But as the PRI agenda

---

[200] Lembke 1988: 91; Press 1989: 37-8; Thomson 1989: 109.
[201] Press 1989: 11.
[202] Cantor and Schor 1987: 17-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

shifted to one of export oriented industrialization and a reliance upon foreign capital goods, becoming a technocratic manager of neoliberlaism,[203] so the CTM became a supporter of the maquiladora program and later, NAFTA. However, because the CTM and other government-allied unions of Mexico – such as the Revolutionary Confederación Regional de Obreras Mexicanas (CROM) – have negotiated notoriously poor contracts and have repressed independent democratic unions, especially in the maquiladora sector, most students of the movement regard their transnationalism to be commensurate with that of foreign capital, not a grassroots internationalism. As for independent unions, there have been a few precedent setting cases of transnational collaboration with U.S. unions (explored in subsequent chapters), such as that between the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and the Mexican National Union of Farm Workers (SNTOAC), and between the United Electrical Workers (UE) and the Sindicato de Trabjadores Independiéntes de Metal, Acero y Hierro (STIMAHCS) (a member of Mexico's largest independent union federation, Frente Auténtico del Trabajo [FAT]).[204] But the reason these are so few is that independent Mexican labor organizations must spend their resources and time overcoming the domestic dilemmas of government/corporate repression and its demobilizing effects,[205] with little time and finances remaining for the education, travel, and equipment needed for international solidarity work. Indeed, those

[203] McCaughan 1993: 17-21.
[204] Velasquez 1995: 47-9; La Botz 1995: 139-40; Bacon 1995a: 30-1.
[205] Cook 1995: 77.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

collaborations that have occurred would have been extremely difficult had it not been for the resources of U.S. unions, long periods of mutual education and trust-building, as well as the help of intermediary groups such as labor support and church organizations. But arguably the most important hindrance to U.S.-Mexican internationalism has been that Mexican unionists often have justified suspicions of their U.S. counterparts being protectionist and self-serving – embodying a liberal form of imperialism dressed as liberation.

In the face of these difficulties, however, the passage and implementation of NAFTA prompted new popular resistance to free trade in both nations,[206] and more recent political shifts within both the Mexican political system and the AFL-CIO[207] have presented new possibilities for solidarity of all North American working classes. Therefore, there seems to be a growing receptivity – however slight – within North American labor movements to the democratic sub-movements that have articulated alternative internationalist visions in recent years. These visions may be summarized in a series of principles that, if implemented, would not only create an "upward" (not "downward") leveling of labor standards internationally,[208] but also redefine and expand the labor movement into new political domains. Certainly these are not without debate and each proposal finds more or less resonance with different factions, however, each strategy's effectiveness ultimately rests upon that of the others,

---

[206] Burgoon 1995: 10.
[207] Rathke and Rogers 1996: 78.
[208] Brecher and Costello 1994: 4-5; Burgoon 1995: 10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

together representing a developing agenda that can offer a substantive challenge to neoliberal economics in North America. First, the ultimate goal of labor internationalists has been and continues to be transnational collective bargaining within the same firm or industry, advocated most strongly within the U.S. by William Reuther, former president of the United Auto Workers.[209] Indeed, there have been a few examples throughout recent history, but most agree that there has been little effect and that this overarching goal is possible only after the achievement of other, more immediate organizing goals.[210] Therefore, a second, more primary, strategy is the formation of transnational networks amongst labor organizations, possibly using the already existing structures of International Trade Secretariats (ITSs), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the OECD, the UN, large international unions, and/or new information and action networks.[211] But an equally important resource here are the many fair trade groups, labor support organizations, immigrant rights associations, and independent unions that have mobilized throughout the Americas.[212] Many argue that these serve the function of facilitating common strategies and educating unionists about trade, financial investment, indebtedness, and different national laws and cultures – thus performing the one task that many agree is central to enhancing transnational solidarity.[213] They thus have the potential to enable labor organizing

---

[209] Bendiner 1987: 2, 89, 93-4; Press 1989: 37.
[210] Bendiner 1987: 182-3, 187.
[211] Bendiner 1987: 2-3, 110-2; Press 1989: 17-21; Waterman 1992: 3-4; Truax 1992: 33; Velasquez 1995: 45-8; Harvey 1995: 96-101.
[212] Sanchez 1995: 30-3; Velasquez 1995: 45-8; Compa 1995: 51-3.
[213] Waterman 1990: 47; Hotch 1995: 4; Burgoon 1995: 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

across different economic sectors, so as to arrive at broader strategies of empowerment. A third possibility is a legal strategy that simultaneously attempts to enhance the protections and rights of labor (such as those of organizing and bargaining) provided by different national legal systems, while working for the implementation and enforcement of international labor standards via trade agreements, social charters, and human rights documents.[214] An accompanying fourth strategy would be to focus organizing on non-traditional sectors – part-time and temporary workers, the unemployed, workfare workers, and public sector employees – insofar as they each provide a unique basis from which to transform social policies of public spending, state services, and privatization.[215] Yet another, fifth idea that makes this more plausible is a strategy of organizing greater political representation for working people by enhancing the democratic accountability of existing parties and governmental organizations, and by mobilizing new labor parties that can offer electoral alternatives to those representing capital.[216] Through these more political strategies, working people and labor movements in North America may achieve greater power through more active and substantive participation in development policy.[217]

However, more democratic tendencies within the labor movement have emphasized consistently that none of these agendas can be realized without embracing

---

[214] Burgoon 1995: 11.
[215] Banks 1995: 77-9.
[216] Rathke and Rogers 1996: 78.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a broader definition of labor and organizing a wider popular base. Thus, one may argue that a necessary precursor to the above strategies is an organizing effort that recognizes the importance of labor identity as it is affected by one's community, media, and other everyday lifeworlds beyond the shop floor. This would prioritize community-based grassroots forms of organizing in which labor movements work to be accountable to the interests of their rank-and-file, in the workplace, in their homes, and in public life more generally.[218] An implication of this is that trade unions need to reconsider political strategies based in lobbying and elite PACs. Vital to this is the resistance to traditionally white and masculine interests of trade unionism by embracing coalitional work with "new" movements of women, people of color, students, environmental organizations, immigrants, as well as gays and lesbians.[219] This would have the potential to expand and redefine labor politics by articulating it with issues of the private sphere, the exploitation of nature, education, the body, transnational citizenship rights, gender divisions of labor, neighborhood communities, and popular culture, while offering forms of economic and political resistance to new movements that would be significant strategic resources. These coalitions would enhance the voices of rank-and-file members of unions over their often bureaucratic and compromising leaders, and thus portend a more diverse and democratic left.[220]

---

[217] Rathke and Rogers 1996: 82.
[218] Brecher and Costello 1990: 257-8; Lynd 1990: 261-2, 270-3; Rathke and Rogers 1996: 81.
[219] Hotch 1995: 5; Gilbert 1995: 70-2; Davis 1995: 23-5.
[220] Aronowitz 1992: 251; Press 1989: 40-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As Sims has argued, "labor no longer stands alone as the sole vanguard of the 'democracy-building' strategy.'[221]

Transnational Environmental Justice

In addition to labor, any internationalism that fails to engage in an environmental critique of neoliberal development would neglect a primary phenomenon of globalization and a valuable basis for new movement coalition. Globally, the emergence of popular environmental movements may be a response to generalized environmental crises of our biosphere, but insofar as these crises have been the result of the discourses and practices of modern development, this resistance also signifies a challenge to the legacies of modernization.[222] Indeed, it is imperative to note that, insofar as natural environments are intimately associated with the cultural and political identities of many non-Western and rural peoples, especially indigenous peoples, the resistance to the deterioration of ecosystems is a component of an ongoing resistance to cultural and ecological imperialism, in which neoliberal imperialism places nature under erasure.[223] From global nongovernmental organizations working for sustainable development to established wilderness protection efforts, from green parties to ecofeminist politics, from deep ecology philosophy to green capitalism, the politics of ecological sustainability and

[221] 1992: 91.
[222] McCormick 1989; Adams 1990; Ekins 1992.
[223] Lynch 1993: 109.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environmental health represent a multivalent opposition to all facets of modern development (industrialization, mass consumerism, urbanization, resource extraction, polluting technologies, enlightenment rationalism, masculine instrumentality) and thus a vital resistance to neoliberalism. Recently, however, many movements have articulated a more critical concern with the intersecting forces of social marginalization and environmental decay which accompany this modernization, emphasizing both the disproportionate ecological impacts on women and working communities of color, and the deregulatory processes that have favored corporate profits over community security.[224] Thus, environmental justice movements attempt to merge older class-based and newer social movement forms in a powerful coalition. Indeed this is one of their distinguishing characteristics in comparison to other, more known, environmental organizations.

More than the wilderness protection organizations such as the Sierra Club and National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) which traditionally have been defined by middle class interests in an ex-urban quality of life,[225] environmental justice movements have acknowledged the ways capitalist nonsustainability places undue burdens on urban working people. Further, the wilderness organizations are among the largest and most influential of the environmental organizations in the world, with large budgets, mail campaigns, and highly professionalized political leadership, while environmental justice organizations tend to have small budgets, community-based

[224] Bullard 1993; Faber and O'Connor 1993; Gedicks 1993; Pulido 1996: 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

campaigns, and volunteer staff. As opposed to "radical" wilderness activism of Earth First! and the ecological philosophies of "deep ecology" which weave together anti-modernism with a common anti-humanism, environmental justice embraces a political tendency to theorize problems of natural sustainability with social critiques of uneven development, class hierarchy, racial discrimination, and gender oppression. Another possible contrast would be that between environmental justice and global sustainable development efforts such as those of the Brundtland Commission and the U.N. Earth Summits. While they have acknowledged that underdevelopment in the periphery and overdevelopment in the core are prime causes of ecological destruction, they often have ignored the colonial histories which have set these problems in motion and they tend to limit possible solutions to the high politics of international think tanks and national regulatory policies. Instead, environmental justice movements have presented a grassroots green politics that has worked within local community-based efforts to understand the ways in which racial, economic, and gendered histories of development impact everyday living conditions.

Pulido summarizes well the distinguishing traits of environmental justice movements by arguing that, in all of their variety, they share a counter-hegemonic or subaltern politics of opposition to the prevailing powers of development and they do not restrict their working class consciousness to purely economic or class

[225] Pulido 1996: 5; Bryant and Mohai 1992: 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

considerations.[226] Indeed, Szasz states that these movements forge links between movements for racial justice, gender equality, community health, and corporate accountability, thus shaping a "radical environmental populism": an ideology that combines participatory democracy with community-based environmental protection.[227] He argues this has broad historical significance:

> The hazardous waste movement ... increasingly defines its environmental mission in terms of a larger critique of society; it makes common cause with other movements and says that, ultimately, they are all joined in the same struggle. It even envisions a future in which grass-roots environmentalism spearheads the reconstitution of a broad social justice movement.... At that point, the boundary of issue history will blur and the specific history of hazardous waste will open up to the larger political history of its time.[228]

Clearly, environmental justice movements, like the new labor internationalism, are making significant contributions to a democratic left renewal. But if they are to open up to the broader history of the late twentieth century and strengthen their ability to affect changes in development practice, certainly it will be imperative to embrace transnational networks and strategies to oppose neoliberalism. Fortunately, integrating a politics of radically democratic environmental justice with a transnational orientation is ever more possible in an era of neoliberal restructuring, which seems to erode ecological conditions in ways that are becoming universal. Yet, as with the new labor internationalism, it is not without conflicts of difference and profound questions of strategy and identity, especially in the Americas.

---

[226] 1996: 4-5.
[227] 1994: 5-6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Despite an ecological tendency towards internationalism, much is necessary for a more complete solidarity among environmental movement organizations in the Americas. Clearly, the more powerful and popular environmental organizations originating in the U.S., such as the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and the World Wildlife Fund, have become transnational organizations pursuing a variety of wilderness and wildlife protection issues globally. And they frequently have provided financial and scientific resources to local communities throughout the Americas, enhancing many local attempts at environmental preservation.[229] Yet, their politics often have been a reflection of many of the contradictions existing in sustainable development agendas in a neoliberal era – between free market capitalism and sustainable ecological practices. These contradictions have manifested in a variety of policies and platforms which have generated some suspicion and mistrust amongst environmental justice critics of sustainable development institutions. Some of the larger environmental organizations have had internal disagreements regarding free trade and immigration platforms. They have been involved in debt-for-nature swaps and ecotourist endeavors within developing nations, which grant environmental NGO's control of wilderness areas in return for payment of a portion of national debt or for limited investments in new service industries, both of which may be likened to a liberal colonialism due to the foreign expropriation of natural areas.[230] Further, in the U.S.

---

[228] Szasz 1994: 166.
[229] Pulido 1996: 16.
[230] Bandy 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

many in environmental justice struggles have regarded these organizations as interlopers who use local movements to enhance a public image or to serve broader political agendas with no continued involvement.[231] Additionally, in the last thirty years these organizations have pursued mobilization strategies which have been aimed primarily at middle class constituents through mail campaigns – a checkbook activism that does not offer the most democratic representation of their own members much less any accountability to working class environmentalists. Traditionally, they also have had little or no critique of the intersection of social and environmental problems. And even many in the wilderness protection movement regard these organizations to be so compromised in their bureaucratic and professional political agendas that they have become relatively powerless in the face of neoliberal development, ultimately being reduced to advisory roles in capitalist resource management.[232] Thus, despite internal differences between these organizations and environmental justice movements within the U.S., insofar as these NGOs represent a non-democratic, non-local, and imperialist environmentalism, they pose continuing problems for open transnational dialogue and cooperation between justice movements in the Americas.

However, despite the influence of the larger NGOs, environmental justice movements themselves have national differences that raise interesting questions regarding the significance of national boundaries. In both their origins and their

[231] Bunin 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interests, environmental justice movements in the U.S. have much in common with their counterparts in Latin America, variously named political ecology movements, resource struggles, urban popular movements, and peasant organizations. Paralleling the U.S. in the 1980s, popular Latin American environmental movements arose from a context of urban migration, privatization, and deregulated industrialization which produced grave ecological consequences, especially for the poor.[233] Indeed, neoliberalism throughout the Americas is creating ecologically deteriorated conditions in all regions, leading to a reterritorialized Third World that crosses the boundaries of many nations and communities. However, there are many differences. First, Latin American environmental justice movements have arisen in a context that has made questions of livelihood most pertinent, while those of the U.S., despite many class-relevant considerations, have focused more on the dynamics of racial discrimination.[234] Clearly, U.S. authors such as O'Connor and Szasz have discussed economic dynamics of environmental injustice and the strategic relevance of class-based claims; however most of the literature and popular movements for environmental justice have placed a primacy on the intersection of racial discrimination and environmental problems. In part, this is a product of very different discourses of race between Anglo and Latin America, and the entire set of race-based power relations that exist in different national settings. Although this may be a basis

[232] Manes 1990: 45; Giannecchini 1993: 430.
[233] Dávila 1996: 204.
[234] Pulido 1996: 13, 17-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for new and expanded transnational dialogue about the multiple histories of colonial power in the Americas and their interrelated racial/economic hegemonies today, it also presents very different political orientations towards movement discourse and strategy. U.S. movements against "environmental racism" have attended to research on racial discrimination in environmental impacts and making civil rights claims of citizenship, while environmental justice movements in Latin America have been more interested in securing economic benefits through land, even development, and livelihood. As Pulido stated succinctly, "racism and the struggle for equality are the entry point for marginalized groups in the United States; livelihood is the entry point for Third World communities."[235]

Second, as mentioned in the case of new labor internationalism, environmental justice movements in Latin America have a more intimate knowledge of imperial development practices led by the U.S., especially the ways they have precipitated ecological destruction. In Latin America, and Mexico specifically, environmental activists have focused on the environmental problems of foreign development interests, declining state services, the deregulatory effects of privatization, rapid industrialization, population growth, the gradual expropriation of sustainable agriculture, and the insidious foreign dependencies that make it possible.[236] As these problems have increased, environmental movements such as Pacto de Grupos Ecologistas, Enlace Ecologico, El Barzón, or Red de Acción Sobre

[235] 1996: 19.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Plaguidicias y Alternativas en México have emerged to create a growing opposition to neoliberal constructions of environment, garnering transnational support and protesting neoliberal models. Rather than accepting an agenda that defers environmental health until Mexico's entrance into the "First World" – President Salinas's promise – they have struggled for sustainable development alternatives through campaigns for ecological literacy, regulatory policy, debt forgiveness, and land reform. However, in the U.S., aside from Native American land and resource struggles, environmental justice movements have not theorized the internal colonization of working people of color and their community environments. Yet possibilities remain for a coalition between Latin American and U.S. environmental justice movements, which could develop an expansive critique of imperialism in the Americas, and the consequent exploitation of working classes, people of color, and natural resources. Such a dialogue also would offer the opportunity to weave racial, class, and environmental criticism into a more coherent analytical tapestry.

Bordering on New Movements

Now that there has been a basic introduction to the individual characteristics of these two forms of globalization from below – new labor internationalism and transnational environmental justice – it may be possible to address some of their similarities and their promise, despite limitations. Both represent a combination of

---

[236] Lorentzen 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

old and new movement forms, suggesting interesting reformulations of social movement history at the close of the century. First, both transnationalisms offer new means of integrating the global and the local while remaining interested in a community-based globalization from below. That is, building on different movement histories of transnationalism, each politicizes local concerns by opening them to critiques of global social problems – such as neoliberal forms of imperialism and nonsustainble development – and forming networks to resolve them. Meanwhile, each simultaneously strengthens the effectiveness of networks by holding them accountable to their constituent communities and their local empowerment. Therefore, if capital is able to compress time and space by homogenizing the local and the global, new subaltern transnationalisms show a willingness to work towards a radically democratic and heterogeneous global public sphere. Second, both forms of transnationalism find it necessary to pose alternatives not only to the imperialist tendencies of global capital and neoliberal development policy, but also to the hegemonic rearticulations of this imperialism within the histories of their own movements, especially in the form of nationalism and protectionism. More abstractly, this may be a correlate of a general orientation towards radical democracy which also opposes strategies that privilege bureaucracy, professionalization, high politics, and other hegemonic means by which movements may trade popular representation for limited effectiveness.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Third, new labor internationalisms and environmental justice networks have integrated old movement concerns for class, state, and political structure with new movement emphases on community identity, participation in public culture, and radical democracy. That is, although they possess a new focus on cultural politics and non-class identities, these new internationalisms are not without a continuing opposition to poverty, uneven development, and non-sustainable livelihoods. Each appears to take a more open and dialogic approach to conflict and difference, enabling flexible and unified coalitions between varying identities and interests – anti-racist, feminist, immigrant rights, economic justice, and environmentalist. Thus each possesses the potential to become accessible to a wider, more popular democratic base, which can only expand the critical and strategic capacities of each towards a more inclusive political socialization.

Of special significance here are greater coalitional ties with feminists and immigrants. Extensive feminist critique in labor and environmental movements allows the latter to be more accountable to issues of domestic work, neighborhood communities, and family health, enhancing community-based organizing that meets the needs of underrepresented workers in their everyday lives. With greater national strength, these organizations may then pursue broader agendas transnationally. More specifically, a feminist unionism can be more attentive and oppositional to gendered divisions of labor, nationally or internationally, that lower labor standards for all and that intensively exploit women in a variety of sectors. Further, without protecting and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

embracing reproductive rights, affirmative action, equitable family and divorce law, child care, anti-sexual violence campaigns, and equality in all governing institutions, labor organizations cannot be an effective force in creating gender equality. Feminism has also expanded the ability of environmental movements to theorize and resist androcentric development projects, increased environmental burdens on women, family health and safety, and modern masculine ideologies supporting the domination of nature.

Immigrant communities are also crucial to this new internationalism, since immigration discourse and policy is so intertwined with neoliberal development and thus opens so many opportunities for transnational working class cooperation.[237] Whether one considers the ways in which restrictive immigration policy creates lower labor and environmental standards; or whether one recognizes the correlation between economic downturns, immigrant scapegoating, and movement fragmentation, coalitions between immigrant and labor/environmentalist movements would be vital to enhancing the strength of national and international solidarity. Clearly, unions with many Latino/a members have been a crucial force in creating this emergent coalition, including the UE; United Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE); the United Farm Workers (UFW); Communications Workers of America (CWA); and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).[238] Likewise, organizations such as the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), the

[237] Cockroft 1982: 48-9; Hinojosa-Ojeda 1982: 67; Bacon 1995a: 30.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Environmental Health Coalitions (EHCs), and the UFW have had both international bases of solidarity and significant numbers of Latino/a members. However, in the U.S., a progressive transnationalism is not possible without an informed critique of both the imperialist relations between the U.S. and Latin America, especially the Cold War anti-communism that demobilized democratic labor movements and the non-sustainable development practices of U.S.-based capital throughout the Americas. A combination of these strategies of coalition has the potential for a broad basis of political education that spans the borders of nations and identity politics, providing historical critique of economic development and creating a radically democratic transnational solidarity.

Through an examination of those efforts of resistance in the economically and culturally unique setting of the US-Mexico borderlands, we may gain greater insight to the full, lived dimensions of our current development problematic while catching a glimpse of the contestations that may shape our global political economy of the twenty-first century. Possibly no setting has offered such an intensive site of cultural hybridization, transnational cross-currents, and development experiments as the US-Mexico border, which thus provides a unique and instructive case for deconstructing the lived practice of neoliberalism and its resistance. With any emergency there is emergence, and with every crisis there is always change and opportunity. The border has always been a land in crisis, since it has been a cultural meeting grounds, an arena

---

[238] Figueroa 1996: 22.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of international conflict, and an arbitrary line dividing families, communities, and peoples. It dissects a land conquered and reconquered, one conquest by the earliest phase of European colonialism and another by the power that has come to define the modern project of development in the twentieth century. As Anzaldúa has said, the border is an "open wound," telling stories of pain and separation, genocide and destruction. Today's crises of social development in the borderlands occur as a part of a long tradition of transgressions in the region, including the many penetrations of imperial interests that have been the subject of Mexican resistance since the Mexican-American war and Villa's border skirmishes during the Mexican revolution. "In short, at the outer edges of nations, oppressors and transgressors of all shades enjoy shields from punishment that are not available in the heartland."[239] North American integration in general, and the maquiladora sector in particular, are designed to institutionalize the economic transgression of extraction and exploitation along the border, making it possible for US interests to loot the labor value of Mexico, turn Mexican land into a landfill, and transform its cities and people into underdeveloped copies of those in the US. "Ambiguity pervades border life. Socially and economically the border barely exists, but the border is real enough when it comes to labor mobility, customs and immigration checks, and as a dividing line between two markedly different systems of social and political organization."[240] Clearly, the maquiladora sector depends on the border since it is performs many valuable

[239] Martínez, Oscar 1996: xiii.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

functions in the general development scheme of North America: it is a fine line that delineates citizenship and thus the labor pool to which one legally belongs; it is an ever more militarized barrier coercively halting migration and containing inexpensive workers; it is an open door through which transnational corporations and their profits move freely; and it is a perforated line that defines territories whose sovereignty and economic legitimacy are ever more in question.

Yet if borders separate, they also are the spaces of hybridity and transgressions of political identities. If the border has been an experimental zone of US-Latin American relations, and an unstable place where Manifest Destiny and modernization have been written into the land and people, it also has been a site of experimentation for those who negotiate the boundaries between Mexican/American, Anglo/Latino, Spanish/English, indigenous/foreign, and core/periphery. Nowhere has there been such a close geographical and cultural relationship between the under- and over-developed worlds, with such a history of transnational identities, peoples, and policies, as on the US-Mexico border. Thus, nowhere have there been such direct conflicts and deep intermingling associations between colonizer and colonized over so many different histories. Multiple generations of border people have seen war, migrations, economic downturns, population explosions, and revolution, each shifting the meaning and permeability of "la linea." Consequently, nowhere may we find more collaboration and resistance against the current dilemmas posed by neoliberalism in

---

[240] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the American hemisphere, than between those on both sides of what some have called "the great divide."[241] But this context would be impossible to understand without authors such as Anzaldúa,[242] Alarcón,[243] and Sandoval[244] who have argued that the confrontation of difference that the border signifies enables a feminist, self-reflexive criticism which may realign the differences between nations, genders, races, ethnicities, and classes, creating a coalitional space for social justice and empowerment – embodied in *mestiza* consciousness of ambiguity and difference. Thus, since the border always has marked a territory riddled with the political-economic experiments of development, and the cultural traditions of historically binational peoples, it is the ideal location at which to study the potentials and difficulties of transnational social movements, especially those that have challenged the premises and effects of neoliberal regimes.

---

[241] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994.
[242] Anzaldúa 1987 and 1990.
[243] Alarcón 1996: 131; 1997: 292-4.
[244] Sandoval 1991.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 2
Research Questions and Methods

Questions and Methods

Because of the presence of many new labor and environmental justice movements working towards cross-border solidarity on and across the U.S./Mexico border, it is a profoundly unique site in which to examine their possibilities and pitfalls. As stated at the outset of Chapter One, this study hypothesizes that the various social movements of the border, especially the community-based endeavors of labor and environmental organizations, may have much to teach all North Americans about the worst prospects of neoliberal development and the radically democratic methods by which transnational coalitions may be forged to resist them. However, although the border context may be representative of many new processes of development and movement dynamics, its complexities prohibit any simple mechanical analysis or rearticulation of the theoretical issues of Chapter One. Therefore, this hypothesis may be unpacked into several more specific research questions, which will be the basis for subsequent discussions.

First, what analyses and platforms do local justice organizations offer to understand and resist neoliberal projects? Implied in this question is the idea that more theoretical and academic discussions of the significance of neoliberal politics are not necessarily congruent with those subaltern critiques that may be found among

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

local border communities. This question subsumes more specific inquiries into the everyday experiences of neoliberalism through labor conditions and wages, the economic exploitation of gender differences, and the erosion of environmental conditions. Further, how do these experiences begin to cohere in a broader analysis of political and economic transformation of the borderlands, if not North America in general, through free trade policies and maquiladora developments?

Second, what are the basic organizational characteristics and histories that have contributed to the current topography of resistance on the border? This includes practical concerns for organizational structure, such as membership size and levels of participation, funding levels and sources, leadership hierarchy and distribution of power, tactics of mobilizing new members, the origins and responsibilities of staff, and technological capacities. One significant concern here is the differences that exist in the personal histories, political interests, and levels of participation between members and staff.

Third, to what extent do these organizations and their practices of resistance subsume new and old social movement forms? Do they resemble the modern mass class-based movements seeking to reestablish state sovereignty for its people; do they offer more postmodern local or grassroots movements which embrace a diversity of cultural and identity claims of inclusion; or do they suggest that this dichotomy is moot in light of local coalitions or in a setting where modernity and postmodernity are as ambiguous as the border itself?

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fourth, given their resources and general orientation towards dilemmas of development on the border, what are the strategies these organizations embrace as relevant to the task of alternative development and social justice? Of these, which seem to be most central; which are most effective; which make the greatest long-term contribution to their goals; and which seem completely irrelevant given their resources and the border context? Also, what strategies are engaged to mobilize a popular base of border residents?

Fifth, what orientations and tactics of coalition-building are embraced to create transnational and trans-movement networks along the border, and why? More specifically, for new labor organizations, what are the roles unions, support organizations, and local community associations take relative to each other in a broad agenda for social change? Likewise for environmental justice organizations, what roles do popular NGOs, environmental justice organizations, and local communities take relative to one another to secure sustainable forms of development? Further, to what extent is there transnational coalition? The latter entails crucial sub-questions such as, who are the participants in coalitional activities, and are U.S. or Mexican organizations more prominent in determining coalition goals, strategies, and identities? What debates and conflicts, if any, have threatened to disperse coalitions, and how do they relate to broader political differences of class, gender, race, ethnicity, or nationalism? Especially given the theoretical observations about the borderlands as a cultural crossroads, an economic zone of integration, a set of political

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contradictions between First and Third Worlds, and a place of mixed and ambivalent identities, how do movements themselves regard the potentials and problems of coalition? Also, to what degree is there coalition among different organizations from the same country, and what particular cooperation, if any, has there been between labor and environmental justice organizations? Lastly, given these questions, do the various labor and environmental justice organizations on the border comprise a movement? That is, do they act in concert to arrive at common strategies, goals, and worldviews of resistance to neoliberal development and the creation of justice on the border, or are they fragmented into disparate organizations that predominantly work alone or with narrow constituencies?

Sixth, another domain of inquiry might be how do these organizations attempt to mobilize or transform neoliberal political and economic institutions throughout North America, if at all, to assist in achieving their goals of new, socially just models of development? That is, to what degree are government organizations and political institutions regarded as compatible with the long-term objectives of border organizations? If so, what are their methods of collaboration, and if not, what strategies of local organizations used to transform the state? Also, what strategies have been used to challenge corporate capital more directly, and what successes or failures have they had? Lastly, what ideological platforms (socialist, liberal democratic, populist...), if any, seem to be most congruent with local justice organizations in their work for change?

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Seventh, despite what contributions these organizations may make to the study and formation of social movement politics in North America, what hegemonic constraints have they suffered? This includes questions regarding the counter-mobilizations that government and corporate institutions may have organized and the tactics they have used to thwart more democratic and just social change. But it also encompasses inquiry into the internal differences over strategy and identity claims that may haunt border coalitions. If these exist, have they resulted from government or corporate repression, more general and lasting legacies of ideological debate, or some dynamic combination of both? Given these hegemonic constraints, what possibilities remain for border movements, and what might be done to overcome both external and internal limitations?

All of these questions, however, must be applied to a specific set of organizations and members along the border. The unit of analysis of this study is the set of community-based labor and environmental justice movement organizations in the San Diego/Tijuana region of the U.S./Mexico border. Spatial and urban parameters are preferred to natural geographic or industrial ones since the interests and strategies of movement organizations are rooted in the particular character of development present within twin city areas. More importantly, the San Diego/Tijuana region of the border encompasses the most traveled border crossing in the world, the fastest growing region on the border, the fastest growing city in Mexico, and it is home to the largest number of maquiladoras. Further, more than the eastern region of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the border that has a greater proportion of heavy industries and thus larger numbers of male workers, the western border possesses light manufacturing and predominantly women workers. Therefore, the western border and specifically the San Diego/Tijuana region is more representative of the future of neoliberal development on the border, with high tech manufacturing and a clear international, gendered division of labor. It also has been characterized by a unique cross-border political context. California's contradictory relationship with Mexico is evidenced in San Diego, the home of former Mayor and current Republican Governor Pete Wilson which has seen the growth of anti-immigration policies (such as Proposition 187 and English-Only proposals), extensive border militarization, and increasing numbers of white hate groups. Yet, many California-based firms derive much profit from investing in Mexico, while agriculture and sweatshop manufacturing throughout the state thrive on undocumented Mexican labor. Meanwhile, during the last ten year period of heightened neoliberalism, Tijuana has doubled in size, creating a contradictory political arena of dependent development in which everyday hopes in modernization and an openness to the U.S. economy accompany profound immiseration and environmental decay. As its citizens and officials scramble to catch up to the rapid influx of people and investment, they are forced to seek out new and creative means of providing social services and popular representation. Thus, it is in this setting that a small but growing number of labor and environmental justice

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

organizations have initiated unique cross-border campaigns in which an emergent new movement politics is arising to challenge neoliberal development.

Of those environmental and labor movement organizations that work in the San Diego/Tijuana region, several engage in both cross-border coalition building and community-based organizing for social and environmental justice. But because the number of organizations is relatively low, the sample of this study can be exhaustive and thus have greater accuracy in addressing the future of political activism in the borderlands, and potentially in North America more generally. These include San Diego environmental justice organizations: Environmental Committee of the San Diego-Tijuana Region (ECSDTJ), the Border Health Project of the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC), and the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ). Also in San Diego is the prominent labor support organization, the Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers (SCMW). In Tijuana, there exist environmental groups including Foro Ecologista de Baja California (Ecological Forum), El Movimiento Ecologista de Baja California, AC (MEBAC, Ecologist Movement), Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental (Border Project for Environmental Education), and EcoSol – Educación y Cultura Ecológica (Ecological Education and Culture). Also involved in environmental and labor justice struggles are colonia-based associations, including Comité Ciudadano Pro-Restauración del Cañon del Padre y Servícios Comunitários, AC (Pro-restoration Citizens Committee of Canyon del Padre and Community Services), Colonia de las

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Playas de Tijuana, and Sindicato Independiente de Obreras Agrícolas y de la Ciudad (SIOAC, Independent Union of Agricultural and Urban Workers). And lastly, Tijuana is home to labor support organizations, including Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X (CDM-GFX, House of the Woman/Factor X), Centro de Información para Trabajadores y Trabajadoras (CITTAC, Workers' Information Center), Comité de Apoyo Fronterizo Obrera Regional/Comité Urbano Popular Asociación Civil (CAFOR/CUPAC, Border Support Committee for Regional Workers/Urban Popular Committee Civil Association), and one independent union, Unión de Defensa Laboral Comunitária (UDLC, Union for Labor and Community Defense). Most all of these organizations have the ultimate objective of empowering communities in Tijuana, but their methods (addressed directly in subsequent chapters) involve many transnational strategies. For more specific information on the organizations and representatives interviewed, please look to the Table of Interviews and Conferences.

Originally, the method chosen for operationalizing the above research questions was an ethnographic study of one significant social justice organization in San Diego/Tijuana as it worked with other regional groups. However, after pilot interviews indicated that there were significant conflicts and differences between these organizations, it was clear that merely researching one organization would have jeopardized or limited the validity and reliability of the information gathered. Further, because the research questions are targeted at both environmental justice and labor organizations, it would have been difficult to perform ethnographic methods with two

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

or more groups. Therefore, the research questions were reapplied to interviews with movement organizers. Certainly, every movement organization may have very significant differences between its organizers and its members; therefore it was necessary to assess very carefully the organizational forms and leadership styles as they differ from one group to another, and when possible, it was useful to have informal or formal interviews with rank-and-file members as well. Additionally, several interviews were conducted with a selected sample of similar organizations from elsewhere along the border, as well as human rights and fair trade organizations from the San Diego/Tijuana area which have had significant impacts on the form and extent of local resistance to environmental and labor injustices. These include the Border Ecology Project (BEP), the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM), the American Friends Service Committee's Border Project (AFSC), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), El Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos (CETAF, Center for Border Agricultural Workers), La Mujer Obrera (the Woman Worker), and the AFL-CIO Strategic Projects Office. And lastly, interviews were completed with the Tijuana municipal government office on development, Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal (COPLADEM, Committee for Municipal Development Planning), and two significant corporate associations, the U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation (USMBPF), and the Asociación Mexicana de las Maquiladoras.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Due to the scope and length of the research questions, it was necessary to plan extended interviews of two to three hours, when possible. Since those interviewed varied in their organizational context and in their involvement in justice movements on the border, the extended interview format offered the most optimal balance between standardized inquiry and flexible, contextually relevant information gathering. The form of the interview chosen for this study was face-to-face, conducted in English or Spanish depending on what participants preferred. Although face-to-face interviews provided a greater record of both verbal and non-verbal communication, phone interviews were conducted on those occasions when geographic distance made it necessary. Along with news reports of border resistance efforts and academic testimonials of participants in justice organizations, the interviews were subjected to coding and discourse analysis in which the major themes and inquiries of the study were examined.

What is meant by discourse analysis may be described as a method shaped by social scientists with affinities to poststructuralism, in which the basis of interpretation is both the texts of research participants – such as interview responses – as well as the powered ideologies and discourses that serve as the constitutive contexts for such articulations. Thus, contrary to classical forms of positivism or empiricism in which self-reports and perception are theorized to be transparent evidence of social phenomena, this study embraces such traditions as psychoanalysis, ideology critique, hermeneutics, and (post)structural anthropology. This is because

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

they have posited that texts are always mediated by social discourses of power, and thus pretensions to transparent or im-mediate interpretations appear as disguised efforts to impose totalizing (social scientific) constructions of the world onto various Others, who hence become the objects of investigation. Likewise, totalizing academic impositions can result from deductive methods in which abstracted theoretical discussions become the sole or primary basis for interpretation of field research, yielding an academic rhetoric that is unaccountable to popular culture and public politics. Indeed, this research does not seek to replicate neoliberalism by descending on the borderlands with designs unaccountable to local residents, by extracting local value in the form of information, and by not returning that value to those interviewed. As will be discussed more extensively in Chapter Four, throughout the early interviews it became clear that others who have researched borderland phenomena such as environmental toxicity, maquiladora developments, and local organizational responses to social problems often fashioned their projects without local input, and once interviews or surveys were complete, few have returned to the borderlands with their results. Many interviewed saw this as exploitative, self-serving, and anti-democratic. Clearly, as the rapidly changing social context of the borderlands has provided so many interesting areas to be studied, it also has been a site of academic colonialism and an extractive form of information development that is decidedly export-oriented.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Consequently, although this project was shaped in part through dialogue with bodies of academic literature that have had indirect engagements with the borderlands, it also was molded through local bodies of research, through pilot interviews, and through open-ended research models involving local movement participants. These interviews and discussions, therefore, have focused on making academic research accountable to local needs and concerns, while simultaneously embracing the bodies of academic knowledge that may assist in documenting and making critiques of border movement politics. By placing into dialogue the interviews of local movement representatives, borderland testimonial and journalistic narratives, and academic studies of development and movement politics, this project will arrive at a more informed, critical, and historicized study of regional resistance efforts. Hence, this epistemological orientation, in addition to the complex intertwining character of the research questions above, results in the following chapters having a narrative form that is distinct from the traditional data-analysis-conclusion model. Although interview data and case studies receive primary attention, they are interlaced with analytical journalistic and academic discourses that contribute some interpretive context.

The ultimate contributions of this research, therefore, will be a set of sociological analyses and critiques that may provide a contemporary history of the transformative possibilities of borderland movements in the North American political economy, while enabling border organizations themselves to reflect upon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

shortcomings and alternatives to their current strategies. This has taken inspiration from several methodological domains: the ethnographic methods of Participatory Action Research (PAR itself is inspired by the work of Freire) in which participant observers work in open consultation with those studied to design practically useful and politically empowering projects;[245] the epistemological ethics of Rabinow in which colonial ethnography in the social sciences is deconstructed and new more dialogic models of research are possible to envision;[246] and the model of higher education put forward by Aronowitz and Giroux in which the academy takes seriously its role of facilitating radically democratic citizenship.[247] Not only can this politicized engagement of academic research make its results more accessible to a broader public and a direct participant in the social transformations of our time, but it enhances the breadth and depth of knowledge by being more radically inclusive of marginalized discourses. But one eternal qualification is necessary: although caution is taken to embrace more radically democratic social science methods, the task of negotiating a research agenda that is essentially pure or universally oppositional to the interests of power is neither possible nor desirable. Thus, this project is always open, never complete, and perpetually inserted in an ever-changing dialogue about development and democracy.

Chapter Outline

---

[245] Fals-Borda 1985; Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991.
[246] Rabinow 1986: 256-61.
[247] 1985.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Three, "Subaltern Critiques of Neoliberalism in the Borderlands," is an extended analysis of the ways in which local border residents, and primarily social movement organizers, discuss the everyday lived effects of neoliberalism in the border region. Through direct commentary by organizers, case studies that exemplify local dilemmas, and the literature about the borderlands, this chapter provides an orientation to general dimensions of development in the region. This entails specific analyses of the problems of labor, gender relations, and environmental hazards that local border residents face. Further, this chapter concludes with a discussion of the anti-imperial discourses used by local organizers to resist neoliberal development and corporate hegemony. Chapter Three, therefore, begins to reveal the subaltern critiques and counter-narratives that are embodied in the strategies of local movement organizations.

Chapter Four, "Strategies of Resistance," is consequently a more lengthy discussion of the ways in which these subaltern possibilities of resistance take shape in the oppositional movement strategies of local labor and environmental organizations. In my view, the most evolved and critical strategic contributions of these movements have been educational campaigns and coalitional endeavors, each of which are grounded in clear philosophies of political praxis and the current historical necessity for cross-border organizing. Therefore, these two strategies serve as the opening focal points of discussion. However, borderland movement organizations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

also engage in more direct action agendas against state and corporate actors who are complicit with neoliberal development. Thus, subsequent sections include a discussion of the practice and possibilities of challenging state institutions while pressuring for new transnational governance structures. And, whether it is through reform or more thorough visions of restructuring, local movements have organized to facilitate corporate accountability, especially through union-community solidarity campaigns. Thus, the broad dimensions of oppositional strategies are discussed.

Chapter Five, "Hegemonies in Movement," makes it clear, however, that despite the crucial leverage that these movement organizations provide in prying open the closed power structures of neoliberalism, there are still many difficulties that limit the scope and effectiveness of these strategies. Beginning with those counter-mobilizations by corporate and state actors, it becomes obvious that resistance, although ever-present, is often foreclosed through limited public education, coercion, and incorporation on both sides of the border. These external limitations frequently have insidious hegemonic effects on the abilities of local movements to surpass isolationism and cynicism to forge democratic, mutually trusting, and critical coalitions with one another, further dampening their political scope and power. Ultimately, however, possibly the greatest obstacles to transformation in the borderlands are the twin dilemmas of too few resources and too much desperation. Whether these are discussed as hindrances or as areas of potential expansion and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

critique, it is certain that the realization of local movement ideals will occur only with redoubled efforts to consider these absences.

Lastly, in the Conclusion, the discussion will return full circle to the above questions that began this research and how, if at all, they may be answered. Here, there is an assessment of the overall historical and sociological context in which community-based border movements act, and the ways in which their subaltern analyses and strategic interventions offer new alternatives to a neoliberal world order. Indeed, there is a discussion of the ways in which local borderland movements offer new critiques that expand the oppositional discourse against neoliberalism and its many contradictions. But further, there is mention of the many ways these organizations broaden the definitions of social movements by suggesting new empowering new models of coalition building and radical democratic process – ideals that are not only difficult to attain, but extremely vital in an era of proliferating and violent imperialisms.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 3
Subaltern Critiques of Neoliberalism in the Borderlands

> The present dismantling of authoritarian regimes in Latin America, the end of communism and the consequent displacement of revolutionary projects, the processes of redemocratization, and the new dynamics created by the effects of the mass media and transnational economic arrangements: these are all developments that call for new ways of thinking and acting politically.
>
> – Latin American Subaltern Studies Group[248]

> Workers north and south of the border have become victims of this new global economic order as transnational corporations move to locations of lower labor cost, lack of environmental restrictions, and suppression of the right to organize.... Our future standard of living and the health and safety of our communities depends on our own transnational grassroots efforts to make our common voice for betterment heard.
>
> – Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers[249]

If you were to cross the border from San Diego to Tijuana and go east, making your way past the numerous street vendors selling anything from Black Madonna statuettes to stuffed cartoon characters, past the U.S. tourists consuming "authentic" margaritas on Avenida Revolución, and past the government plaza of La Zona del Rio, you inevitably would encounter one of the largest and fastest growing export processing zones in Mexico, El Parque Industrial del Florido. Situated on the Otay Mesa and extending to far eastern Tijuana, El Florido is home to a growing number of large high-tech corporate investors from around the world, including the Korean firms

---

[248] 1993: 110.
[249] 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hyundai and Samsung. These firms are part of the reason why Tijuana now possesses the largest number of maquilas along the border. Although approximately ninety percent of maquiladora investments are based in the United States,[250] a rapidly increasing number of manufacturing centers have been developed by Korean and Japanese companies, each employing hundreds of workers who are part of a global chain of principally electronics and auto parts production. It is in this eastern zone of the city that many Mexican hopes for continued expansion and development are vested.

But in stark contrast to these world-class production facilities and the newly developed highway corridor that services them, there exists a *colonia* (an unchartered subdivision) known as Maclovio Rojas, a community lying between the Samsung and Hyundai maquilas. Maclovio Rojas encompasses about thirteen hundred families each averaging about six persons and living on dirt floors, in one room sheet metal or particle board homes, without sewage, running water, or electricity. Most of the colonia is composed of recent migrants from the increasingly depressed agricultural regions of southern Mexico, especially Oaxaca, who have come to the border, like so many others in the last ten years, looking for work. About half of the women and a quarter of the men of Maclovio Rojas depend on the nearby Hyundai facility for work where they earn less than five dollars per day. And in their standard forty-eight hour work weeks, these workers have experienced intermittent problems related to

[250] United States-Mexico Border Progress Foundation 1996; Support Committee for Maquiladora

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

overwork, exhaustion, injury, and sexual harassment, leaving many unable to work after merely ten years of wage labor. But despite the long hours and few resources, this colonia has fostered a vibrant community culture, including a community center and a school built and run completely by members of Maclovio Rojas.

Under Mexican law, communities that occupy unused land for five years have the legal right to claim it as their own and to demand basic sewage, electricity, and water services from the Mexican government. Although the community has been in its current location for about ten years and has registered its land entitlement with the government, not to mention the five years of fees paid to local officials for services, none have come. Instead, the wide highway corridor and the large PEMEX (Mexican Petroleum) station near by signal that government attention is focused on assisting other, more profitable infrastructure needs. Originally, the Maclovio Rojas land was eighteen hundred hectares, which colonia residents used for housing and sustainable agriculture, but for the ten years they have lived there, they have been asked to concede much of this land, directly or indirectly, to government expropriation. With threats of eviction and government promises to grant services, the colonia has relinquished all but 198 hectares of their land, only to see it given over to large farmers and foreign investors for maquiladora development. Hence, with great pressure many have traded in their land and subsistence economy for export processing jobs, and so far it has not proved to be an equitable exchange.

Workers 1996: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The tensions between the Mexican government and Maclovio Rojas reached a breaking point in the summer of 1996 when Hyundai reached an agreement with the conservative PANista (National Action Party) government of Baja California and the PRIista federal government to grant the company 2500 hectares for expansion, including the remainder of the colonia's land. Risking repression and eviction, the colonia banded together, expanded its community center, and formed the Sindicato Independiente de Obreros Agricolos y de la Ciudad (SIOAC). With some assistance from the Tijuana-based Comité de Apoyo Fronterizo Obrero Regional (CAFOR), the San Diego Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers (SCMW); and the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM) based in San Antonio, they were resolute in standing their ground and fighting for their land. They publicly denounced the agreement and refused to move, and they sought legal representation and began publicity efforts to bring more direct pressure on company and government officials. As Artémio Osuna said, "We will not go one centimenter out of Maclovio Rojas.... We are linking with other organizations elsewhere to make our government make a just decision, for fear of repudiation by foreigners and national business."[251] In reply, Hyundai and the state government initiated a counter-mobilization. The local maquila workers faced increased sexual harassment and intimidation on the job, many were fired, and two community members, Artémio Osuna and Horténsia Hernández, were imprisoned illegally. A transnational letter campaign was successful in achieving

[251] Osuna 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

their release after two months, but continuing harassment, intimidation, and abuses have increased the resolve of SIOAC and the entire Maclovio Rojas community to strengthen their efforts.

Indeed, if anything is clear from this struggle it is that a unified opposition to the legal rights of the colonia by government and foreign investors has served only to galvanize the community and expand its critique of political and economic power in Mexico. Highlighting the lack of accountability and corrupt interests of Mexican officials in Tijuana, Hernández claimed, "Our resources are in the hands of foreigners,"[252] which prompted Osuna to state, "We would like to denounce the corruption in the state and federal governments which want to take over 2500 hectares that belong to the nation, distributing them to officials and private interests. This is the business that is being done in Baja [California]. It is a mafia that is shamelessly taking these lands."[253] Assisting SIOAC has been the organization of CAFOR, founded in October 1994 as a civil association that, according to Eduardo Badillo, emerged "out of a need to protect workers in the maquilas" and "a struggle of urban popular movements" in Mexico.[254] Providing an interesting historical contextualization, CAFOR's Aurora Pelayo claimed that a government that will oppress its own people by denying them land and legal rights in the service of foreign interests is, in effect, a rebirth of Mexico's nineteenth-century dictatorship in Baja

[252] A. Hernández 1996.
[253] Osuna 1996.
[254] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

California, the *Porfiriato* – "Porfirio Díaz has come alive again here in Baja California."[255] Indeed, the large colonial haciendas of the *Porfiriato* have been replaced by maquiladoras, surrounded by dependent and destitute communities of laborers. But most poignantly, Hernández summarized at length the predicament and sentiments of many in Maclovio Rojas:

> Everybody else is the owner of these lands except we who have them. On good faith we asked for this land, we paid for this land, and the ... people were threatened. We asked for state help, and the answer was repression and harassment. The government assaulted us, and so that we would finally be silent, the government wanted to show that once we had our leaders in prison they could break up the community. But, the interests in the Mexican government, together with the transnationals, were surprised. We showed that we would not go back at all and that we would continue forward with our objectives. We showed that we were not just looking for a piece of land to live on, but we were looking out for our economic interests. And we will never be able to live with the wages that we have in the plants. We don't have enough to eat on, much less clothe ourselves. The mother and father must work and leave kids alone. Sometimes kids must be taken care of, and if not, the kids are undernourished, and under fed, and they fall into drug addiction. This happens, and we don't want it. We are fighting for our lives, our families, our family land, and we are fighting for that to which we have rights.[256]

Indeed, despite having no services and few natural resources, the Maclovio Rojas community, through SIOAC, displays a strong moral economy in the struggle to protect not merely their communal land, but their legal rights, dignified and well-paid jobs, family health and security, as well as their collective identity as Mexicans in the face of foreign encroachments. In February 1997, the Mexican police entered the

[255] Pelayo 1996.
[256] H. Hernández 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Maclovio Rojas community to evict the residents, but were only successful in evicting six families before being confronted with three hundred to four hundred residents who also blocked the highway. The state government claimed it had made a mistake and the crowd assisted the six families return their possessions to their homes.[257] As of the time of this writing, strong local solidarity and public support all along both sides of the border have prevented an eviction of Maclovio Rojas, and SIOAC is still in pursuit of land rights and government services.

These events and the resistance of Maclovio Rojas to foreign expropriation is merely one case of opposition to North American integration and export oriented industrialization on the U.S./Mexico border, but it is representative of the resistance found throughout the border region. It indicates there are simultaneously local and global movement forms that are rising from the ashes to challenge neoliberalism, however nascent and embattled they may be. But this is based on an emergent subaltern analysis of neoliberal political economy in the region that deserves immediate attention, one that regards North American integration as a new articulation of U.S. imperialism. Indeed, the story of Maclovio Rojas is a lived case of various themes that local movement organizations frequently discuss: clientelistic relations between Mexican officials and export manufacturers, poor community health, exploitative and abusive labor relations, corrupt deregulation or neglect of national law, repressive apparatuses, the rapid growth of maquiladora facilities, and

---

[257] La Botz 1998e.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

extensive if uneven urbanization due to the influx of displaced agricultural workers seeking wage labor. Many other cases discussed below highlight one or more of these issues and interview responses suggest that this is only a glimpse of the many power dynamics of neoliberalism that are shaping everyday life on the border. Therefore, before we reach a thorough comprehension of the many structures, goals, strategies, and obstacles faced by local movement organizations, it is necessary to explore the basic analytic discourses that community-based labor and environmental organizations use to orient to the social problems of neoliberalism on the border.

The field of Mexican studies is replete with interests in the historically unique and hegemonic apparatuses of the Mexican state, the contradictory legacies of revolution and one party rule, as well as the many ways Mexico has encountered modernity. But arguably, with the obvious exception of the many writings regarding the EZLN, until recently there has been a relative dearth of studies of the contemporary subaltern classes of Mexico and the situated knowledges that have resisted the tangled relations between authoritarian rule at home and imperialism abroad. Indeed, to study elite politics of the state and mere functional analyses of modernity yields incomplete – and possibly imperialist – histories which elide the constructive role of continuing conflicts and the agency of subaltern classes.[258] Indeed, although as Spivak would argue, subaltern classes, especially Third World women, have a collectivity that is "foreclosed" and an agency that is

[258] Spivak 1988a: 3-5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"manipulated,"[259] and thus resistance is never autonomous from the powered structures of capital, the state, or patriarchy, this project recognizes the relative abilities of the subaltern to overcome, however limitedly and contingently, the contradictions of neo-imperial development. This is all the more relevant when one considers Mexico's uneven relationships with the project of modernity and thus the inevitable subaltern oppositions to state governance that have helped constitute its current social landscape. Further, as we seek to understand the ways in which the nation-state is becoming increasingly marginalized in a period of transnationalization, it is necessary to study the margins of the state and thus the many subaltern knowledges that offer alternatives. However, throughout any such discussion it is imperative to avoid a rearticulation of colonialism by attempting to discover a single local or marginal consciousness, an essential and thus contradictory proletarian refusal, or engage in a mere pluralist celebration of difference.[260] Instead, the critiques movement organizations have made offer an "affirmative deconstruction"[261] of the many lived realities of neoliberalism on the border, or in other words, one beginning for revolutionary interventions in the neo-imperial power relations in North America.

Each environmental and labor movement organization in the San Diego/Tijuana area, and many interviewed from other regions of the border, has

---

[259] Spivak 1988b: 283.
[260] Richard 1993: 12; Spivak 1998b: 284-5.
[261] Spivak 1988a: 16.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

articulated various narratives about development in the region which they have derived from original research, personal experience, anecdotal testimonies, academic studies, and some official data. Indeed, due to limited regulatory and monitoring agencies on either side of the border, it has been incumbent upon local organizations to construct their own research agendas, listen to the local expertise of community residents, and enlist outside writers and researchers when needed. Hence, much of the information available on the border and its regional social and environmental problems has been provided by local movement organizations. Despite multiple sources and some divergent interpretations, most movement organizations in this study have arrived at a more or less common story about the origins of environmental and labor problems on the U.S./Mexico border, and their continuing impacts on the everyday experiences of workers and residents. Indeed, this convergence is no accident since inter-organizational coalition-building has facilitated many information-sharing fora in which common analytical frameworks and critical commentaries have been explored and elaborated. At the most general level, these narratives of development in the borderlands share many common traits, including a discussion of export-oriented industrial growth on the border, the changes and problems associated with new maquiladora labor processes, the restructuring of gender relations, the manifestation of environmental health crises in impoverished communities, and the transnational structures of power that have fostered and maintained these crises despite popular opposition. Indeed, this litany of issues

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

represents the basic outline of this common analytical narrative and the structure of the discussion to follow. These will include references primarily to those movement organizations active in articulating this analysis, but also some academics, government officials, and corporate representatives who have had distinct roles in shaping development in the region.

On the Border of Under/Development

In 1965, the Mexican government loosened its historically protectionist laws regarding foreign investment along its northern border, creating a free trade zone – *una zona libre* – that would become the basis for intensive industrialization, foreign investment, and eventually NAFTA. This was executed as part of a broad financial strategy with several goals: to encourage export-oriented production (EOI), to make Mexico competitive with East Asia, to offer some employment opportunities for recently unemployed guest laborers in U.S. agriculture, and to boost the border tourist economy.[262] Fernández-Kelly has suggested it was a "national windowcase" for development as Mexico increasingly faced north to attract potential U.S. investors.[263] Martín de la Rosa, the General Director of Tijuana's Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal (COPLADEM) recalls the 1980s, with its declining oil prices and the national financial crisis of 1982 in which President Portillo suspended foreign debts, was a time in which the export-oriented development agenda was consolidated

[262] Sklair 1989: 5, 10; Stoddard 1987: 16-17.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and the maquiladora program became more than a mere enclave economy, and instead, the focal point of Mexican industrialization.[264] As the maquiladora program expanded the long-range goals of this development became focused on greater domestic growth and integration into the world economy, through greater decentralization of the maquila industrialization away from the border, more diversification of production so as to produce more high tech and capital goods, larger numbers of industries to consume Mexican raw materials and assembled goods, and interestingly, the increased employment of skilled wage labor, generally men.[265] As in any society facing rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth, the changes along the northern border were profound, including massive shifts to the social structures of wage labor, consumerism, large cities, and the intensive work environment of the export processing zones.[266]

During this period manufacturing industries ranging from textiles and electronics, to auto parts and plastics, have found the Mexican government to be an hospitable neighbor in their search for profitability in a more competitive global economy, inserting Mexico into emergent global assembly lines, and arguably, a new international division of labor. Because of rapid growth and some lax formal registration, estimates vary regarding the total number of maquilas along the border. However, most concur with Alfonso Hernández, former Partido de la Revolución

---

[263] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 23-4.
[264] Interview, February 1997; also see Kamel 1988: 18; Sklair 1989: 10.
[265] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 38-42.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Democrática (PRD) opposition candidate for the municipal presidency of Tijuana, who estimates that there are around 2200 maquilas along the border and somewhere between 575 and 700 in Tijuana alone, making it home to the most maquilas of any border city and second only to Ciudad Júarez in the number of maquiladora workers, approximately 100,000.[267] Although these are a minority of the two million or more citizens in Tijuana, it is the fastest growing sector of employment and the prominence of the maquiladoras in national development strategies portend increasing significance in the future. Maquiladora trade already represents about one-third of all Mexican trade with the U.S.,[268] ten percent of Mexico's entire manufacturing workforce, and approximately thirty percent of manufacturing wages.[269] According to Marco A. Valenzuela, president of the Concilio Nacional de la Industria Maquiladora Exportación (CNIME), the maquiladora sector makes up forty percent of Mexico's total exports and accounts for $42 billion of the $110 billion in foreign sales.[270] The maquilas vary in size from small factories with only a few workers to large transnational corporate facilities that are state-of-the-art and have workforces of several thousand. Alejandro Bustamante, former President of La Asociación de las Maquiladoras Mexicanas (AMM) and current Director of PLAMEX telecommunications, claims that the maquilas are expanding their operations and

---

[266] Sklair 1989: 11.
[267] A. Hernández 1996.
[268] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 84.
[269] Velasquez 1995: 1.
[270] La Botz 1998a.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

growing in number since Mexico receives approximately two hundred new maquiladora applications each year, and has only a three percent rate of failure. In the last ten years, the number of maquiladoras along the border has tripled and a new one opens approximately every business day.[271] Further, Hernández claims that electronics manufacturers employ approximately forty-five percent of the maquiladora workforce,[272] enabling Tijuana to produce over ten million televisions each year.[273] replacing Hong Kong as the new global capital for the production of home electronics.

According to Mary Tong of the Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers (SCMW), based in San Diego, the 1980s and 1990s have witnessed an inundation of the border with literally thousands of corporations, primarily from the U.S., seeking lower wages, non-unionized shops, lax health/safety and environmental regulations/enforcement in Mexico, and infrastructure and tax subsidies, all the while remaining very near to U.S. markets.[274] Although there is significant debate about which cost factors cause the border to be an attractive location for investment, most agree that all of these play a part. Environmental legislation is limited compared to the U.S. while labor law, according to de la Rosa, is better than that of its northern neighbors (with clear labor rights to health and housing), but inadequate inspection, enforcement, and federal confiscation of local tax income prevent significant

---

[271] American Labor Education Center 1995.
[272] A. Hernández 1996.
[273] Public Citizen 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

regulation or social welfare.[275] Further, Bustamante argues tax concessions are minimal but he confirms that state taxes on maquilas are not required for the first two years of operation and that investors only pay federal taxes if they make a thirty-three percent profit.[276] But this is rarely paid because, in the typical accounting of maquila operations, they do not make profit since they trade within corporate affiliate networks and they therefore can afford to provide maquilas with only enough capital to cover overhead.[277] Further, maquiladoras pay export duties only on the value added in manufacture.[278] A 1990 study of eighty maquilas showed that they paid only $279,000 in payroll taxes that year, altogether.[279] Thus, tax incentives are very important, but Bustamante argues that lower utilities and real estate are the greatest reason for maquiladora growth on the border, since cost savings on construction can range from 50-66 percent over building in the U.S.[280] Yet many, such as José Bravo of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ)[281] and Mary Tong,[282] disagree and suggest that labor costs, possibly the single greatest expenditure of many labor intensive industries that relocate to the border, represent the central location for cost reduction through border investment. Bravo puts it as follows, "we know why they're going to Mexico. They might say it is because they

---

[274] Interview, July 1996.
[275] Interview, February 1997.
[276] Interview, July 1996.
[277] See also Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 118.
[278] Also Kamel 1988: 17.
[279] Interview, July 1996; see also Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 119.
[280] Also Moody and McGinn 1992: 9.
[281] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

want to go and give jobs but we know better than that. We know it's because of salaries."[283] Indeed, even Bustamante confirms that labor costs represent approximately three out of the average four to five dollars per worker per hour operating costs of the maquilas.[284]

Clearly there are many reasons for U.S. capital flight to Mexico and other nations in Latin America, but the combination of low wages, lax environmental regulations/enforcement, and tax/infrastructure subsidies make the border a particularly profitable destination. Additionally, despite NAFTA enabling greater investment elsewhere in Mexico, and the many labor-intensive industries which have sought lower operating costs in the Mexican interior and in Central America, the border remains especially attractive due to its proximity to the U.S., and investment continues apace.[285] Among the most notable of the new investors along the border have been a growing number of Korean and Japanese firms which have located entire manufacturing operations to Tijuana for the production of high tech goods, primarily electronics. Of these, Bustamante reports that about eighty percent reside in Tijuana.[286] Given the rise in production costs in much of the Pacific Rim, investment in the western border is not surprising. For example, in Tijuana a subsidiary of the Korean firm Samsung found that its operating costs would be only $4.25(US)/hour

---

[282] Interview, July 1996.
[283] Interview, July 1996.
[284] Interview, July 1996.
[285] Also Kamel 1988: 18.
[286] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

versus $15.00(US)/hour at home. Due to this possibility for return, Tong states that Asian firms are sweeping into the area. Indeed, Samsung now employs a full eleven percent of the entire industrial workforce in Baja California, and therefore, despite being outnumbered by U.S. maquiladoras, it has become the largest employer in Tijuana.

Bravo (SNEEJ) as well as Tong (SCMW) have argued that this influx of maquilas has created huge surges in population growth, since the offer of employment corresponds to the depressed economic conditions in the agricultural regions of southern Mexico, where cheap food imports from the U.S. and the sale of lands to the large agribusiness has displaced literally millions of peasants.[287] Further, due to greater enforcement measures by the Border Patrol, such as Operation Gatekeeper in 1995 which has increased the San Diego staff by fifty percent, immigration to the United States has been more difficult in recent years.[288] Beyond this, Tijuana has a two percent unemployment rate and the largest number of maquilas on the border.[289] It therefore has become an obvious destination for migrants from the south and hence the fastest growing city in Mexico, as well as the primary reason the San Diego/Tijuana area now is home to about fifty percent of the border population, or approximately four million people split almost evenly by the border.[290] Indeed, Tijuana has doubled in size in the last ten years with an average growth rate of well

[287] Interviews, July 1996.
[288] Interview of Border Patrol Agent Ramírez, March 1997.
[289] Interview of COPLADEM Director Martín de la Rosa, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

over five percent per year.[291] And Bustamante estimates that up to eighty percent of the Tijuana workforce are recent immigrants from the Mexican interior, with the largest proportion being from the area between Sinaloa and Sonora.[292]

Tijuana is a preferred location for investors as well since it is a strategic location near western ports in the United States and close to the enormous California economy with its many consumers and suppliers. Clearly, due to the deindustrialization, downsizing, and demilitarization of the California economy, many industries have found it convenient to cross the border to retain fiscal solvency. Los Angeles also has the largest port on the west coast and is home to many industrial and high tech vendors which can supply the maquilas with raw materials. Additionally, many U.S. citizens – over 5,000 in Tijuana alone – work in the maquilas, primarily in middle management and executive positions, and there are few labor markets like California which has such a large supply of educated professionals. Further, Tijuana not only has a large industrial infrastructure of highway corridors and industrial parks, but it also has five universities and many throughout its workforce who are bilingual, making it an even more attractive site for finding trained and able labor. Lastly, many interviewed, including AFL-CIO Special Projects coordinator, Ed Feigen,[293] Armando Ramírez of a Detroit UAW local,[294] and Mary Tong,[295] all argue

---

[290] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 1.
[291] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 20.
[292] Interview, July 1996.
[293] Interview, March 1997.
[294] Personal conversation, October 1996.
[295] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that Tijuana, unlike cities on the eastern border, has relatively no unions to raise the level of wages and working conditions, creating a profitable environment for maquila operations. Thus, Eduardo Badillo of CAFOR reports that the city now has forty-two export processing zones with three major industrial parks.[296] Further, Tijuana has received the most recent industrial development, contributing to the border's very slow transition to high tech manufacturing and more value-added production. Some area factories tout flexible team-oriented hierarchies, just-in-time production, and other post-industrial facets of global corporate culture.[297] Indeed, although maquiladora specialization varies depending on local supplier networks, transportation considerations, and workforce characteristics, generally there is a trend for the eastern states of Tamaulipas and Chihuahua to be places of heavy industrial investment (including auto parts assembly, plastics) while the interior of Mexico has become home to maquilas that have lower wages, labor intensive and low value added processes, and easily transportable products such as food, garments, jewelry, and crafts.

Laboring under Neoliberalism

> We bring tapes in from Japan and assemble cassettes. They say we work together, but this is a lie. Everything is done on machines and assembly line. The speed is tremendous. The twenty thousand pieces of machines work us, we don't work them.

---

[296] Badillo 1996.
[297] Interview with Mexhon General Manager, Angelica Muller, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

-Claudia Vargas, maquiladora worker[298]

Because of this growth in large manufacturing facilities, Martín de la Rosa estimates unemployment rates hover around a very low two percent.[299] Although census data is highly inaccurate in Tijuana due to rapid growth and many unincorporated colonias, many agree that unemployment is indeed extremely low, especially for a country in a widely-acknowledged economic crisis. Part of this employment growth includes the development of managerial positions in the maquilas which, in addition to some small businesses and a large tourist industry, has caused the border to be home to one of the largest middle classes in all of Mexico. However, the development in the region has not been even and thus the wealth derived from Tijuana's growth has not been distributed equally. Indeed, upon approaching any of the large industrial parks in the city one may pass several colonias lined with shanty homes, dirt roads, exposed sewage, and no services, only to enter within a space of mere feet high-tech security gates on wide freshly-paved roads. There one may find multi-million dollar facilities complete with air-conditioning, industrial architecture rivaling any in the world, as well as transport and information systems that enable these maquilas to take part in global assembly lines. Beyond this obvious uneven development, only a cursory glance at the typical wages, work conditions, and hardships that maquiladora workers face every day reveal extensive poverty and broken lives.

[298] 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The most important contributor to the quality of life of maquila workers is the daily wage. The average maquiladora worker earns $5.00 (US) for one day's work.[300] Because this is approximately the average wage for all of Mexico, this may seem fair. But given that this distribution is skewed by nearly forty million people in Mexico living in poverty[301] (while Mexico ranks fifth among all nations in the number of billionaires);[302] given that the inflation rates along the border make northern Mexico's prices more commensurate with the U.S.; and given that successive devaluations throughout the last twenty years have caused real wages to plummet, with over fifty percent of purchasing power lost to the December 1994 devaluation alone, many workers live in utter misery with minimal nutrition, clothing, or shelter. Some maquilas are especially low-paying, including that of Alcoa which pays $4.66/day and Boston-based Kendall Health Care in Tijuana which pays less than $4.00/day, both of which could pay less if necessary since the legal minimum wage is about $3.00/day. Further, to avoid paying profit-sharing or holiday bonuses, some maquilas reportedly fire senior workers before Christmas, contributing to the high turnover rates. As Angelica Muller, Plant Manager the MEXHON (Honeywell) maquila in Tijuana, argues, "it's actually good to have some turnover, because it gives you some flexibility."[303] In 1994, before the devaluation, Ruth Rosenbaum conducted a

---

[299] Interview, February 1997.
[300] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 1.
[301] Public Citizen 1996.
[302] Public Citizen 1996.
[303] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Market Basket Survey" for the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM) and found that Mexican wages differed from those in the U.S. by an average of almost seventeen dollars per day for the same work. She further found that, with this wage, a maquila worker would need to work 45 minutes to purchase a loaf of bread, 69 minutes for a pound of rice, 69.8 minutes for one dozen eggs, 113.2 minutes for cooking oil, 87 minutes for one pound of chicken, 142.9 minutes for a gallon of milk, 315.8 minutes for a pound of butter, and 545 minutes for one bottle of Tylenol. For the average U.S. worker who is a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW), the minutes required to purchase each is under fifteen.[304] A 1995 market basket survey in the Mexican border town of Piedras Negras revealed that a wage of $6.65/hour was necessary to purchase thirty essential items.[305]

In Tijuana, where the cost of living is as high as any city in Mexico, it is no accident that Martín de la Rosa cites a sixty percent poverty rate, which is conservative given an extremely low poverty line of twenty-one dollars per day for a family of five. As Badillo of CAFOR stated, "People simply cannot afford to live on the current wages."[306] Or in the words of Silvano Zuñigo, a worker at CustomTrim in Matamoros in the eastern state of Tamaulipas, "We can't survive on current wages. If we buy one thing, we have to give up something else. On 285 pesos a week [less than

---

[304] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994.
[305] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 1.
[306] In Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

$40], we can't even eat badly."[307] Further, César Luna of the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) claimed, "you see people working in these maquilas making $400 TV's, and they'll never be able to afford a $400 TV."[308] Indeed, if the Fordist production processes are now being exported to Third World nations in the form of export-oriented industrialization, the most noble of Fordist ideals – that workers would be able to purchase what they make – seem to have been sacrificed to a more post-Fordist and predatory industrialism. In this setting, it is difficult for families to achieve a basic standard of living, which often forces every able-bodied member, including those who are under the legal age, to work and contribute to the family income, frequently lying to employers and forgoing mandatory schooling for wage labor. Although it is difficult to measure because of limited reporting and monitoring, the Mexican Center for Children's Rights estimates there are approximately twelve million children working in Mexico, many quitting the legally required primary school for work.[309] And those kids who do not work often have little supervision at home due to both parents working. In the analysis of one worker, José, "When they pay so little, parents go to work, kids are alone and they go to the street. People lead them into different vices and many social problems result. Crime is the problem that

[307] Zuñigo 1996.
[308] Interview, July 1996.
[309] In Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993a: 34.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

results, due to the fact that parents earn miserable wages. The solution is to find an increase in these wages."[310]

In the eight months subsequent to the 1994 devaluation, while purchasing power was in decline, the possibilities for greater corporate profits through maquila investments was evident in over 250 applications to the Mexican government for new maquiladora operations. More directly, a general manager of a Tijuana maquiladora in the San Diego Union Tribune claimed, "This devaluation has definitely given us an edge. Even with a [wage] increase we gave on January 1, we are still saving 60 cents per worker per hour."[311] In 1995, at the same time as workers in maquiladoras received between $30-50/week or $1500-2500/year, CEO compensation for General Motors was $5.6 million, Johnson and Johnson's was $2.7 million, R.R. Donnelley's was $5.2 million, and Chrysler's was $4.5 million. Ford CEO Alexander Trotman's salary was 2,003 times the annual pay of an average Ford employee in Mexico, while Allied Signal's CEO, Lawrence Bossidy, received $8.4 million for 1995, more than the company's total annual Mexican payroll of $7.8 million for approximately 3,800 workers. Indeed in 1995, while Mexican workers saw their real wages drop by over fifty percent, Pearl Meyer and Partners reported that CEO compensation packages at large maquiladora corporations increased by twenty-three percent, to an average of $4.37 million, or $2,100/hour.[312] Mary Tong (SCMW) argues that in 1995 border

---

[310] José 1996.
[311] In Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 1.
[312] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

maquilas swept up over $750 million in profit,[313] which is well over three times the total amount all border maquila workers took home during the same period. Indeed, this is no accident since the maquiladora associations along the border, according to Tom Barry, Beth Sims, and Harry Browne, of the Inter-hemispheric Resource Center (IHRC), actively share information regarding wage structures so as to maintain low wages and prevent bidding wars in a region with high employment, all the while negotiating with the government to maintain low legal minimum wages.[314] Thus, social movement organizations of the border articulate a common position on wages – that maquiladora compensation cannot sustain workers' basic life needs, much less enable the savings needed for long-range plans of education, entrepreneurial investments, or the cultural and civic needs of the community. And given the enormous discrepancy in wealth derived from maquiladora operations, which therefore foment transnational dependencies, polarized class structures, and Mexican poverty, many have questioned the imperialistic character of the many transnational corporations along the border and the creation of a new colonial zone.

But if wages appear to have no equity, work conditions in the maquilas also do not seem to match the levels of investment. Standard non-overtime work weeks are forty-eight hours – eight hours per day, six days per week, with longer overtime work days being a frequent occurrence. And with often long commutes on woefully inadequate public transportation, leisure time for resting, recuperating, or spending

[313] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

with family and friends is very limited. Beyond the sheer length of time spent working, maquila employees also work at high levels of intensity. With typically non-unionized employees and little enforcement or regulation of labor conditions, employers may push workers extremely hard on Taylorized assembly lines designed to be globally competitive in efficiency and productivity. Indeed, one of the reasons the average age of the maquiladora workforce is so low – 17-25[315] – is that the pace of work exhausts most employees as young adults. Artemio Osuna of SIOAC reports,

> I've been a supervisor for five years in a maquila, and I've seen the inhuman exploitation of the Mexican workers – wages that don't go above five dollars a day and continuous mechanized work which leaves dead bodies after ten years of work. People are literally worn out. And this is why I have resigned and have incorporated myself into this struggle of workers.[316]

Manuel Mondragon, a worker at CustomTrim in Matamoros who makes plastic covers for steering wheels claims that because of the speed of fine-motor movements required for production there are approximately two hundred workers who have developed Carpal Tunnel syndrome. Some have lost sensation in their fingers and hands, while still others have numb arms and shoulders, suffering from near complete immobilization of their limbs. To add insult to injury, about one hundred fifty of these injured workers have been dismissed by CustomTrim – many illegally – for their lack of productivity.[317] And in one tragic incident in 1991, a sixteen year old

---

[314] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 86.
[315] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 50.
[316] Osuna 1996.
[317] Mondragon 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

worker at Ford's Autovidrio plant was crushed to death on a conveyor belt designed to crush glass, all before he ever received his first paycheck.[318] Alfonso Hernández of the PRD confirms that these experiences are not uncommon ones:

> All the advantages given to the maquilas annihilate the rights of workers. They send them into intensive exploitation, lowering their useful production as workers. A forty year old worker is not able to participate in this production any more. With the managing of chemicals and other toxics, there are hundreds of workers that are young and give their youth intensively to degenerative work. The simple and repetitive movements like robot movements cause high stress and anxiety.[319]

Indeed, Tong cites that injury, overwork, sexual harassment, and chronic exhaustion are some of the major contributors to a 40-90 percent turnover rate in the maquilas – with higher turnover experienced in the more labor intensive trades – as workers search, often fruitlessly, for more safe and healthy working conditions.[320] This high turnover, along with speedups, little unionization, minimal if any worker control over the labor process, and low compensation, create intensive experiences of worker alienation – from their products, each other, their own bodies, and their capacities as skilled creative workers. In a succinct way that highlights the dehumanization of the labor process through an almost enslaving technology of production, Claudia Vargas states, "The twenty thousand pieces of machines work us, we don't work them."[321] In

[318] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993a: 48.
[319] A. Hernández 1996.
[320] Interview, September 1997.
[321] Vargas 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this setting is it any wonder that there are such high degrees of cynicism, hopelessness, resentment, crime, and corruption?

One telling set of events that took place in 1996 is that of workers employed in the maquilas of Ley Mex and Dae Wan, subcontractors for Hyundai. There, the almost completely male workforce constructs tractor trailer units for transport trucks, which requires working around heavy equipment and toxic welding substances. One phase of the operation entails workers inserting large sheets of steel and tin into hydraulic machines that clamp the sheets and then bend them into the appropriate shapes for assembly. These devices are designed to work at a high rate of speed for greater productivity, and were therefore engineered to have laser safety sights that detect the presence of hands in the clamping area and stop the machine if it could cause injury. However, due to the added expense of the sights and the slowdown they cause in manufacture, they were removed from the machines by the manufacturer before being delivered from Korea to the border. Subsequently, accidents began to occur that were horrifying and devastating to workers' lives. Some workers lost fingers, hands, and even arms to these machines, not only subjecting their bodies to the most violent and permanent violations, but also creating horrendous debilities for workers who now have difficulty finding employment. Beyond this, Dae Wan refused to grant workers the promised raises of twenty-five percent and instead provided only a minimal raise of 1.5 pesos an hour, which in combination with the injuries prompted workers to initiate a drive for unionization and provoked some

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

concessions from the company.[322] This organizing drive will be the subject of later discussions, but it is the recurrence of cases like these, with blatant disregard for workers' health and safety, and the mistreatment of workers as mere objects of production, which has demonstrated clearly the contradictions that exist between the promises of wealth through free trade and the everyday experiences of misery and abuse on the border. However, this abuse has a particular resonance for women workers, on whose backs much of the maquiladora industry has been built.

Gender on the Frontier of America

The development of export manufacturing on the U.S./Mexico border has been possible only through the gendered construction of a global division of labor and a labor process in which women's bodies have been subject to coercive discipline. Although women always have worked inside and outside the domestic sphere,[323] export manufacturing on the border has succeeded, as it has in many regions globally, in rearticulating a division of labor based in the gendered politics of a national agricultural economy.[324] Even though there have been increasing proportions of men in the maquiladora workforce since the 1980s, it currently has a composition of sixty-five percent women, which can range as high as ninety percent for light manufacturing – industries that are labor intensive and produce low value-added

---

[322] Interview of CITTAC organizer Jaime Cota, March 1997; Cota 1996.
[323] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 8.
[324] Sklair 1989: 168-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

goods such as textiles, apparel, and electronics. Companies such as Zenith, TRW, and Delnosa (owned by GM) specify in their job announcements that work is "sólo para mujeres" or "only for women."[325] Because these industries are represented in high numbers in Tijuana, the proportion of women in the local maquiladora workforce could be significantly greater. But even according to Fernández-Kelly's survey of Júarez workers on the eastern border, the average maquiladora employee is a single woman of 17-25 years of age who lives with her parents and siblings, for whom her income is a crucial contribution. This leaves many older women unemployed or in low-paid service or informal sector work, including domestic servant work across the border and sex work in the growing tourist economy of Tijuana.[326] Most women maquila workers migrated to the border from the interior and have between six and eight years of education, which is significantly above the national average; while about eleven percent have studied to be professional secretaries, beauticians, computer operators, or seamstresses.[327]

Like many men, women may find maquiladora employment alluring insofar as it entails the potential fulfillment of an (American) dream of economic stability, upward mobility, and consumerism, but for women this also may possess a special hope of economic autonomy from the domestic sphere or from traditional family

[325] See also Human Rights Watch 1996: 14.
[326] Interview of CDM/GFX organizer Carmen Valadez, July 1996.
[327] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 50-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

structures.[328] Indeed, some wary of this change have suggested that the preference for women workers will function to displace men from regional or national wage labor and challenge the traditional gendered structure of the family. However, authors such as Fernández-Kelly,[329] Tiano,[330] and Sklair[331] claim that, since women are employed in low-value added production, there is no evidence that the maquilas have enhanced women's positions in labor markets, and women still suffer equal or greater levels of un- and under-employment.[332] Stoddard also suggests this fear assumes that women have not worked in previous agricultural or industrial economies, devaluing women's historic and often unrewarded contributions to local, national, and global wealth.[333] Thus, it is clear that maquiladora employment, shifting labor markets, and growing poverty have had severely damaging effects on family cohesiveness and general well-being – José Morales of EcoSol, a Tijuana environmental organization, thus argues, "Maquiladoras create a disintegration of families and of livelihood."[334] However, inadequate compensation and severe exploitation in the workplace rather than a challenge to patriarchal order in the home appear to be the cause of this.

These critiques are confirmed by Bustamante, a consultant to maquiladora start-ups, who claims that as one surveys industries with higher value-added production, such as the high tech firms assembling plastics, chemicals, and auto parts,

---

[328] Ong 1987: 85-107
[329] 1983.
[330] 1984.
[331] 1989.
[332] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 8-9; Tiano 1984: i; Sklair 1989: 170.
[333] Stoddard 1987: 62.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

one sees higher wages, more skill requirements, and greater proportions of men workers.[335] This reveals a gendered division of labor in which men occupy more valued and highly compensated positions while women are relegated to traditionally domesticated and lower wage tasks such as sewing. Additionally, he asserts that corporate managers tend to hire women workers because they believe women to be more productive, reliable, punctual, and have greater manual dexterity for refined assembly work. Articulating a discourse of "nimble fingered" women workers that has surfaced throughout Fortune 500 companies involved in export processing,[336] he also references the rapid rate at which women must work:

> They [women] are a lot more skillful than men. They have more dexterity with their hands, than the men will have.... They have very small pieces [to assemble]. If you see the type of the components you'd be amazed. I dare anybody to possibly try to do that. And to try to do that a hundred times an hour becomes a more difficult process.... They're more skillful in that.[337]

Others, such as Carrillo,[338] Sklair,[339] and Gilbert[340] have suggested that managers also believe – despite much evidence to the contrary – that women have greater docility, more tolerance for poor working conditions, and thus fewer tendencies to unionize – the ideal maquila worker.[341] However, Mary Tong of the Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers reports, "In the U.S., docility and compliance is usually cited as

---

[334] Morales 1996.
[335] Interview, February 1997.
[336] Sklair 1989: 171.
[337] Interview, February 1997.
[338] 1985.
[339] 1989.
[340] 1995: 70.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the reason women are selected more. But in Mexico, they explain that women are hired more because they are more responsible to their families and are less liable to leave their jobs – better attendance, lower turnover."[342] But given that Mexican women, like their counterparts in the U.S., receive two-thirds of a man's wage for the same work, she concludes that there are multiple ways by which maquila investors profit from gender distinctions in the labor process. Indeed, authors like Fernández-Kelly,[343] Tiano,[344] Mies,[345] and Kamel,[346] have confirmed this as a part of a more generalized way that new constructions of gender are enabling a rearticulation of patriarchal apparatuses of global production, while simultaneously fostering transnational dependencies and a global concentration of wealth in developed regions.[347] This is in evidence every day as women workers, in addition to receiving lower wages, face high rates of abuse, sexual harassment, restrictions on reproductive freedom and health, prohibited maternity leaves, and sometimes more vile violations such as rape, indicating that women's bodies have become the focal point of often violent labor discipline in a neoliberal economy.

One example is the case of the Dae Woo Electronics maquila in San Luis Rio Colorado, Mexico, east of Tijuana, which produces remote controls sold to GE, Hitachi, and Sony. In March of 1997, workers there filed a complaint with Mexico's

---

[341] Sklair 1989: 172; Human Rights Watch 1996: 14.
[342] Interview, July 1996.
[343] 1983.
[344] 1984.
[345] 1986.
[346] 1988, 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Public Ministry and Labor Board in which they described their experiences of multiple human rights and labor law violations, including sexual and physical abuse. They reported how company managers touched workers, offered money for sex, and threatened women with their jobs if they did not comply with sexual advances. The company President was cited for having repeatedly entered the women's bathroom to rush them back to work, often using physical force and racist slurs. Managers also locked employees into a "punishment room" without ventilation where they were exposed to toxic solvents that were known to cause birth defects and cancer. And one seventeen year old employee who was taken to this room was physically beaten. Further, the company did not pay overtime and bonus pay to workers as required by law, nor social security taxes to government; it did not provide legally specified work breaks nor safety equipment such as goggles and ventilation equipment; it possessed no legally required elected commission of workers to monitor worker health and safety; and it unlawfully fired workers who complained about these violations.[348] But possibly the most egregious and publicized violation of women's physical and sexual autonomy was that which took place, coincidentally, in the year NAFTA was signed into effect.

In September 1994, at the Exportadora de Mano de Obra maquiladora in Tijuana (EMOSA), a subsidiary of American United Global/National O-Ring Inc. based in Downey, California, the President and CEO of the company, John Shahid,

---

[347] Kamel 1988: 16.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

visited the maquiladora and held a corporate picnic to honor the workers and the managers. The plant employs over one hundred twenty workers to clean and inspect O-rings for the U.S. auto market. At the picnic, Shahid demanded that the employees, predominantly women, compete in a bikini contest for him to videotape. Stunned and enraged, the women protested, but were coerced into participating by threats of firing, and one woman was pushed to the ground. Mary Tong (SCMW) confirmed that sexual harassment in the maquiladoras is very common, especially at EMOSA, where about eighty percent of the women had experienced some form of sexual harassment, leading to a monthly turnover rate of eleven percent or nearly one hundred percent annually.[349] She said further that sexual harassment typically occurs in two forms, quid pro quo in which employers demand sexual service in return for employment opportunities, and general work conditions of taunting and propositioning, both of which were common to EMOSA. One worker stated, "Shahid was verbally abusive and insulting. In response to our demands [to stop the contest], he threw fifteen dollars in cash on the table and told the women that he wanted 'amor' in return."[350] After the forty-five minute ordeal, another worker, Veronica Vásquez Baron said, "I felt humiliated and violated.... Shahid treated us like objects. He thought because he has money he can do anything. I hope Shahid now understands that we are not his

---

[348] Interview of SCMW organizer Mary Tong, September 1997.
[349] Interview, July 1996.
[350] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

property."[351] In describing this case, Tong stated that, "Executives visiting their maquilas brag about being able to get anything they want from the Mexican women workers. The believe the Mexican women are easy, used to lots of sex, and that they are exotic."[352]

At an October sixteenth meeting at the plant, the women reported the incident and demanded Shahid's videotape as well as an increase in pay. Shahid refused. One hundred eighteen workers filed a sexual harassment suit in Tijuana with Mexican labor authorities and planned a strike. In response to this, American United Global not only ignored subpoenas for the videotape, but closed the plant, leaving the workers stranded without their three months severance pay – violating Mexican labor law – and then claimed they did not own the EMOSA maquila – a common practice among violators of evading responsibility. Therefore, in an unprecedented legal attempt to not let American United Global off the hook, the workers filed an unfair labor practices lawsuit in the Los Angeles Superior court with Judge Valerie Baker against the parent company, and with legal assistance arranged by the San Diego-based SCMW. The SCMW was founded in 1993 as an organization providing material aid for Tijuana workers suffering from the January floods of that year, and has since become a volunteer effort of unionists and community activists who are helping to build "independent organizations and facilitate cross-border ties between U.S. and Mexican workers," and who have been involved in a variety of local

[351] Bowdish 1995: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

unionization campaigns. Support demonstrations also occurred in Los Angeles and at the CEO's home on Long Island, accompanied by an extensive letter campaign involving many sympathetic groups.[353]

This lawsuit was filed on the one-year anniversary of the implementation of NAFTA, and not by coincidence. Fred Kumetz, the attorney representing the women, stated "The U.S./Mexico border will not be used as a shield by American companies to evade their legal obligations to Mexican workers."[354] Mary Tong, administrator of the SCMW, said the women's case is a legal test of NAFTA: "If NAFTA opened the border to trade, the border should also be opened in terms of liability."[355] Vasquez Baron added, "Hopefully our actions will set a precedent that can keep this from happening to other workers."[356] After eight months of legal action, demonstrations, and national letter writing, the one hundred eighteen former workers at the EMOSA maquila achieved a satisfactory settlement from American United Global. According to Mary Tong (SCMW), the action that clinched the settlement was a threat by the UAW to have Chrysler, Ford, and GM (eighty percent of the company's business) shift their purchases of O-rings from American United Global to other manufacturers, which the UAW could have enforced through union contract clauses that mandate their employers buy from good corporate citizens.[357] The settlement accorded

---

[352] Interview, July 1996.
[353] Tong 1998.
[354] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 2.
[355] Interview, July 1996.
[356] Bowdish 1995: 1.
[357] Tong 1998

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

confidentiality regarding the specifics, but one ex-employee explained, "All of the women are extremely happy with the agreement. We have demonstrated that Mexican maquila workers can take a stand for their rights and make their voices heard."[358] Ramon Contréras, the Mexican lawyer who advised the workers throughout their case, said the "most notable part of this was that the workers didn't believe that this case could be won.... The success of this came from the unification of the women workers themselves."[359] In summarizing these events Tong said, "the problem is that sex harassment is an effect of how the entire industry fails to respect its workers, that sex harassment is merely one instance of this, and that all sex harassment policies do is mask the root of the problem – exploitation."[360]

Another set of violations to women's sexual and physical autonomy has been a recent series of assaults on reproductive health and freedom. Carmen Valadez of Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X (CDM/GFX) and Jaime Cota of the Centro de Informacion para Trabajadores y Trabajadoras, Asociación Civil (CITTAC), both based in Tijuana, have been active in researching and supporting women maquila workers facing these problems. They cite problems of toxic exposure leading to miscarriages and birth defects, overwork and firings of pregnant women, and illegal pregnancy testing of workers.[361] Indeed, one major dilemma has been that pregnant

---

[358] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996: 1.
[359] Contréras 1996.
[360] Interview, July 1996.
[361] Valadez 1996; Interview of CDM/GFX organizers Carmen Valadez and Reyna Montoya, July 1996; Interview of CITTAC organizer Jaime Cota, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

women have been forced to work in physically strenuous, toxic, and potentially damaging jobs. An organizer from Ciudad Júarez's FEMAP, a network of health promoters, said, "We have a problem in a maquila with pregnant women whose health is not respected. They are asked to continue to produce as much as other workers, so much that they are forcing them to resign. Due to this pressure, there have been miscarriages."[362] Workers from yet other Júarez maquilas have reported similar cases, but because some companies have allowed handicapped workers to apply for lighter duty, FEMAP and other organizations have argued in letters to company officials that pregnant women also should be retained and reassigned. So far, compliance with these requests has been spotty, but includes Electrical Systems of Mexico, a subsidiary of United Technologies. However, many companies have regarded pregnant women to be too great of a liability for production standards, and thus have refused to give women the legal six weeks maternity leave causing many to work until the day they go into labor, or worse, forcing pregnant workers to resign.

But some maquilas have attempted to avoid the problem altogether by refusing to hire pregnant applicants which they verify with pregnancy tests and tampon collection. Human Rights Watch has documented over thirty-six cases of pregnancy testing in companies including Zenith, AT&T, TRW, Sunbeam-Oster, Erika en Reynosa (W.R. Grace), Plásticos Bajacal (Carlisle Plastics), Texitron, and others.[363] Guermina Solis of the Centro Taller del Labor (CETLAC) in Júarez, has been

[362] FEMAP 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

involved with workers at the Rio Bravo Electricos plant where, not only have they experienced skin disorders due to toxic exposure, but women are being asked to show their tampons to company doctors in order to work.[364] Yolanda, a worker at the plant, describes the procedure as follows:

> This is what we have to do: They go with us one by one and you have to show your sanitary napkins, or else we won't be contracted. Once I went through the interview, they asked me for the date of my last period, and I couldn't come to work until I showed that. I need the work for my family, and so I got my period on Saturday, and I told the personnel director. The nurse asked for the napkin, and they accepted me that same day.[365]

Claudia Vargas confirms these experiences: "When we work, we have one month of training. They give each woman a pregnancy test, and if she is not [pregnant], she can remain on the job. At the end of training, she is given another test, and if pregnant, she can be fired, even when she works well."[366] Usually, because it is illegal to fire pregnant employees, maquila managers will coerce women to sign letters of "renuncia," or resignation, by threatening to withhold pay.[367] Human Rights Watch has been monitoring these violations, writing reports, and filing complaints with the National Administrative Office (NAO) established under NAFTA to hear corporate violations of the agreement. Specifically, they are targeting forty three companies from all along the border by publicizing their reports on the problems, prompting

---

[363] Human Rights Watch 1996: 19-26.
[364] Solis 1996.
[365] Yolanda 1996.
[366] Vargas 1996.
[367] Human Rights Watch 1996: 27.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

direct letter campaigns to corporate offices, and facilitating legal support in individual cases when possible. Also, with organizations like the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM) and the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), they have called for a transnational standard of corporate conduct that would counterbalance the negative effects of export processing in the region. Indeed, Human Rights Watch argues that, although reproductive health and freedom is specifically a women's issue and thus an issue of sexual discrimination in need of redress, it is inextricably linked to the limited respect for all workers in the maquiladoras.

Clearly other stories of abuse could be cited. One would be the case of a Samsung maquila manager who, after hearing two young women workers laugh on their lunch break, suspected that they were derogating him. But instead of letting the incident pass or even confronting the workers, he became enraged and immediately slapped them in their faces. Outraged at this violation of their rights, the workers filed an assault complaint with the police, which led to an arrest of the manager and a brief period of detainment.[368] Beyond these cases of physical abuse, Carmen Valadez[369] (CDM/GFX) and Hortensia Hernández[370] (SIOAC) have reported that rapes of workers by factory personnel are not an uncommon occurrence. They argue that in a context where many managers tend to dehumanize workers and regard them

---

[368] Interview of former Asociación Mexicana de las Maquiladoras President Alejandro Bustamante, July 1996.
[369] Valadez 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as disposable servants to productivity, they often feel completely entitled to live out their fantasies of power over young women's bodies. And rape, in concert with other threats, can create an environment of terror at the workplace which enforces labor discipline and the relations of exploitation in the maquilas. Further, although many male relatives of women laborers are supportive of their work outside the home, and although many families have been bastions of strategies of survival and resistance,[371] Valadez and Reyna Montoya (CDM/GFX) argue that women's work as wage laborers has in some cases upset familial norms of patriarchy, often resulting in violent attempts by men to reestablish their authority and power through domestic abuse.[372] Summarizing the sexually violent situation many border women face, Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X (CDM/GFX) argues,

> One of the primary obstacles that confront women, when they awake to their community life and/or to the defense of their rights, is that of the domestic violence, such as assault or sexual harassment in the home, the streets, the colonias or the workplace; this violence is aggravated by the failure of public services, and the poor economic resources and abuse in the workplace.[373]

Therefore, it is obvious that the gender and labor relations of export processing on the border has constructed an insidious hegemony in which women often are subject to various forms of coercive subordination and exploitation, inside and outside the factories.

---

[370] H. Hernández 1996.
[371] Fernández-Kelly 1983: 152.
[372] Interview, February 1997.
[373] Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Although certainly not every maquila participates in these violations, the permissiveness of North American governmental organizations and the insidious logic of global competition of capital allow this to occur, and over time it lowers labor and living conditions for all. Thus, throughout all of these examples of abuse and mistreatment, we may witness that export processing zones, despite their glossy high-tech exterior and highly rationalized systems of production, can do great violence to workers' dignity, bodies, and economic well-being globally. But contrary to the expectations of personnel managers throughout the border, women workers in neoliberalism's ground zero have not been mere passive objects or docile recipients of this abuse, but instead have struggled to better their work environments and posit gender as a central axis of development politics. As Carmen Valadez proclaimed, "They thought we were passive, but from the beginning of the maquilas there have been struggles by women. It is very important to retrieve this memory and claim these stories."[374] However, one formative element of these stories yet to be told is that of environmental hazards and workers' lives, a relationship that extends beyond the shop floor and into the public spaces of community neighborhoods, as well as the water, soil, and air resources of both nations.

Toxics, Sustainability, and the Chupacabras *of Free Trade*

[374] Valadez 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The originally Puerto Rican legend of the *chupacabra*, or literally goatsucker, is one that has become common to the ranching culture of northern Mexico and tells of a frightening vampirish creature which has the ability to fly and preys upon livestock, violently sucking their lifeblood from their bodies and consequently destroying the livelihood of ranchers and their communities. Commenting on the mass culture hysteria that surrounds these legends, Alejandro Bustamante, former President of La Asociación de las Maquiladoras Mexicanas argued that the many reports of environmental hazards spread by the AFL-CIO and "paid" pro-union workers along the border are like so many chupacabras – merely folktales designed to provoke popular outrage and fear with no basis in fact.[375] However, if one discusses the frequency and the destructive effects of toxic exposure with the social movement organizations of the borderlands, one may begin to see that the prevalence of toxics in the region is far from paranoid speculation. The lack of regulatory law and enforcement agencies along the border has created what Robert Bullard and others have described elsewhere as a "pollution haven" for industry and a case of "toxic colonialism,"[376] an effect of Mexican political policies that have set aside environmental protection in favor of export industrialization. Indeed, if vampirish chupacabras do exist in the borderlands, half way between life and death, they might resemble the many transnational corporations that have descended upon the region. With their fleet-footed freedom of movement they have come to act out their

[375] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

voracious propensities to consume the lifeblood of those who serve them, creating in their stead deathly zombies who are now tragic lifeless distortions of their former selves, knowing no rest in a community whose spirit and earthly vitality have been cleanly extracted.

Surely, there is no more insidious or pervasive outcome of export processing in the borderlands than the toxic exposure suffered by citizens both in the workplace and via the contamination of the common resources on which all life depends. Tom Barry, Beth Sims, and Harry Browne of the Inter-hemispheric Resource Center (IHRC), who have performed some of the more exhaustive surveys on deteriorating borderland environmental conditions, have argued bluntly, "Environmental crisis along the U.S.-Mexico border is nothing new to most border residents. Over the past three decades they have seen their streams and rivers die, their air become clogged with pollution, and the natural habitats for wildlife disappear."[377] Reports of sterile soils, toxic clouds, and dark noxious streams running through colonias are not uncommon.[378] Carol Byrne, speaking of Matamoros, describes an all too familiar experience:

> From the factories run open ditches full of gunk, sometimes water, sometimes what looks like black oil, sometimes chemical slicks, sometimes a milky white ooze. Floating on the surface is every king of trash imaginable. The streets are made out of calcium sulfate waste; the eye-watering smell of pentachloryphenol permeates the air.[379]

---

[376] Bullard 1993: 19; Moody and McGinn 1992: 31.
[377] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 171.
[378] Montes 1991.
[379] Byrne 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Because there is little statistical monitoring of the problems of the region, anecdotal evidence has been the primary form of documentation, but that alone is startling. A few examples may help illustrate a generalized environmental crisis on the border.

The New River which runs through the western border town of Mexicali is reputed to be the most toxic stretch of water in North America, winding its way through sewerless colonias, maquiladora parks, and into California's Imperial Valley and its extensive fruit farms that sell to many U.S. markets. Many Mexican border cities, especially Matamoros, have experienced extremely abnormal rates of birth defects such as anencephaly (a condition in which infants are born without brains) due to maquiladora effluents, including xylene emitted from a local GM subsidiary at 6300 times its legally tolerable level. Other areas such as Nogales have encountered extremely high rates of cancer and infectious diseases, including tuberculosis.[380] Agricultural pesticides and industrial solvents banned in the U.S. are openly sold in Mexico. Indirectly aided by the overconsumption of U.S. consumers, many U.S. firms and citizens have been caught on many occasions illegally dumping hundreds of toxic waste drums on Mexican land – often filled with chemicals such as PCBs – as if it was merely a landfill.[381] Smelting emissions in El Paso/Ciudad Júarez caused such a high concentration of airborne particulate metals that many claimed they could taste them in the air.

---

[380] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993a: 54-9.
[381] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 201.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Also in Júarez, as in much of the border, not only are there toxics to be regulated but the urban infrastructure is not sufficient to provide the drainage needed to prevent flooding, prompting a representative from Comité Ecológico de Matamoros (CEMAC), a grassroots environmental organization, to say, "people don't have resources to survive. With the money they receive from the maquilas, they can't live. So they pray for rain to cleanse, but when that comes, it creates floods."[382] CETLAC reports skin eruptions, chronic headaches, and illnesses resulting from toxics that flow down water canals on which local colonias depend for bathing, cleaning, and cooking water.[383] And, as an extreme example of the hazards resulting from deregulated trade, a U.S. X-ray equipment firm sold a cancer therapy machine with radioactive materials to a medical center in Júarez without having to report it to the Mexican government. It was stolen by a custodian and electrician who, in the process of transporting and selling it to a recycling firm that made it into construction rebar and furniture parts, exposed over four thousand people in twenty-three states and four countries to intensive radioactivity, causing skin discoloration, sickness, sterility, and one known death from bone cancer. This has raised concerns that a lack of government and corporate oversight in free trade generally may cause an incident similar to that in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India, 1984, where a Union Carbide plant leaked methyl isocyanate, affecting over 200,000 people and killing thousands.[384]

---

[382] CEMAC 1996.
[383] Solis 1996.
[384] Gupta 1988: 53; Shiva 1994: 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, according to industrial hygenist Rafael Moure, many corporations on the border, such as pesticide producer Retzloff Chemicals, seem to expect spills and accidents routinely.[385]

In Tijuana, the problems are equally astounding. With such rapid growth in the last decade, Tijuana has been a home to hundreds of thousands of migrants searching for jobs, migrant corporations looking for workers, and various levels of government either ill-prepared for, or indifferent to, the infrastructure needs of its population. César Luna of the EHC summarizes it well:

> You have movements of labor that are having a heavy impact on the already lacking infrastructure. So you not only have an excess use of hazardous and toxic materials, but you have also an impact in overpopulation, where you don't have adequate sewage, electricity, adequate solid garbage waste, solid disposal. So you have this area completely impacted.[386]

Elsa Saxod of the binational U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation confirms that, in addition to toxics resulting from export manufacturing, Tijuana suffers from problems of overpopulation: poor air quality, sewage facilities (plumbing, routing pipes, and treatment plants), and recycling.[387] And during Winter/Spring rains, many colonias, especially those not protected by developments provided by the dominant parties,[388] become subject to floods and mudslides that bring sewage and toxic waste, or that literally wash entire communities away. In fact, it was the lack of

---

[385] Montes 1991.
[386] Interview, July 1996.
[387] Interview, July 1996.
[388] Interview of ECSDTJ facilitator Kaare Kjos, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

infrastructure and the floods of 1993 that created a state of emergency in Tijuana and much of Baja California, prompting extensive binational cooperation among many environmental and workers movement organizations in the area.[389] Further, José Bravo (SNEEJ) suggests that, even when government organizations on either side of the border attempt to address these dilemmas, the remedies are often ad hoc, piecemeal, underfunded, and ineffective due to limited public input. One example is the new wastewater treatment plant in Tijuana which he argues is already overtaxed and is able to remove only biological contaminants, not toxic chemicals. Another is the HazTrack system supported by the EPA which is designed to track hazardous substances imported to Mexican maquilas by U.S. companies, but as of yet its lack of funding and trade information makes its data unreliable.[390] César Luna (EHC) expresses his frustrations with this lack of monitoring: "It's not going on. And we know that EPA has all of the equipment to put the Berlin Wall here in terms of technology, but they can't come up with an efficient tracking of waste. So they're not as responsive as people think."[391] Ultimately, however, Bravo argues that the health dilemmas caused by inadequate infrastructure, and environmental injustices generally, are caused by extreme poverty among residents – "we start getting what we call 'misery belts' along the maquiladora sectors, and ... people start taking possession of

---

[389] Interview of SCMW coordinator Mary Tong, July 1996; Interview of ECSDTJ facilitator Kaare Kjos, July 1996.
[390] Interview, July 1996.
[391] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

land with no infrastructure at all" – as well as a lack of resources or will in government.[392]

But infrastructure inadequacy, although a significant focus of environmental justice organizations in the San Diego/Tijuana area, does not exhaust their energies. Additionally, they endeavor to increase the accountability of government and corporate actors to healthy and safe environmental protection standards, through clean-up, prevention, remediation, and the public's right-to-know about common hazards. And nowhere is this more relevant than in the maquiladora industry. As Alfonso Hernández of the PRD in Tijuana argues, the maquiladora industry "has been aggressive against the workers and has generated grave ecological damage in this city."[393] One example is Ejido Chilpancingo, a community of 25,000 residents downstream from various tributaries to the Tijuana River that flow directly off of the El Florido industrial park on the Otay Mesa and into Cañon del Padre. With many high tech assembly plants in this zone emitting toxic effluents, the *ejido* – cooperative or communal land – has been subject to multiple toxic streams carrying such pollutants as lead, copper, and zinc that have contaminated water and soil, causing an extremely high incidence of toxic-related disease. In a striking graphic representation during an interview, Maurilio Sánchez Pachuca, Director of the Comité Ciudadano Pro-Restauración del Cañon del Padre y Servícios Comunitários, displayed a housing grid of the ejido with marked plots of families who have suffered from environmental

[392] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

illnesses. With approximately a forty percent incident rate, and a high lead contamination index of fifty parts per million, the markings made the grid appear like a very toxic checker board.[394] In yet another infamous case that will be discussed more in subsequent chapters, Alco Pacifico, a lead recycling operation in Tijuana, dumped 33,000 tons of toxic lead slag into open pits and then abandoned its factory without cleanup of the leaden soil – leaving a ground so saturated that nearby cattle ranchers have found high lead content in their cows' milk.[395]

But the toxification of everyday life in the region does not merely occur outside the factory gates. Indeed, if recent political attention has been granted to ecological sustainability by government organizations and corporate associations throughout the region, relatively little has been paid to the health and safety problems within the maquilas. Maquiladora workers are seldom given adequate safety training and equipment, they frequently are not notified about toxics, machinery and chemicals are not safeguarded, and health instructions that are present often appear only in English. Thus, there are common incidents of health problems related to toxic exposure including rashes, chronic fatigue, dizziness, illness, fainting spells, and even death. The National Safe Workplace Institute confirms that U.S. companies in Mexico do not enforce the occupational and environmental standards common in the

---

[393] A. Hernández 1996.
[394] Interview, March 1997.
[395] Interview with CITTAC organizer Jaime Cota, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

United States.[396] And in Mexico, workers have less legal recourse because of fewer legal restrictions, less rights-to-know about the presence of toxics, little education about legal rights or health standards, and minimal resources – all decreasing public and corporate accountability. Indeed the UAW Health and Safety Department, in a comparison of Mexican and U.S. occupational safety and health legislation, found that "the worker protection system in Mexico is substantially deficient in comparison to U.S. law ... health and safety standards are substantially weaker than [in the] U.S., and Mexican enforcement mechanisms are very limited."[397]

For example, at Plasticos Bajacal, a U.S.-based plastic coat hanger manufacturer, one worker lost an eye to a broken drill bit because he was denied proper protective goggles; another suffered a miscarriage on the line and was not allowed to leave for a break, much less medical attention; all workers complained of toxic fumes and abuse of pregnant women; and twelve workers that began to organize around these abuses were fired.[398] Manuel Mondragon, a worker at CustomTrim mentioned above and an organizer at Comité Fronterizo de Obrera (CFO) has reported rashes, burning throats, and nasal irritation as common experiences in a factory with toxic substances, poor protection, and bad ventilation.[399] In 1993, forty-seven workers at a Sara Lee plant were hospitalized after inhaling the spilled industrial solvent xylene. Workers at an AT&T maquila were forced to solder with

[396] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 205-6.
[397] United Auto Workers 1992: 1.
[398] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

no protection, often suffering burns, and one worker lost her hair after being exposed to solvents. Alma Molina of a Clarostat plant in Júarez describes having to work with dangerous chemicals such as phenol and epoxy resins with no masks being provided. W.R. Grace employees at the Erica factory in Reynosa have experienced loss of consciousness on the assembly line due to the use of methylene chloride.[400] Zenith workers also have reported headaches, dizziness, and fainting due to toxic exposure and sheer overwork. One worker there, Matilda, described her experiences: "I would get these awful headaches and if a drop of chemicals fell on my clothes, it burned the material. I felt pressured and closed in when they screamed at you. They just want you to produce and the expectations are too high."[401] Violations at Zenith also include inadequate worker protective wear, no emergency exits, no warning labels in Spanish, no emergency drills, no training, no worker-elected Commissions on Safety and Hygiene, and inadequate supervision.

But in the border maquilas owned by General Motors, a company that once defined the U.S. economy – and still might in its rush to globalize its operations – a series of egregious incidents have occurred since 1982. GM-owned factories have been implicated in illegal dumpings of plastics, releasing methylene chloride effluents into local water supplies (at 250,000 times legally tolerable levels in the U.S.), hiring child labor, and blacklisting workers for organizing against the company. Further, in

---

[399] Mondragon 1996.
[400] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993b: 47-52.
[401] Matilda 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

one 1990 crisis a motor at GM's Deltronicos plant in Matamoros caught on fire and was quickly extinguished, but before the smoke could clear supervisors were demanding workers return to their stations, causing many to faint from smoke inhalation. When ambulances arrived, company guards closed the gates and refused entry until an official order from Mexico's Interior Ministry ordered GM to allow medics and firefighters into the plant. At least seventy-six workers had to go to the hospital. And tragically, in a 1982 incident, José Herebia García was killed at GM's Rimir plant in Matamoros when he was exposed to poisonous chemicals and fell while cleaning an industrial tank.[402] Yet possibly the most publicized violation of worker health and safety has been the exposure of pregnant workers to xylene, an industrial solvent that has been released by at least eighty-eight corporations such as Stepan Chemical, GM, and Sara Lee. It has been documented by regional physicians and residents to cause respiratory irritation, brain hemorrhage, internal organ bleeding, fainting, and at least four times the U.S. incidence of anencephaly, a condition in which infants are born without brain stems.[403] These birth defects have been the primary subject of organizing campaigns, media attention, and legal cases to be discussed in subsequent chapters, but their prevalence has been the source of great outrage and hostility towards unregulated border development.

[402] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993b: 47-52.

[403] Lewis, Kaltofen, and Ormsby 1992: 69; Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994; 1993b: 3-12, 17, 61.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, various sources have made damning claims regarding the health and safety of the region. The American Medical Association has claimed the border is a "cesspool" breeding ground for infectious diseases such as hepatitis and tuberculosis.[404] The National Toxics Campaign sampled various soils throughout the border and found seventy-five percent of them to be contaminated with toxic wastes. Much of this waste we can safely assume has emanated from maquiladoras since, according to EPA records in 1988, only one percent of maquilas reported returning imported toxic wastes back to the U.S., as required by the 1983 La Paz Agreement.[405] Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are still woefully underprepared and understaffed, and those infrastructure improvements and treatment facilities that have been planned may be inadequate given the extensive demand placed on them. Despite some limited attention during the NAFTA debates, environmental amelioration or rehabilitation appears to be growing more difficult as increasing numbers of chemical-intensive industries are moving into the region such as plastics, electronics, and obviously, chemicals. Studies at New Mexico State University further confirm that environmental deregulation is a significant consideration for industries relocating there, with a high correlation between maquiladora growth rates and decreases in environmental abatement costs from 1982 to 1990. Ten percent of maquila managers surveyed, including those at Eastman Kodak, reported that lower environmental regulations were a primary factor in relocation decisions, while another

[404] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 171.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

seventeen percent indicated it was an important consideration. In fact, this reaffirms local experiences of the influx of toxic corporations into the region during the 1980s and 1990s, such as that of José Bravo of SNEEJ.[406] Further, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has found that transnational corporations do tend to have better health and safety performance in their home countries than in their subsidiaries abroad.[407] Indeed, much attention has been given to environmental dilemmas that have resulted from liberalized border industrialization and the formalization of free trade policies in the Americas.

Whether it is immediate health and safety problems or long-term dilemmas of non-sustainability in the borderland ecosystem, the rapid industrialization of the region under successive decades of export oriented development has exacted a level of environmental damage that threatens to turn the entire border into a wasteland or a "doomsday" landscape.[408] Mexico has long regarded economic development to be more important than environmental health and sustainability, which is especially evident in the deregulatory practices pursued during the current free trade era. In concert with U.S. economic policies which have perpetuated debt and dependency, non-sustainable food systems, and resource harvesting via export manufacture, the environmental costs of this neoliberal development have been extreme. As NAFTA grants foreign investors and consumers greater access to Mexican natural resources,

---

[405] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 202-3.
[406] Interview, July 1996.
[407] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 206-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

more and more wild spaces will be overcome, and increasing numbers of people whose livelihoods depend upon these environments will suffer higher levels of poverty and poor living conditions, especially rural women and the urban poor.[409] As this occurs, industrialization will continue in the urban centers along the border, employing hundreds of thousands in factories that have significant rates of health and safety problems. As the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras statement against NAFTA reads, working people, women, and the environment have no representation in the agreement, and, despite the side accords, NAFTA summarily reduces environmental standards and protections to the lowest common denominator, expanding ecologically destructive industry and agribusiness throughout the hemisphere.[410] In an ever more transnational economy, and in a natural web of life that has never been anything but global, it is impossible to limit environmental problems to one nation. Indeed, the toxics present in water, air, and soil will not be policed by the Border Patrol. Clearly, the deregulatory policies of free trade are far from compatible with sustainable ecosystems that require biodiversity, wilderness, and safe urban environments. If the border region is a testing grounds for liberalized investment, trade, and peripheral industrialization, it also has become a site in which we may catch a glimpse of devastated environmental conditions that threaten to become universal in a global economy.

---

[408] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 171.
[409] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 154.
[410] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994: 12; 1993b: 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conquest on the Border of the 21st Century

> The connection between the maquilas and the reformation of capitalism is precisely that an important group of TNCs based in the United States gradually came to see that the opportunities offered by the maquila industry were both typical in terms of the global embryonic reformation of capitalism (like the EPZs in East Asia) and also unique in terms of the interests of particular TNCs in a position to exploit the logistical advantages of the U.S.-Mexico border region.
>
> – Leslie Sklair[411]

> It is the only border in the world where the Third World meets the industrialized north. The maquila economy, currently growing by leaps and bounds, is one of the institutions that derives from the meeting of two countries on such unequal terms.
>
> – Rachael Kamel[412]

> The maquila is part of this savage capitalism that globalization has brought to Mexico and particularly to the border area. The general profits of the maquiladoras return to their countries of origin, in contrast to the low wages of employment and the national industry. It appears they want to dismantle the national industry and turn the nation into one huge maquiladora.
>
> – Alfonso Hernández, PRD[413]

In sum, these movement organizations' discourses about regional labor and environmental problems amount to a wealth of damning evidence against, and an indicting critique of, the many contradictions of neoliberal development in the borderlands. Clearly, the wealth and prosperity of continental integration promised by

[411] 1989: 10-11.
[412] 1988: 17.
[413] 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the federal governments of North America have not been realized by working people, especially in Mexico, who live in the dark shadows of U.S. capitalism. Despite billions of dollars in investment in export processing over the last thirty years, neither the extensive growth of the region nor the profits gained from the maquiladoras have resulted in a diversified or autonomous Mexican economy, sustainable wages and living standards for the majority, minimal gender equity, democratic governance, or a healthy and thriving environment. Instead, these have been mortgaged for a deferred development that, for most, appears ever more distant and unattainable without significant political restructuring. Despite different domains of interest and divergent tactics of resistance to be discussed in the following chapters, it is clear that border movement organizations have widespread agreement about these basic dilemmas and their most general causes. Often, organizers and members of local community-based organizations focus their critiques on political autocracy and corruption, extractive export processing, predatory and unaccountable corporate profiteering, and anti-democratic violations of human rights and dignity. Thus, by way of conclusion to this detour through the subaltern narratives of border development and its crises, and before there can be an exploration into the innovative strategies and tactics of local resistance movements, it is necessary to discuss how these counter-narratives theorize the political-economic projects of neoliberalism.

One frequent focal point for critiques of neoliberalism in the region is that of the Mexican government, whether it be federal, state, or municipal. This is so

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

because many movement participants become politicized, active, and critical of development agendas through their confrontations with Mexican officials, especially over the responsibilities government has to maintain human rights, environmental health, and a decent standard of living for its people. This is particularly politicizing for those who recognize the obvious contradictions between, on the one hand a nationalist revolutionary culture that historically has favored protectionism and independence from foreign influence, and on the other the alliances the Mexican government has forged with foreign investors despite the consequent immiseration of its own citizens. Clearly, the mutually reinforcing problems of economic dependency, uneven development, and a repressive state remain as central dilemmas for Mexico at century's end given bureaucratic fears of foreign divestment. These government fears of capital flight from Mexican markets have not been unwarranted in light of the withdrawals of speculative capital that followed the EZLN uprising, and the February 1995 memo of Chase Manhattan Bank putting the Mexican government on notice: "While Chiapas, in our opinion, does not pose a fundamental threat to Mexican political stability, it is perceived to be so by many in the investment community. The government will need to eliminate the Zapatistas to demonstrate their effective control of the national territory and of security policy."[414] Indeed, the formative influence of foreign capital has conspired with authoritarian Mexican traditions to create grave human rights dilemmas, and no enforcement of law. As Roberto

[414] Hawkes 1996: 189; Oppenheimer 1996: 244.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Martínez, of the American Friends Service Committee Border Project, claims, "Unfortunately, I think Mexico is avoiding the issues because they are so indebted to the United States, for the bailout, for NAFTA, for all the other stuff ... And the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer."[415]

As if nearly seventy years of one-party rule by the PRI, extreme concentration of power in the executive branch, and the many national scandals of embezzlement, assassinations (47 between 1992-3 alone)[416], and election fraud were not sufficient to provoke cynicism and opposition, there have been numerous human rights violations in recent years related to neoliberal development which have provoked popular outrage. Most recently there have been many paramilitary efforts to control opposition in Chiapas, including the December 1997 Acteal massacre. In the borderlands also there have been many cases of corruption and state-sponsored violence that have highlighted the negligent and repressive character of the Mexican government in its protection of profitable conditions for investors. These include illegal land seizures; arrests and detainment of organizers (like those at Maclovio Rojas); intimidation, harassment, and beatings of independent unionists by "official" or "*charro*" unions closely affiliated with the PRI;[417] tampering and failure to certify independent union elections; federal confiscation of state and municipal resources; incorporation of opposition interests; and the maintenance of poor minimum wages,

[415] Interview, July 1996.
[416] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993a: 64.
[417] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 88-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environmental health, and working conditions, just to name several. And border residents in Tijuana argue there is little appreciable difference between the development agendas of the historically dominant PRI and the party that currently holds power in the city and in Baja California, the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN). The PAN, like the PRI, has supported maquiladora expansion and free trade, official unions and their repressive practices, as well as illegal imprisonment of movement leaders. As Hernández of SIOAC stated, "They [PANistas] are the same party with different names. They are shameful people and the proof is right here. Why does the governor think about the corrupt landowners and the affluent, and why do they support the powerful, exploiting the poor making them poorer and poorer? They are the same people."[418]

In this marriage between repressive national regimes and foreign capital, many local movement groups in the borderlands as well as many national organizations throughout Mexico have turned to a universalist discourse of human rights to galvanize the attention and support of an international community. This includes appeals not merely to individual or personal freedoms – to speech, bodily autonomy, association, etcetera – but also to latter generations of rights embodied in the 1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights – to dignified employment, education, shelter, as well as personal and environmental health. In a 1993 report, the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras stated, "Conspicuously absent from NAFTA is any

[418] H. Hernández 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

acknowledgment of Mexico's lack of democracy and blatant disregard for political and human rights.... In our assessment, human rights violations persist in large numbers and impunity for human rights abusers continues to be the norm rather than the exception."[419] In the case of Maclovio Rojas above, Artemio Osuna (SIOAC) refers to the state and federal governments as a "mafia" stealing lands and handing them over to foreign investors, while Aurora Pelayo (CAFOR) made the analogy between state officials and the dictatorial rule of the *Porfiriato* (the government of Porfirio Díaz), ruling in the service of a foreign imperium.[420] Organizers also cite numerous incidents of government/corporate sponsored harassment, arrests, detainment, and beatings of social movement organizers, which violate constitutional provisions for freedom of association and free speech against government interests. Also, as Laura Durazo[421] of Projecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental (PFEA) and César Luna[422] of the EHC have argued, limited right-to-know legislation regarding toxics in the workplace and inadequate employee safety training are just two examples of how poor educational standards and restricted freedom of information perpetuate human rights violations while prohibiting popular empowerment through democratic participation and government accountability. Freedom of information, according to Badillo of CAFOR, also is hindered by the incorporation of local journalists and media sources into pro-government agendas via official unions and

---

[419] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993a: 63.
[420] Pelayo 1996.
[421] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

other structures of patronage, further confining free speech and inhibiting popular education or consciousness raising.[423] Further, from the above discussions it is clear that the basic needs of workers for food, clothing, shelter, health care, and safe employment frequently go unmet, depriving hundreds of thousands of even the most minimal living conditions. Thus, through these expansive definitions of rights and their claims to universal standards of living many organizations have begun to demand greater public accountability from government and private institutions, and hence to define a more inclusive and democratic global political-economy.

Government institutions in Mexico are also a target of border movement organizations since, far more than transnational corporations, they are at least formally accountable to a national citizenry and to an international community. The significance of this is not lost on border movement organizers who, at the geographic ground zero of neoliberalism, recognize that the state, however disempowered it may be due to dependencies on transnational capital, remains at least a potential apparatus of democratic governance, balanced development, and wealth redistribution. Beyond mere appeals to corporate good will or public service, local labor and environmental organizations have argued that the state is a significant force in the transition to hemispheric or global processes of democratic participation, sustainability, and equitable development. Thus, discussions of public participation, human rights, and basic living conditions are oriented towards a broader agenda of democratization, in

---

[422] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which various levels of government represent alternative development agendas within transnational economic policy. However, because of a popular cynicism and distrust in the representative capacities of state institutions, and because many Mexican citizens have had little formal education regarding the constitution, law, or rights, many movement organizers along the border recognize that greater grassroots education and consciousness raising is necessary before directly confronting state political power. Further, U.S.-based movements shy from programmatic discussions regarding any political restructuring that may be necessary in Mexico, for fear of promoting a left version of colonial despotism and thus encroaching upon any national autonomy sought by sister organizations in Mexico. Also, as expressed by Saxod (USMBPF),[424] de la Rosa (COPLADEM),[425] Badillo (CAFOR),[426] and Luna (EHC),[427] faith in responsible federal government action towards the border is hindered by the federal appropriation of regional resources and the ways U.S. and Mexican governments have neglected the needs of the territories at their margins – a more regional or sub-national version of the metropole-colony relationship. Moreover, the focus on state institutions is dulled by an awareness of the many transnational economic processes that supersede national or local government, and thus necessitate other targets of social change, such as global corporations and an

[423] Badillo 1996.
[424] Interview, July 1996.
[425] Interview, February 1997.
[426] Interview, February 1997.
[427] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

international community of states and NGOs. In theorizing these political and economic forces, many have resorted to an anti-imperial discourse that has affinities with many post-colonial discussions of global power at the end of the millennium.

Many organizers interviewed, including Mary Tong (SCMW),[428] José Bravo (SNEEJ),[429] and Carmen Valadez (CDM/GFX),[430] have raised specific concerns that government deregulation of industry not only makes transnational corporations less accountable to national or local populations, but it places downward pressure on labor and environmental standards globally. As if the tragedies currently faced by Mexican citizens are not enough to raise global concerns, transnational control of the Mexican economy ultimately exemplifies how, under capitalism, poor economic conditions anywhere can create dismal living circumstances everywhere.[431] This is not unlike the fears expressed by the AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, or any number of organizations on the left which have argued, like Brecher and Costello, that the globe faces an immanent "race to the bottom" or "downward leveling" at the hands of liberalized trade.[432] Similarly, Moody and McGinn claim that agreements such as NAFTA and GATT amount to corporate declarations of independence from the regulatory policies that labor and other movements have struggled to achieve over the last century.[433] Indeed, Bravo suggests that a dismantling of Mexican protections against ownership

[428] Interview, July 1996.
[429] Interview, February 1997.
[430] Interview, February 1997.
[431] Sklair 1989: 18.
[432] 1994: 4-5.
[433] 1992: 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of domestic industry, land, and labor has enabled corporate investors to enter Mexico with little regard for its long-term development or the welfare of its people.[434] But in a common sentiment among border organizers, he further argued that this will only work to erode the relatively high U.S wages, working conditions, and environmental health, while corporate interests will continue attempts to weaken national regulatory legislation. Thus, one principal axis of border movement discourse has been the creation of new social institutions that can hold corporate capital accountable to global standards of conduct, including transnational unions, social charters, and inter-governmental enforcement mechanisms.

Toward this end, many organizers and even some regional officials suggest that corporate accountability will come only when foreign capital makes genuine contributions to Mexican national development. This implies a shift of national development strategies towards state-sponsored protection of domestic industry and its linkages to export manufacturing, as well as the stimulation of demand through social spending or wealth redistribution. Many on the border have begun to articulate such a critique of neoliberal agendas and offer alternatives. Although his party – the PAN – has supported maquiladora investors and free trade policies, Martín de la Rosa of Tijuana's Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal (COPLADEM) summarizes the problem at length:

> [We] are not really creating the foundations of a sound economy. Because on one hand the social cost, or the price we are paying for that

[434] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> short term benefit, is that in the long term we have a lot of needs without solutions – housing, or health care for the families, or even other benefits ... [T]he input that the Mexican industry is putting into the products of the maquila is below two percent, which is nothing. In that sense the maquila is not helping. Many people have argued that the maquila is a big benefit for the local economy, but I don't see that because the maquila is not helping the activity of the national industry – the Mexican industry – as it should be.... The point is that if we don't develop our industry here, providing parts to the products that are assembled in the plants, then we are not taking advantage of that proximity [to the U.S.]. Instead of exporting to Europe or to Asia or whatever ... we should be producing those parts that are needed in the maquila industry, without the need of exporting elsewhere, if we have the demand here in our country. Here I think that, in the wide perspective, the maquila is a failure in terms of transfer of technology, and in terms of helping the Mexican industry.[435]

But Alfonso Hernández of the PRD puts it more bluntly,

> The maquila is not linked to the national economy, doesn't use national products, doesn't transfer technology to our nation. It only serves the foreign economy and it obstructs an independent industrial development. And it inhibits a national industry that has many raw materials. The government facilitates this for the bosses. They open and close the factories and take the rights of workers.[436]

Although optimistic about long-term national growth under NAFTA, even Alejandro Bustamante, formerly of la Asociación de las Maquiladoras Mexicanas, agrees that there needs to be more government efforts to provide small business support, infrastructure, and public education if Mexico is to achieve autonomous development:

> The Mexican country has tried to persuade foreign investment, but that's not the only thing that Mexico is trying to do. Mexico is trying to develop something that is very important for the success of this country. It's what we call the small and medium industry and that's something that Mexico needs to continue to push for ... because that's going to be

[435] Interview, February 1997.
[436] A. Hernández 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> very important. That's creating infrastructure for the country, and that's something that we don't have. The other thing that Mexico has to do is also concentrate on education, and they're trying to do that.[437]

Indeed, government officials and even maquiladora representatives recognize that, at least in the first few years of NAFTA and in the first thirty years of export-oriented industrialization, few of the predicted benefits of neoliberal development have been realized, especially for the working majority. Instead of being the basis for spill-over or multiplier effects in the formation of domestic industry, urban infrastructure, high wages, tax revenues, and technological advancements, foreign investment has created a relatively isolated enclave economy for the profitability of transnational capital but not for the general economic welfare or political autonomy of the Mexican people. Barry, Browne, and Sims agree: "Because of its lack of linkages with the domestic economy and its export orientation, the *maquila* industry can be fairly described as a foreign-owned enclave economy."[438] This form of development may bring a rise in Gross Domestic Product, but it has failed to alleviate widespread poverty even slightly during the period of border industrialization. Therefore, even though most regional organizing campaigns are focused upon having corporations and government institutions be accountable to existing national laws and transnational agreements, there is an emergent long-term vision based in a common critical discourse about the restructuring of trade and investment regimes in the hemisphere. Given that NAFTA represents an extension of neoliberal hegemony in the continent and beyond, it has become a focal point for

[437] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

movement critique of development in the borderlands. Indeed, because NAFTA galvanized such a diversity of opposition movements in North America it has had a formative influence on the discourses borderland organizations articulate as they resist a globalization from above.

Practically every border organizer, official, and resident interviewed agrees that NAFTA does not hold great significance for the region in the immediate future, since it is merely a continental application of what most border residents have experienced as everyday reality for the last thirty years. Mary Tong (SCMW) stated, "NAFTA really just, as far as plants were concerned, sanctioned certain things that had been going on a long long time previously."[439] Organizers such as Tong[440] and José Bravo[441] (SNEEJ) have gone so far as to say the 1995 peso devaluation has had a greater short-term impact than NAFTA on Mexican economic conditions, but even this is understood as a free trade policy designed to attract foreign investment via lower costs and better exchange rates. But what has changed, most agree, are three things. First, NAFTA focused unprecedented levels of North American attention on Mexico and the border, raising concern and potentially increasing surveillance of local social and environmental problems.[442] Second, it has damaged the economic solvency of the Mexican agricultural sector, creating great poverty, northern migration, and widespread resistance

---

[438] 1995: 87-8.
[439] Interview, July 1996.
[440] Interview, July 1996.
[441] Interview, February 1997.
[442] Interview of MEBAC coordinator Naachiely López, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

movements throughout the country. And third, it has enabled some limited movement of labor-intensive export manufacturing to the interior of Mexico and other countries of Latin America.[443] Despite some speculation that the latter change signifies the obsolescence of border industry under NAFTA and despite the formal phase-out of maquiladora provisions under NAFTA, the financial advantages accruing to investors in the region are still intact, and the proximity to U.S. capital, consumer, and labor markets will make the border a long-term home to export oriented production. Clearly, many changes are sweeping Mexico after NAFTA that seem to give credence to the words of Subcomandante Marcos – NAFTA is a "death sentence" for the Mexican people. Like the Zapatista communiqués, many border movement organizations have seized the opportunity to discuss the imperialist character of neoliberal development.

> Before the agreement was signed, CJM stated in its 1993 annual report that, NAFTA will make the work more difficult because it institutionalizes the maquiladora program and opens up all of Mexico to the kind of irresponsibility now being practiced by multi-nationals throughout the maquiladora industry.... [NAFTA] perpetuates the exploitation of workers by transnational corporations – especially women, communities of color and indigenous peoples. Given the current history of gross violations towards workers, environmental pollution, human rights abuses, lack of social and physical infrastructure, NAFTA fails to provide significant and effective access for individual citizens and/or communities to correct these on-going abuses.... [NAFTA's] terms reduce standards and protections ... to the *lowest* common denominator among the three signatory countries.[444]

---

[443] 1995: 89.
[444] Coalition for Justice in the Maquildoras 1993a: 10, 12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Despite many promises and prophecies issued by the federal governments of Mexico and the U.S. for upward harmonization of wages, work conditions, and environmental standards, and despite the economic rhetoric of mutual benefit and generalized prosperity, most border movements regarded this as pure ideological obfuscation and economic fantasy. Indeed, in a 1990's global version of "trickle down" or "voodoo" economics, NAFTA and its accompanying battery of policies throughout North America have yielded nothing but contradictions. Wages in the border region since NAFTA have plummeted; inflation has more than doubled; little resources have been invested in public infrastructure despite growing need; and environmental conditions have suffered from an ever-growing population and from a rapid influx of deregulated toxic industries. And far from upwardly equalized wages, the collapse of many small businesses in Mexico and the exportation (or the threat of exportation) of jobs from the U.S. have created greater under- and un-employment in both the U.S. and Mexico. "Increasingly the structure and the mobility of global production limit the development choices open to Mexico and its borderlands."[445]

From the beginning of NAFTA, as was witnessed by organizers such as César Luna[446] of the EHC during the pre-NAFTA public commentary period, the opportunities public NGOs had to affect the agreement's composition and approval were extremely limited relative to those of transnational corporations. Indeed, the lack of democratic accountability within this moment of neoliberal policy was clear in the

---

[445] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 91.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fast Track authority granted to President Bush, which enabled a circumvention of congress in the implementation of new trade principles. Movement representatives from the many Fair Trade Coalitions throughout the U.S., including Robert Lehman[447] of San Francisco's Coalition for Fair Trade and Social Justice (CFTSJ), experienced such gross exclusion from the NAFTA debate that the agreement appeared from the outset as an anti-democratic charter for transnational corporate profitability. Roberto Martínez (AFSCBP) has reported that possibly the clearest evidence of an imperialist conquest of Mexico often comes from average U.S. citizens themselves: "I wish I had a written book or saved tapes of people calling in to say that, 'I think the solution to the immigration problem is to annex Mexico' – take it over, you know, just buy it.'"[448] This long history of U.S. imperialism is blatantly obvious to Mexican citizens as well. During a conversation with members of Grupo Beta, a civilian advisory force in Tijuana that assists potential U.S. immigrants understand the risks of undocumented crossings, Alejandro Olea[449] half jokingly but profoundly stated that the best solution to border problems would be for the U.S. government to return to Mexico the land it stole. Hernández[450] of the PRD goes so far as to suggest that NAFTA is an attempt by U.S.-based capital to annex Mexico as "one huge maquiladora," echoing the exact analyses of Chomsky and Orme et al.[451] Similarly, César Luna[452] (EHC) refers to the border as a

---

[446] Interview, July 1996.
[447] Interview, June 1996.
[448] Interview, July 1996.
[449] Interview, March 1997.
[450] A. Hernández 1996.
[451] Chomsky 1996: 39; Orme et al. 1991.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

significant site in which the U.S.-dominated "new world order" is taking shape. And of course, Aurora Pelayo's (CAFOR) commentary about the contemporary return of the Díaz dictatorship and U.S. imperialism in Mexico suggests that NAFTA and the transnational relations it portends are one of increasing violence and oppression for Mexican communities. Martín de la Rosa agrees:

> [M]illions of dollars are used not to fight poverty, but to reinforce or to support some autocratic government, or even dictatorships.... For me the foreign policy of the U.S. government is a disaster in terms of democracy. They don't support the democratic initiatives, but the dictators, and we have the case of the Shah, we have the case of Saddam Hussein, supported by the U.S. government, Pinochet, Batista, and so on.[453]

José Bravo echoes these sentiments but takes them to their logical conclusion by suggesting that, like Díaz, the current authoritarian regime may be haunted by the specter of popular revolution:

> The way I see it, on a personal level, is that I see history has a way of coming around. You saw these same things right before the Mexican Revolution, when you had the company stores, you had the U.S. corporations, you had the DuPonts, the Wrigleys, and others. Who knows, in some cases it's already led to revolution, like in Chiapas and Guerrero, and other places where people are not going to stick around and see their land be privatized.... taken away from farmers and citizens and given to banks, oil, and heavy industry.[454]

Indeed, these commentaries seem to point to "imperialism" or "(neo)colonialism" as means to describe the absurdity of neoliberal development in this transnational region, where repressive states and exploitative foreign capital interact to make debilitating

---

[452] Interview, July 1996.
[453] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

poverty, stifling repression, and toxic landscapes everyday experiences. Many border movement organizers such as Harry Browne[455] (IHRC) and Bravo[456] (SNEEJ), therefore, regard the term "imperialism" not as an atavistic label of premodern colonialism, but as a term equally applicable, if modified, to the current era of transnational corporate dominance and their client governments. North America was shaped by multiple imperial histories, and the contemporary period following the end of the Cold War and a relative decline of U.S. economic hegemony has been a time of various projects, such as the Gulf War and indeed NAFTA, to reassert a U.S. imperium. As Williams and Chrisman argue, "the political and economic culture of the twentieth century represents the ironic coincidence of the dismantling of colonialism and the continued globalizing spread of imperialism."[457]

Indeed, decades of Mexico's debt-ridden and dependent participation in a global economy dominated by U.S. capital and geopolitical influence today have granted transnational corporate and speculative capital extensive formative influence over Mexico's domestic policies, and its entire society. As one locus of control, the border region has been an increasingly open gateway through which the vagaries of U.S. influence – economic, cultural, political – have proliferated throughout Mexico. It has been a laboratory of economic change, and if neoliberalism continues to flourish in the years to come, it will be a significant testing grounds for the North

---

[454] Interview, July 1996.
[455] Interview, May 1996.
[456] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

America of the third millennium. In the words of Leslie Sklair, "The reformation of capitalism did not start and will not end in these borderlands, but what is taking place there reveals the likely structure and prospects of relations of dependency, dependent development, and dependency reversal between rich and powerful societies and poor and weak societies."[458] On several dimensions of power – gender, class, environmental, national – the border is a site of differences that have been mobilized by transnational capital and state bureaucracies to shape conditions of extreme profitability and exploitation, and with it a global polarization of wealth. And the force with which this has been secured has been trenchant, severely constraining political opportunities for significant change. Indeed, Escobar's commentary on the hegemony of modernization discourse is relevant to neoliberalism: "Reality, in sum, had been colonized by development discourse, and those who were dissatisfied with this state of affairs had to struggle for bits and pieces of freedom within it, in the hope that in the process a different reality could be constructed."[459] Clearly, the words of the above organizers and officials alike reveal a common indictment of corporate-led globalization and state complicity in the destruction of the borderland political-economy, culture, and environment. In confronting these anti-democratic and resolute structures of authority, they articulate sentiments of despair, cynicism, and

[457] Williams and Chrisman 1994: 1.
[458] Sklair 1989: 229.
[459] 1995: 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

alienation – products of a war-weary skepticism of immediate political change and an acknowledgment of the existential absurdity of such immiserated conditions of life.

Yet, there are cracks in the edifice of neoliberalism. José Bravo's (SNEEJ) hopeful predictions regarding revolutionary change in Mexico; Artemio Osuna's resolute proclamation not to give "one centimeter" to Hyundai in SIOAC's struggle for its land; and the solidarity displayed by the many women maquila workers at EMOSA who sought legal remedies for the abuses of U.S.-based transnational – these are only three cases that exemplify an emergent base of opposition to an encroaching neoliberal imperialism. Coming full circle to reconsider the case of SIOAC that opened this chapter, it is clear that, if many border organizers possess Gramsci's "pessimism of the intellect," they all also share his "optimism of the will" – a hope and a faith in the abilities of working people to empower themselves and resist becoming mere objects of neoliberal experiments. The discourses border movement organizers use to understand power in the region, cohering however loosely in a subaltern critique of neoliberalism, have found their extension in many diverse movement strategies. Far beyond an understanding of the ways in which border movements comprehend neoliberal dilemmas, the contours and directions of these strategies allow for a more thorough discussion of subaltern discourses in the region and the practical conflicts which have shaped them. And only through an analysis of the strategies, tactics, and practical orientations of border movements can there be a contextualized engagement with the many transnational issues that construct

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

neoliberalism and its imperial other. It is this analysis to which this discussion now turns.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> The shift from industrial to postindustrial, or complex, society has profoundly affected the makeup and organization of social movements and challenged all received notions about their functioning. The old ways of thinking about social movements are not commensurate with the realities of today's complex society, and new ways of imagining the workings, forms, and ends of collective struggle have not yet been established or stabilized.
>
> – Robert Fisher and Joseph Kling[460]

> the new social movements seem at present to embody our best hopes for challenging established and oppressive political, economic, and cultural arrangements at levels of social complexity, from the interpersonal to the international.... The new social movements, and the theorizing that accompanies their emergence and evolution, reconstitute our understanding of "the political" and "the global".... Both by enlarging our sense of "the political" and insisting that everyday practices contain an element of "the global," new social movements are dramatically altering our understanding of what the pursuit of a just world order entails in a variety of concrete situations.
>
> – Richard Falk[461]

In 1991 in Matamoros, a city located in Mexico's northeastern state of Tamaulipas, and adjacent to Brownsville, Texas, the EPA found that a maquiladora owned and operated by the U.S. firm Stepan Chemical was responsible for an "ammonia leak in [the] colonias" next to the plant. Stepan Chemical produces basic and intermediate chemicals and surfactants, and the EPA only then discovered something that was known or suspected by local residents for a long time, that

[460] 1993: xiv.
[461] 1992: 125-6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

effluent was contributing to the toxicity of local water supplies used by residents for washing and cooking. In the area immediately surrounding the facility, where Stepan workers and their families resided, ammonia leaks were known to be linked to serious respiratory and internal organ damage. The company was not a stranger to toxic leaks, since in 1989, two years before the incident in Matamoros, Stepan's flagship plant in Maywood, New Jersey was discovered to have a corrosive leak that necessitated an evacuation of the factory and provoked much outrage amongst the workers subjected to the hazard.[462]

But Matamoros also has been no stranger to intensive toxics. The city is located where the Rio Grande completes its long toxic journey collecting wastes from the cities located along the border, and it is the place where the river's contents empty into the Gulf of Mexico. A canal flowing through an impoverished Matamoros neighborhood was found to contain the widest range of contaminants detected in all of the borderland water sources in a 1992 study, which is no small claim since the New River flowing across the Mexicali/Calexico border is reputed to be the most polluted stretch of water in North America.[463] Also in 1992, at the Finsa Industrial Park in Matamoros local researchers discovered that xylene, emitted from the nearby GM subsidiary, existed at six thousand times the U.S. legally tolerable level in a local discharge (2.8 million parts per billion), and has been linked to increased incidences of respiratory irritation, brain hemorrhage, internal organ bleeding, and possibly most

---

[462] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994: 45.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

well-known, anencephaly, a condition in which infants are born without brain stems.[464] But of all the cases of toxification, that caused by Stepan Chemical became one of the most publicized and central campaigns for environmental justice in the borderlands.

With the evidence for a disregard of worker health and safety mounting against Stepan Chemical, and with relatively no legal recourse and no worker unionization, the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM, one of the border's largest and most inclusive movement organizations with over one hundred affiliates) decided to hold one of its 1993 meetings in Maywood, New Jersey to help galvanize a transnational campaign against the corporation. With significant contributions from U.S. environmental organizations, worker health and safety support groups, and local Mexican community associations, the CJM began a binational campaign to have Stepan and other maquilas adhere to tighter environmental standards or relocate to safer and less populous areas. This campaign had many interlocking strategies. After pointing out the contamination problems to the U.S. EPA and its Mexican counterpart, the Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL, now Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales, y Pesca or SEMARNAP), colonia leaders were able to gain a meeting with Stepan officials to discuss their grievances. Since this meeting yielded no reforms, the CJM and the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) filed a shareholder resolution to add the threat of stock divestment to Stepan's

---

[463] Lewis, Kaltofen, and Ormsby 1992: 68.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

concerns. In Chicago, the location of Stepan's executive offices, local political officials were notified as to Stepan's violations and were urged to censure the company; and a sample of toxic waste was delivered to CEO Paul Stepan's office. An eighteen minute award-winning video, entitled "Stepan Chemical: The Poisoning of a Mexican Community," was produced to help in outreach as well as to document the environmental damage Stepan Chemical and other maquilas caused in what has been called Matamoros' "Chemical Row." The CJM also worked with John Quiñonez of "Prime Time Live" to expose the high rates of anencephaly in Matamoros and Brownsville to a national audience. But most of all, the CJM and its member organizations such as the Comité Fronterizo de Obreras (CFO), with help from the AFL-CIO, performed an extensive amount of networking amongst local colonia and political organizations, mobilizing great solidarity among local communities from all along the border.

Stepan Chemical, rather than face increased regulatory scrutiny, divestment threats, and public relations dilemmas, decided to adopt much of the Coalition's proposal. The transnational agreed to discontinue the use of dangerous chemicals, begin a comprehensive worker training program in the handling of toxic wastes, and modify its pollution practices, which included eliminating unlined evaporation ponds near the plant, removing its discharge pipe, and performing site assessments. Except for refusing to clean up past discharges, which the CJM considered a serious loss,

---

[464] Lewis, Kaltofen, and Ormsby 1992: 69.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Stepan agreed to all of the terms local colonia leaders and movement representatives wanted. Using governmental, media, and direct action strategies; linking environmental, labor, and community organizations; and involving both U.S. and Mexican communities, the CJM not only mitigated Stepan Chemical's environmental injustices, but was able to stop the toxic operations of Retzloff Chemical (pesticides) and Metales Federados Asarco (smelting) as well.[465] Although these gains are highly limited to voluntary corporate policies, and accidents such as exploding gas tanks near workers' homes have continued, the mobilization of this broad campaign solidified a culture of solidarity against corporate abuses on the border, and served to promote ever larger and more proactive concerns for the effects of "free trade" and unregulated export-oriented development.

As merely one example, the campaign against Stepan Chemical recognized the immediate needs of local working people along the border, while it also attended to the long-term possibilities of transnational democracy, redistribution, and alternatives to corporate-led globalization. Indeed, if the 1990s have seen the advent of a neoliberal regime of accumulation with its requisite agendas of free trade, export-oriented industrialization, and neo-imperial dependencies, they also have seen a new wave of movements that have worked to construct alternative visions of development and democratic transnational publics.[466] With only volunteer staffs, limited budgets, and existing in the binational communities they assist, these movement organizations

[465] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994: 5-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

are struggling to form an emergent tradition of simultaneously local and transnational forms of economic equality and environmental justice. As in the Stepan campaign, border labor and environmental justice organizations have engaged in a variety of strategies and tactics. These include grassroots and participatory strategies of representation, popular education/consciousness raising, local research of social/environmental dilemmas, coalition building across political interests and borders, legal representation, emergency direct action responses to local crises, corporate pressure campaigns, environmental health protection, and the facilitation of union organizing. These strategies and their critical contributions to social movement politics under neoliberalism may be categorized into research/education, coalition building, state (trans)formation, and making corporate capital accountable, all of which contain general principles of a radically democratic populism that will be discussed below. Surely, with every crisis there is opportunity, and with each emergency there is an emergence of new social forms which present unique possibilities for the future.

Situated Knowledges: Action Research and Pedagogies of Empowerment

One unique possibility lies in the ways by which border environmental and labor movement organizations empower local knowledge – or the everyday lived experiences – of regional crises of neoliberal development. Certainly, organizers and members of local community organizations have allegiances – sometimes tenuous,

---

[466] Garner 1994: 427-9; Brecher and Costello 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sometimes more developed – with academic and journalistic students of the border, including those who have achieved some acclaim as authorities on the region and U.S.-Mexico relations. These include academic writers such as Carrillo, Fernández-Kelly, Tiano, Shaiken, Anzaldúa, and journalists such as David Bacon and David Moberg. However, although these allegiances have become useful for researching and publicizing particular problems, and for bringing greater public pressure to bear upon those responsible, it is clear that the independent research, analyses, critiques, and testimonial narratives of local residents have a more primary significance for border movements. In part, this is because there are few official and/or publicly available documents within Mexico regarding the extent and dimensions of environmental and labor abuses along the border. Indeed, the organizer of the now disbanded CFTSJ, Robert Lehman, had a telling experience when he proposed to the U.S. Department of Labor a pre-NAFTA research project that would monitor free trade impacts on labor. To this a Labor Department official said, "That would just be giving the big unions a loaded gun to point it at our heads."[467] Thus, due to few monitors and official watchdog agencies, it has been incumbent on local activists and citizens to begin to write their own stories and compile their own research data to raise public awareness and promote alternatives.

But another point of frustration which has led to independent local research is that academics and journalists engage in border research as interlopers, with few ties

[467] Interview, June 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to the long-term interests of locals. Organizers like José Bravo[468] (SNEEJ), Laura Durazo[469] (PFEA), Eduardo Badillo[470] (CAFOR), Carmen Valadez[471] (CDM/GFX) and Kaare Kjos[472] of the Environmental Committee of the San Diego/Tijuana Region (ECSDTJ) have argued with almost a single voice that academic research has been conducted, more often than not, without any consultation from local border residents. They argue not only that this creates faulty research conclusions which misrepresent the region and its many dilemmas, often minimizing the crises of labor and environmental decay, but also that this makes academic pursuits unaccountable and inaccessible to those from whom they borrow. Biologists and environmental scientists often come to the border to perform studies for the EPA, private corporations, or their own universities, without ever sharing their results with local citizens. This functions to disarm border residents – *fronterizos* – of information that could raise consciousness, help avoidance of toxics, begin a legal case, or initiate more direct forms of action. Humanities students and social scientists of various stripes also make their way to the borderland, studying anything from border art to state formations, but rarely share project designs or results with fronterizos. José Bravo has argued that many come, take the information they need, and use it to build journalistic or academic careers without ever returning, or without ever using the

[468] Interview, July 1996.
[469] Interview, February 1997.
[470] Interview, February 1997.
[471] Interview, July 1996.
[472] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

information in a way that could empower residents.[473] In effect, border activists have described an imperialist analog to neoliberal export-oriented development in the region – an academic export processing – in which intellectuals descend on the borderlands, extracting cultural capital from Mexican workers which rarely seems to return to the region in the form of political empowerment, regional or Mexican cultural autonomy, or even simple economic resources. They also suggest that researchers take information and use it to construct misleading representations of the border that become official knowledge of the region, obliging border residents to live out even more colonial contradictions. Indeed, although many academic publications, as was evidenced in Chapter Three, have been relevant to fronterizos and movement organizers in their construction of analyses and critiques of border development, they have been notoriously few.

Therefore, as a counter-movement to this form of knowledge production, border movement organizations have contributed to edited testimonial volumes, most notably Oscar Martínez's *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*[474] and Augusta Dwyer's *On the Line: Life on the U.S.-Mexican Border.*[475] Border activists also have published accessible and comprehensive reports, papers, and books about the border and its history, including Harry Browne of

[473] Interview, February 1997.
[474] Martínez 1994.
[475] Dwyer 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the IHRC,[476] Mary Tong of the SCMW, and Richard Kamp of the Border Ecology Project (BEP).[477] There also have been several videos of border labor and environmental problems related to maquiladora developments which border organizations have organized and produced, including several documentaries of problematic cases. Those national or transnational NGOs working in coalition with border organizations have published informative and action-oriented surveys of development dilemmas, including that by Human Rights Watch entitled, *No Guarantees: Sex Discrimination in Mexico's Maquiladora Sector*.[478] Further, Carmen Valadez (CDM/GFX) and Jaime Cota (CITTAC) have undertaken the task of compiling workers' stories into what will be a very valuable book for students, policy-makers, and movements everywhere.[479] And of course, included in the investigative projects of local activists has been opposition research, designed to assess the abuses and power structures of corporate and government actors along the border, providing a growing database of maquila transgressions and increasing movement effectivity. This has been done by many organizations, but most notably the CJM, the SCMW, and the PFEA, which have successfully identified buying and supplier networks, ownership structures, union-busting histories, investment commitments in Mexico, as well as workforce size and location. This has helped in strategizing against companies from Stepan Chemical to Hyundai. Lastly, as mentioned in the previous

[476] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1995.
[477] 1996.
[478] Human Rights Watch 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

chapter, the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras has contracted independent researcher Ruth Rosenbaum to perform *pro bono* a purchasing power study assessing real wage levels. In a telling statement about the general attitude towards academic research, Rosenbaum, when questioned about whether this was an academic study, emphatically replied, "No, this is free, and I already have my Ph.D." Indeed, for some border activists, the mere allusion to academic research elicits thoughts of big budgets, ivory tower abstraction, impractical information, and self-serving careerists. One may argue that this is an expression of a broad critique of the academy as generally inaccessible to underprivileged citizens, uninvolved in social justice movements, and worse, a primary locus of many hegemonic discourses that have supported nonsustainable and unjust forms of development in the borderlands. Thus, local activists and community leaders have begun their own research projects and their own pedagogies of empowerment.

Although local research efforts have addressed a wide array of problems on the border, possibly one of the most common and contested areas of scientific research is the environmental impacts of toxic releases. In one facet of the Matamoros toxics story above, we may see very clearly the conflicts that emerge between local knowledge of border development problems and that of government and corporate representatives. Just across the Rio Grande from Matamoros, in Brownsville, Texas, communities were also affected by the release of xylene into

---

[479] Valadez 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

local water and soil. Childhood cancers increased two hundred thirty percent and birth defects were up by a factor of fifteen,[480] not to mention xylene-related problems such as internal organ damage, respiratory problems, and anencephaly, which was four times the normal rate of occurrence. Local residents experienced these problems in frighteningly normal incidents of death, stillbirth and chronic health disorders, and thus they demanded formal confirmation and compensation. In a lawsuit filed by sixteen Brownsville families, eighty-eight corporations including AT&T, Zenith, and GM were alleged to have caused wrongful deaths through these xylene emissions. With assistance from local doctors and epidemiologists, they made their *prima facie* case, and they demanded compensation for damages including medical expenses, physical impairment, pain and suffering, mental anguish, and disfigurement, among others. In response to these charges, Fred Quintana of la Asociación de las Maquiladoras in Matamoros said the claims were without basis since the accused were among the "most law-abiding companies"[481] and that the CJM, which helped to organize the communities, was lying about conditions in Mexico, denigrating the maquila industry and Matamoros. Indeed, this potential threat to border investment resulted in one activist, Domingo Gonzalez, receiving an intimidating call from the Mexican government.[482] General Motors spokesman Bill O'Neill also stated that GM "denies strongly that we have been negligent relative to our handling of hazardous

[480] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993b: 54.
[481] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994: 17.
[482] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1993b: 63.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

waste and we also deny that the waste causes anencephalic babies.... We're concerned, of course.... This concerns some of our employees."[483]

In response to public frustration, the Center for Disease Control and the Texas Department of Health researched the rate of anencephalic births and found it to be a "trend" not an "epidemic," failing to tie the birth defects to environmental toxics. But then again, they did not even travel to Brownsville or Matamoros to perform the studies. Instead, they focused merely on survey data gathered about the diets of local pregnant mothers. From this, they suggested, along with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), that the causes of the birth defects were folic acid deficiencies in the diets of local women, and they began a campaign to help young mothers achieve the prenatal supplements and care they believed they needed. To many border activists representing SNEEJ, EHC, CJM, and the BEP, this not only blamed the victims and insulted the intelligence of local residents, but took eighteen months to complete and committed egregious methodological errors, never taking soil and water samples, and failing to understand that folic acid is commonly found in corn tortillas, a staple food in the affected communities.[484] Through a lack of interest in local communities, they arrived at highly irrational conclusions and therefore allowed the responsibility for toxification to be displaced onto women's inadequate management of their bodies – an example of paternalistic and self-interested research. But more, because the CDC-TDH study refused to label the problem an "epidemic,"

[483] Byrne 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

government funding for clean-up and health care was not made available. José Bravo (SNEEJ) explained the ensuing confrontation between border activists and the EPA as follows:

> Bill Reilly [of the EPA] did a report to us and said, "Look, we found the problem. The problem is that the mothers who had these children have a folic acid deficiency." And after we finished reading the riot act to him, we said, "You know, this is not only insulting but it's a waste of my money, because I paid for it." After we explained to him that tortillas, which are a main staple, have a high concentration of folic acid – [as well as] corn and beans and other things like that, what poor people eat – he did a double take and said, "Well maybe we need to get back to it." Right? ... Sometimes you can go to the community and the community can tell you, "Here's where you look. Here's where and here's how."[485]

As Naachiely López, of Movimiento Ecologista de Baja California, AC (MEBAC), states, "We have a lot of people in the colonias, and most of the time they're like our eyes and our ears in the city."[486] In subsequent studies with the National Toxics Campaign and independent physicians, the CJM found extremely high concentrations of xylene near GM and Stepan maquiladoras, far beyond legally tolerable levels in the U.S., yielding strong correlations between xylene exposure and birth defects. But because of contradictory studies, and hence conflicting expert testimony, the lawsuit against these companies has been neither won, nor settled. Indeed, one maquiladora worker and organizer with the Centro Taller de Labor (CETLAC) in Júarez argues that, in current research regarding soil contamination, government bodies continue to

[484] Border Campaign 1993.
[485] Interview, July 1996.
[486] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

draw upon independently contracted studies by major universities, denounce local claims of toxicity, and never report the results or analytical conclusions of these studies.[487] As Assistant Director of the Udall Center at the University of Arizona, Robert Varady, argued, "If they really wanted good input they would have gone about this the other way ... Instead of it being a top-down thing, they should have tried to gather local reaction first."[488] Or in the words of Bravo (SNEEJ), researchers on the border need to refrain from "speaking on behalf of the community" unless there has been community participation from the outset.[489]

At a more general level, not only does this exclude local knowledge from global circuits of information about neoliberal development and its crises, but, as in the case of the Brownsville families, it can serve to inhibit restitution and reinforce hegemonic ideologies of corporate benevolence, government responsibility, and worker culpability. Clearly, if there is no consultation with local border residents regarding their conditions of life and labor, any study of local development risks confirming the imperialistic discourses of neoliberalism, finding little cause to question official political-economic narratives of beneficial modernization and progress. Or at best, those outside researchers who wish to assist local communities, but neglect their interests and knowledge, may produce information that is unusable, redundant, or that suggests strategies of resistance which are impossible or risky to

[487] Solis 1996.
[488] In Hawkins 1991.
[489] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

execute. As one example, Mary Tong (SCMW) has suggested research needs to be careful about naming workers and organizers, since they may become the targets of repressive government/corporate tactics. Therefore, when local activists perform or contract research projects, they are more comprehensive in their assessment of local experiences with labor and environmental crises; they are designed to address issues of strategic relevance to justice campaigns; and they struggle to document the numerous problems border residents face. The latter has occupied the majority of local activist research and has been significant in creating a culture of solidarity that can protect workers from hazards and abuse, all the while enabling more encompassing counter-narratives to neoliberalism. Indeed, this local, situated knowledge and its global applications are the starting points for broader political strategies of change and the beginnings of a globalization from below.

But the information and conclusions that these research projects construct would not contribute to the empowerment of working communities if they were not disseminated through educational campaigns. As former director of the CJM, Susan Mika, argues, popular education and consciousness-raising constitute not only the first priority of organizing on the border, but also the primary successes of community-based border organizing to date. She says it brings "a whole other level of awareness about what could be done," and without this expansion of vision, little social change could be accomplished.[490] Kjaare Kjos (ECSDTJ) agrees and claims

[490] Interview, March 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that, "We are ambitious in a subtle way, because we're trying to alter attitudes, and maybe that's the most ambitious of all.... Here we're trying to build relationships, which is very abstract and difficult."[491] As a Benedictine Sister who has had a long history of social service, Mika has had a special but not uncommon dedication towards pedagogies that value the everyday intellectual practices of working class fronterizos, citing Paulo Freire and Saul Alinsky as major influences.[492] These influences suggest more democratic and inclusive processes of open debate, discussion, and training in which workers share their personal experiences rather than merely passively receiving "expert" knowledge. Activists thus assume the role of facilitator not authority, inserting factual knowledge when relevant and directing conversation towards consensual strategies of empowerment that rely upon ever-expanding leadership from the grassroots. This has been particularly effective in the experiences of Ed Krueger within the Comité Fronterizo de Obreras (CFO), who has helped to create dynamic and powerful cells of worker-activists throughout the Texas/Chihuahua border region.[493] Also, Mary Tong of Tijuana's Support Committee for the Maquiladora Workers (SCMW) has cited the Highlander Center as a model for democratic grassroots empowerment campaigns,[494] and has had success in mobilizing knowledgeable and critical worker resistance in a variety of cases. As CJM staff coordinator Eric Meyers puts it, "our principle work is to facilitate communications,

[491] Interview, July 1996.
[492] Interview, March 1995.
[493] Krueger 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

coordinate actions, and to ensure that member organizations are aware of others' actions, and are aware of the coordination we try to do. It is the member[s] ... that actually carry these projects out."[495]

Here, strategies and goals emanate more organically from the membership rather than being imposed by organizers or representatives of trans/national movements. As workers share their own narratives of labor abuse and environmental hazards, the testimonial form has become a primary means of expression, providing local movements such as the CFO, the CJM, CDM/GFX, and the SCMW with extensive documentation of worker beliefs and ideologies. Although these democratic principles of education are highly valued, it is clear that on many occasions organizers feel compelled to make interventions into the lives of workers by offering unsolicited advice and promoting particular strategies. Beyond this, it is clear that any romanticization of worker testimonies as authentic or unmediated risks reproducing imperialist visions of the pure native Other and silencing useful dialog between local community knowledge and that of people with different identities and from other places. And clearly, border movements – like all public spaces – are far from Habermas's "ideal speech situation" in which communicative abilities are equally distributed and transparent. But despite these obvious difficulties in creating thoroughly democratic process, most every organizer interviewed articulated a democratic ethos that preferred a dialogic form of intervention, which activists may

[494] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

initiate, but in which members and organizers engage in critical interchange about development crises and strategic alternatives. This tendency towards a decentralization of power at the micro levels of organizing enables the interventions of organizers to be subject to interrogation, dismissal, or rearticulation with local needs and interests. And in so doing, there is a developing dialogue between the global and the local, to be explored more below.

More directly, the most common issues promoted through educational campaigns have been the legal rights of workers under Mexican law or NAFTA, the toxicity and effects of chemicals found inside and outside the workplace, rights and privileges of unionization, and women's skills of empowerment at home and at work. These have been most frequent since the problems are commonplace, since the media are negligent, and since Mexico's citizen's rights instruction, women's education, and environmental health information have been either non-existent or inaccessible to underprivileged fronterizos. Organizers such as Eduardo Badillo[496] (CAFOR), Manuel Mondragon[497] (CFO), Jaime Cota[498] (CITTAC), José Morales[499] (EcoSol), Ed Krueger[500] (CFO), and César Luna[501] (EHC) have implored one another and anyone who has an interest in the region to assist in educating maquiladora workers about their labor and environmental rights. From the violated reproductive freedoms of

---

[495] Meyers 1996.
[496] Badillo 1996.
[497] Mondragon 1996.
[498] Cota 1996.
[499] Morales 1996.
[500] Krueger 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pregnant women workers to the firings and blacklistings of unionists; from the exposure of workers to deathly toxins to the many industrial accidents causing debilitating injury, the maquiladoras have created a system of rights violations that require workers to be better educated and proactive in seeking resolution. Thus, these activists have spoken with a tone of dire urgency since the sheer number and magnitude of abuses have caused many organizers to be inundated with workers' requests for training, education, and often, legal representation. Further, according to Badillo[502] (CAFOR), Luna[503] (EHC), and Morales[504] (EHC), many communities are familiar with the daily tribulations of export manufacturing and its destructiveness, but there remains amongst many workers a deficit of sociological, economic, or political critique of development in the region. And surely, it can be painful and intimidating to confront such overwhelming forces of oppression. Therefore, to meet the demand for education and support, border movement organizations have created a diversity of educational fora such as movement conferences, regular leadership training sessions, direct action events, individual consultations between activists and workers, the circulation of publications, and open community centers that have become social service institutions for many along the border.

These educational campaigns are in their infancy, but already they have become highly influential. SIOAC, La Mujer Obrera, CDM/GFX, CITTAC, CFO,

---

[501] Interview, July 1996.
[502] Interview, February 1997.
[503] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CJM, and CAFOR have been involved in creating such centers throughout the borderlands, forming an ever brighter constellation to help guide local communities to environmental and social justice. And they have promoted, non-accidentally, a growing culture of opposition to neoliberalism. For instance, the CDM/GFX, in addition to educational workshops working to prevent and sensitize workers to sexual abuse, the group has offered a program on labor, reproductive health, and sexuality that, in their words, "gives attention and serves to improve the knowledge of the body, of work health and reproductive rights. This program permits documentation of the processes that deteriorate the health of women and the problematique they represent."[505] Other organizations such as the CJM and the SCMW have facilitated the publication of manuals chronicling legal violations and providing accessible documentation of workers' legal rights to healthy and safe workplaces. Laura Durazo (PFEA) has begun a unique project of environmental education in Tijuana's elementary schools, teaching basic principles of environmental health and resource conservation.[506] Workshops are also a source of education, promoting health/safety standards and women's leadership training, offering legal and organizational skills as well as emotional support and peer counseling for workers suffering from violations of their bodies and dignity. Of particular significance are those workshops led by José Luis Morales (EcoSol) who has worked in solidarity with the Mexican Programa

---

[504] Morales 1996.
[505] Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X 1996.
[506] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Nacional de Educación Ambiental (PNEA), and Garrett Brown for the Support Network for Occupational Health in the Maquiladoras (SNOHM), which is based in Berkeley, California and has over two hundred members in three nations. Brown works with border organizations such as CAFOR and CITTAC to raise awareness about toxics, provide safety equipment, conduct surveys assessing overall workplace safety, and create a database on toxins and violators throughout the region.[507] With regularity, these workshops have led to a series of worker-organized meetings that are action-oriented and have ended in proactive solutions. As an example of the positive results of these educational fora, worker Norma Gómez discusses her empowerment through work with CAFOR:

> The supervisors of the assembly lines pressure and threaten us, making up their own rules. Thanks to CAFOR, we have been given classes about toxic substances. I've been able to learn about workers rights. I've learned about federal labor law and about labor rights.... [M]anagers and supervisors make up their own rules, and as workers we have to respect them or else we are labeled "troublemaker." Why? Thanks to CAFOR I know what is happening.... I know about my rights. I was on the assembly line, and now I am an assembly line worker who is a troublemaker.... They told me to leave, and if I don't fit out the door, to go out the window. How can they make up their own rules? I told them they violate the law.... They told me to leave if I don't like it. I will leave when I want to, not when they tell me. I continue to work through the support of CAFOR. They demoted me, but I won't let them intimidate me because I know what should be done.[508]

Indeed, Badillo confirms that this is CAFOR's purpose: "we've been trying to get closer to workers and break their apathy. This comes from the fear of workers losing

---

[507] Brown 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

their jobs. They say they don't want to be there because when they join, they might be fired. They are no longer apathetic. They work, speak, and organize in the maquilas."[509] Beyond mere information sharing, this reveals how popular educational strategies are pedagogies of empowerment since they simultaneously provide solidarity with fellow workers, emotional support and encouragement, bulwarks against fear and intimidation, moral and legal norms for corporate conduct, and possibly most proactively, renewed hopes and expectations in social change. Certainly, as will be explored in Chapter Five, Ed Feigen of the AFL-CIO suggests that educational campaigns should not be considered the end-point of successful movement campaigns, and indeed to do so would support quietism.[510] But, as Badillo[511] (CAFOR) and Tong[512] (SCMW) argue, in a movement context where workers have minimal resources or leisure time to devote to organizing or formal education, and in a setting where workers are subject to intensive repression by government-union-transnational alliances, every ounce of knowledge and solidarity is precious. And besides providing greater support for maquila workers and their communities, these educational fora offer opportunities for inter-movement coalition, creating ever-broader critiques of regional development problems and collaborative strategies for more significant strides towards radically democratic alternatives.

---

[508] Gómez 1996.
[509] Interview, February 1997.
[510] Interview, March 1997.
[511] Interview, February 1997.
[512] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Coalition Building: Becoming a TransAmerican *Red*

The border context is unique in that it allows immediate and flexible transition between local and global phases of resistance. The sheer economic significance of the region affords local political organizers a global reach, and it forces fronterizos to recognize that they can have no relief from their immediate dilemmas unless there is a restructuring of transnational capital. Indeed, Susan Mika of the CJM prefers to invert the common adage, "think globally, act locally," to read, "think locally, act globally," since it would be neglectful and suicidal to focus merely on the local manifestations of undoubtedly global problems.[513] Through new communication technologies, increasingly transnational economics, global ecological processes, and more mobile diasporas within North America, border movements have begun to regard transnational cultural and political ties as common sense. Many concur with CJM's Susan Mika, who argues, transnational organizing is "the only thing that makes sense,"[514] since it is the best leverage against transnational corporations, and since it replaces an imperial transnational culture with one that respects a radical global inclusiveness. Also, the sheer severity of border social/environmental problems necessitate coalitional resource sharing and strategic assistance whenever possible. Further, Harry Browne (IHRC) highlights how transnational coalition-building gives local movements greater legitimacy as transnational actors,

---

[513] Interview, March 1995.
[514] Interview, March 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

consequently ensuring a wider inclusiveness of strategies and political voices.[515] Likewise, Carmen Valadez states the work of CDM/GFX centers around "constructing networks of action, empowerment and local solidarity, national and international, between women," claiming a distinctly feminist character to locally-based subaltern research.[516] Some environmental organizations, such as MEBAC and PFEA have emerged from national and transnational networks that regard coalition-building as a necessary reflection of the global eco-system in which non-sustainable conditions anywhere promote ecological devastation everywhere.[517] Thus, Kjos[518] (ECSDTJ), Luna[519] (EHC), Tong[520] (SCMW), López[521] (MEBAC), Bravo[522] (SNEEJ), Feigen[523] (AFL-CIO), Medina[524] (SEIU), and Saxod[525] (USMBPF), and many other organizers have been part of a growing consensus that nationally-based endeavors for many North American movements have become futile and obsolete, making the border an interesting beginning for a new movement future. With an ostensibly practical agenda to address immediate crises of development, these movements are shaping a radically democratic transnational political solidarity – a

[515] This has been embodied by the efforts of the IHRC to publish a valuable resource, *Cross-Border Links*, providing basic cross-indexed information about numerous border organizations.
[516] Valadez 1996.
[517] Interview with MEBAC coordinator Naachiely López, February 1997.
[518] Interview, July 1996.
[519] Interview, July 1996.
[520] Interview, July 1996.
[521] Interview, February 1997.
[522] Interview, July 1996.
[523] Interview, March 1997.
[524] Interview, March 1997.
[525] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

network, or *red* in Spanish – extending citizenship to the hemispheric level and resisting the contradictions of neoliberalism.

Mary Tong (SCMW) has worked extensively to broaden the border's bi-national networks into trans-american and global networks by meeting with workers and activists in nations ever-more affected by maquiladora developments and capital mobility in general, including Canada, Guatemala, Cuba, El Salvador, and more recently, Japan and Korea. In her words, "transnational corporations know no borders," and therefore activists should not either.[526] The organizations with which shc is forging ties include U.S.-Guatemala Labor Education Project (USGLEP), a U.S.-Guatemalan Equipo de Apoyo Internacional para Textileras (EAIT), Hong Kong's Asian Monitor Resource Center (AMRC), and the El Salvadoran support groups, the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and El Rescate. The substance of these collaborations at present is information sharing and opposition research on transnationals, but conversations are developing around coalitional action strategies. For Tong, it is only through these bonds of solidarity and education that significant leverage can be used against increasingly mobile and exploitative transnationals, by developing union-to-union campaigns within the same corporations or sectors, by pressuring different nations simultaneously for fair trade legislation, and for setting legal precedent for worker protections. Thus, through the coalitional inter-movement ties forged on the border, the region's historic identity of

---

[526] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

bi-nationalism is being expanded to much of the continent – deepening a consciousness of global citizenship and thus broad political-economic entitlements.

In this practice of coalition, there is a unique openness towards solidarity that seeks difference in unity by strategically intermingling various political sectors – churches, unions, workers, environmentalists, trade activists – and national citizens – Canadian, U.S., Mexican, Guatemalan, Chilean, etcetera. This coalitional endeavor has been described by Mika (CJM) as the result of reciprocal "give and take,"[527] by Ojeda (CJM) as an effect of actively "interlocking" agendas,[528] and by Tong (SCMW) as a consequence of flexible contributions to collective goals of democracy and corporate accountability.[529] Not only do these coalitions provide stronger resistance to common dilemmas, but many workers such as Artémio Osuna of SIOAC claim that it is this solidarity that sustains individual commitment in the face of repression: "If the government imprisons us, so be it. But you will be here struggling in unity. Truth will be defended. This is what supports us now and in the future."[530] Veronica, a worker in the EMOSA sexual abuse case, claims the lawsuit would not have been won without the coalitional assistance of border activists: "Even if we had one hundred lawyers, we couldn't have won without your support."[531] In the words of their Mexican legal advisor, Ramon Contreras, "humanness and unification can

[527] Interview with former CJM Executive Director Susan Mika, March 1995.
[528] Ojeda 1996.
[529] Interview, July 1996.
[530] Osuna 1996.
[531] Veronica 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

overcome anything."[532] Likewise, Hortensia Hernández (SIOAC) expressed her appreciation for the broad support of the Maclovio Rojas struggle against government-corporate seizure of their land,

> We'd like to thank you. This gives us more confidence to continue with our struggle, for we see that we're not alone. My friends here from Maclovio Rojas, we should applaud our friends and ask them that this not be the last time they come visit us. We will always receive you here with open arms at any hour. We are very happy to continue forward. Thank you for everything, each one of you. We hope each of you will continue forward with love, for your brothers and sisters, for communities like ours. This is the same all around the world. Thank you very much.[533]

However, despite this interest in transnational solidarity, many difficulties exist that challenge everyone to engage in more radically democratic and empowering strategies of mutual aid. Historically there have been many reasons why Mexican movements have distrusted coalitions with their U.S. counterparts. Tong (SCMW) discusses how, after over a century of U.S. political, economic, and cultural interventions into Mexico, many activists south of the border have been wary of U.S. activists' impositions of inappropriate and risky strategies, protectionist agendas, as well as paternalistic presumptions about Mexican's needs for U.S. expertise in movement organizing.[534] These impositions, according to Kaare Kjos (ECSDTJ), have been the basis for growing stereotypes of U.S. activists. Many Mexican activists and working communities harbor suspicions of a left interventionism that may mimic

---

[532] Contreras 1996.
[533] H. Hernández 1996.
[534] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in a hegemonic way the imperialist history of the U.S. and Mexico. Carmen Valadez and Reyna Montoya (CDM/GFX), in one of the few references to race by border organizers, commented that paternalism by "blancos" – whites – in Mexico and in the U.S. is all too common, suggesting even more clearly that the racial, economic, and gendered mechanisms of imperialism are at work in the borderlands.[535] Indeed, as will be explored further in Chapter Five, U.S.-based unions historically have been willing to make compromises with U.S. capital and imperialist U.S. foreign policy in order to maintain a privileged position in the global division of labor – a labor aristocracy – primarily by protecting U.S. jobs from foreign competition, and in some cases assisting in the demobilization of democratic movements throughout the Americas. Mexican environmental activists also have been suspicious of U.S. environmental organizations wishing to protect Mexican wilderness while ignoring urban or workplace environments, or opposing forms of development that provide much needed jobs without offering realistic alternatives. Another contributing factor to this distrust, according to Roberto Martínez[536] of the American Friends Service Committee Border Project (AFSCBP), is the recent intensification of anti-Mexican immigrant scapegoating and xenophobia, especially evidenced in increased hate group activity and popular support for border militarization through the Border Patrol; California Republican Bob Dornan's fears of undocumented immigrant voters contributing to his defeat; public ratification of California's Proposition 187, denying

[535] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

welfare benefits, emergency health care, and education to undocumented immigrants; and the public success of Proposition 227 which now denies funding for bilingual education throughout the state.[537] When these Mexican suspicions are heightened due to a historically revolutionary and nationalist culture of protection from foreign imposition, it becomes paramount to engage strategies that form open discussion, reciprocal coalition-building, and mutual respect. Thus in response, environmental justice and labor support committees based in the U.S. have educated themselves about this imperialist history and organized more democratic fora in which Mexican and U.S. community members can dialogue openly about mutually beneficial strategies of empowerment.

Just as Gaventa,[538] in his discussions of community/labor solidarity between U.S. and Mexican workers, has revealed that transnational coalition-building can be powerfully politicizing, border organizers have equally rich stories to tell. In daily networking and in strategy building, international and multicultural contact on the border causes many barriers to be faced and promotes many transformative encounters. Kaare Kjos (ECSDTJ) tells of the radical possibilities of overcoming prejudice and distrust between community members and political leaders of both countries through a non-obtrusive mediation strategy of open information sharing and bi-national education. He claims that it has taken many years of these meetings to

---

[536] Interview, July 1996.
[537] Interviews, July 1996 and March 1997.
[538] 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

facilitate levels of trust and understanding necessary for more proactive social movement coalitions, and that these collaborations are more committed and lasting because of it.[539] Laura Durazo (PFEA) has argued that this strategy of unobtrusive information sharing and open dialogue has been the critical avenue of coalition building, and that for his role in furthering this, Kjos is the "Hero of Mediators."[540] Further, Mary Tong (SCMW) has argued that it is necessary to promote a sense of mutual trust by being clear about noninterference in Mexican community movements and adopting a supportive role through mediation:

> There is such a dearth of organization at this time and we don't see it as our role, as people from the U.S., to go into Tijuana and organize the workers, but to facilitate their organizing themselves. So that puts you into a position where you've gotta connect with people who are willing to do that work of organizations. And we're very fortunate in finding community organizers who had been involved in very militant struggles.... In terms of our relationships with community organizers in Mexico, we make very clear that we're not interested in doing organizing in Mexico at all, and that any kind of political organizing (you know attacking Mexican government policies or anything like that) would be completely up to them, that we would specifically not involve ourselves in that. Our focus would be on what we could do on this side of the border in consultation with them at all times, in terms of how that could best promote their struggle. So generally, the relationship that we have would be that they would present a problem or propose strategy. And we'll try to look at all the potential resources available to us and possible avenues of support, etcetera, and then present that to them, and determine a plan for how that can work.... There is good reason for mistrust on the Mexican side – since there are many examples of us forcing organizing tactics on Mexican workers that are inappropriate. We need to back off demands that determine their strategy. Instead, we need to be slower, work with the organizations so they build their own democracy and their own

[539] Interview, July 1996.
[540] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> strategies, and then collaborate. This will take a long time, but it is the only way to do it.[541]

Likewise, César Luna (EHC) has described the problems of left U.S. interventionism and the appropriate roles of support committees working in Mexico.

> I think the part of lack of sensitivity and cultural understanding is the fact that because we think we have the resources and technology and stuff, we think we know that we're doing the right thing. But we don't realize that the community has been there forever and they probably know more than us as technicians ... or as experts – legal experts – or whatever.... You see the frustration in the community when you go out there and say, "I will do this" or "We're going to do this for you." Because, if you don't take them into account – which is our first main drive again – you know, you're always going to see something of a threat, or you're going to put yourself into a wall. So when we try to create coalitions that's the very first thing we do. We put it on the table, and say, "We're not here to tell you what to do, we're not here to dictate anything – we're just here ... to help." Now that has definite drawbacks for the person that says, "well, I'm more efficient. I want this resolved now." Because with those coalitions it takes a little longer to get things accomplished.... [But] part of the benefit is that we're much stronger.... And it takes a lot of patience.[542]

Here, Luna suggests that there is an imperialist consciousness pervading U.S. society which comes to the surface not merely in its most common form, patriotism, but in a popular reflection of that present in U.S. foreign policy and modernization – a sense of the U.S. as the center of the world and the pinnacle of progress and democracy. Hence, Tong and Luna suggest more patient and long-term strategies of facilitation and a respect for local autonomy in the definition of the problem or its solutions.

[541] Interview, July 1996.
[542] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bravo[543] (SNEEJ) and Valadez[544] (CDM/GFX) also have emphasized that the need for education regarding Mexican political culture is crucial if U.S. citizens are to step aside from nationalistic, imperialist, and sometimes xenophobic orientations. This necessarily entails sensitivity to Mexican political cultures of national independence and resistance to imperialism. By way of summary, Mary Tong (SCMW) has issued this mandate: "If you want to get into transnational solidarity organizations, you have to have relations of mutual respect, and in your solidarity work, always take actions in coordination with workers already in active organizing, or you risk defying their interests even though your intentions may be positive."[545]

This internal struggle of individual unionists has its analog in the struggle of entire social movement organizations along the U.S. side of the border which have learned, over many years of trial and error, how to form democratic coalitions. Ed Feigen of the AFL-CIO's Strategic Projects office has described laughingly some of his original impulses during the early organizing on the border with the CJM.

> You know, ... first and foremost the problem...with some of these early cross-border organizing ideas was that we were going to go down thinking the U.S. unionists, or U.S. citizens, are going to go down and organize the maquiladoras – the first kind of silly idea.... [I]t's certainly an improvement over the first earlier notion [protectionism], but I don't think it's going to be ... central to making a change.[546]

---

[543] Interview, February 1997.
[544] Interview, March 1997.
[545] Interview, July 1996.
[546] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, over the last eight years of Feigen's involvement on the border, primarily with the CJM, there has grown the realization that bi-national organizations in support of maquiladora workers should be grounded in analyses and strategies originating in Mexican communities. Beginning with the work of religious leaders on the U.S. side of the border and strategic support from the AFL-CIO, the CJM has developed and facilitated many campaigns and networks. With increasing participation from Mexican organizations and mounting critiques of the CJM as dominated by U.S. activists, the CJM board in 1996 reviewed its policies; hired an activist and former PRD candidate from Nuevo Leon, Martha Ojeda, as its Executive Director; and in the Fall ratified a proposal to have the board be composed of fifty percent Mexican representatives and fifty percent U.S. and Canadian members. Further, the board of no more than thirty members is now divided evenly among representatives of different movement types: four Mexican labor, four Mexican grassroots, four Mexican research and mobilization, eight U.S./Canadian solidarity partners (in the areas of labor, religious, or grassroots organizations), and four U.S./Canadian education and resource groups from environmental health and legal groups. Ed Feigen[547] and Mary Tong[548] (SCMW) have argued this is an enormous step in having the CJM reflect the interests of Mexican movements and creating inter-issue solidarity. Thus, in the creation of greater democratic participation and transnational

---

[547] Interview, March 1997.
[548] Interview, September 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mutuality, these changes not only should enable strategic successes, but they should provide for more reciprocal educational fora and deepening solidarity efforts.

One strategic embodiment of this orientation is the practice of worker-to-worker exchange and border conferences, in which border activists hold workshops with representatives of labor and environmental justice representatives throughout North America, professional lawyers and scientists, as well as journalists and clergy. The explicit purpose of these workshops is to provide opportunities for participants to design transnational strategies of resistance to common dilemmas of poor working conditions and environmental health, not to mention more distant objectives of economic and political reform. They also have worked to make political officials such as congressional and municipal representatives more aware of the everyday lived realities of border industrialization, U.S. corporate investments, and what free trade may have in store for all of North America. Many historical examples could be cited, including the various formal and informal exchanges facilitated by the United Farm Workers (UFW) between U.S. and Mexican farm laborers. More recently, in 1987, the U.S.-Mexico Exchange Program of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) began a model of worker-to-worker exchange that became the basis for the UAW's MEXUSCAN, as well as different programs by the Teamsters and the United Electrical Workers (UE) to create regular relations between independent Mexican unions like the FAT. In the wake of the advent of neoliberal models of globalization and capital flight from overdeveloped nations, many information networks also have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

facilitated worker-to-worker coalition-building, including the Transnationals Information Exchange (TIE), the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), Mujer a Mujer, and the Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network (TIRN). On the border, as is explored below, the work of the SCMW in the case of striking workers at the Han Young maquila in Tijuana reveals how these exchanges have had significant positive impacts on union organizing and political reform. Implicitly, however, these entail trust-building through education about one's local or national political culture and the consequent construction of a vision of transnational citizenship. Here, participants discuss their common rights and mutual obligations as members of a global economy, and interrogate their own complicity with neoliberal regimes. In this process there are very personal confrontations with the insidious power of imperialism, leading many U.S. citizens and activists to engage in what Guillermo Gómez-Peña calls "gringostroika" – a new openness among "gringos" to Mexican culture and politics.[549]

One interesting example of a worker-to-worker exchanges on the border occurred as a part of a CJM conference in Tijuana in the Fall of 1996, between members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) union local in St. Paul, Minnesota and members of the Maclovio Rojas and Guadeloupe Victoria colonias. After personally escorting them to and from conference workshops and community meetings, and then discussing their reactions, several lessons about these exchanges

---

[549] 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emerge. On the one hand, U.S. rank-and-filer's experience an incredulity and outrage at the exploitation of land and labor by U.S.-based corporations, many of which they previously regarded as good corporate citizens which produced reliable and safe products. They were appalled with the local, state, and national governments – in Mexico and in the U.S. – for having facilitated an export-processing that leaves Mexicans in poverty and hazardous living conditions. They were angry with U.S. media for having neglected the atrocities committed by U.S.-based corporations and a U.S.-backed Mexican repression of workers' movements in the region, keeping many U.S. workers in the dark about the many problems associated with free trade. Further, and possibly most poignantly, after meeting first hand many Mexican workers who earn no more than five dollars a day and live in immiserated conditions, it was difficult for U.S. workers to regard Mexican laborers as enemies stealing good jobs from U.S. families. Thus, they experienced a new found openness to transnational dialogues regarding the strategies Mexican activists wished to pursue and a commitment to solidarity through strategic and financial assistance. On the other hand, these steelworkers often revealed how continued political education is necessary among U.S. citizens if transnational coalitions are to be purged of paternalistic visions of Mexican workers, or if they are to be strengthened by more radically democratic social movement forms of unionism in the United States. The would-be brothers and sisters of Mexican maquila workers still had a tendency to conflate Mexican poverty and underdevelopment with the backwardness of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mexican people. Further, they issued paternalistic judgments regarding the need of Mexican workers for U.S. expertise on how to build democracy, revealing the need for more education in the U.S. about the repressive machinery of the Mexican government, not to mention the many ways the U.S. government has undermined democracy domestically and abroad. Nonetheless, these rank-and-file unionists began a very committed and long process of understanding more about global economics and the possibilities of transnational collective action.

In another interesting set of worker-to-worker exchanges, TIRN, working in solidarity with the famous Highlander Center, has been involved in worker education projects, affording empowering cross-border encounters. Workers from Tennessee who have recently been threatened or harmed by the exportation of jobs to Mexico, and have wished to lobby against free trade agreements in the state legislature, have been able to meet with Mexican workers, most from maquiladoras. Not only have these U.S. workers learned that the Mexican people are not contributing to Perot's "great sucking sound," but that the culprit is transnational capital seeking greater profitability at the expense of all workers in the hemisphere. Indeed, TIRN, like IATP and Mujer a Mujer, provide opportunities for U.S. workers to overcome any politics of resentment that divides them, dismantling chauvinist nationalisms and imperialisms, in favor of common class- and gender-based resistance to transnational capital. As an example, Luvernel Clark, a TIRN member, testified as to her

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

experiences in worker-to-worker exchanges and her consequent feelings about NAFTA:

> We're not against increased trade with Mexico. We are against blackmail. We are against any kind of system that pits worker against workers on the basis of which one can be forced to take the lowest wage. We are against any system that can encourage multinational corporations to go shopping for the lowest wage or the most lax law enforcement or the biggest tax break. Our government's reactions to the global economy is that corporations need more freedom. *A visit to the maquiladoras will show you what freedom without responsibility can mean.*[550]

But as in the case of the Minnesota Steelworkers, it is imperative to have these forms of political education and coalition-building continue beyond initial contacts, through an infrastructure of political solidarity and transnational action agendas. As Susan Williams of TIRN argued, "It's a huge educational experience for people to go on the exchanges – the learning and activism doesn't happen any other way - but we need some kind of infrastructure for people to fit into when they come back home."[551]

Mexican fronterizos and activists from throughout Mexico also have expressed a readiness to forge coalitions. Members of independent unions, PRD party members, environmental organizations, fair trade networks, and human rights associations are frequently in attendance at borderland activist conferences. Although the recent wave of U.S. interest in cross-border solidarity often appears self-interested and far too late, Mexican activists from groups such as CDM/GFX, EcoSol, and CAFOR have been interested in forging coalitions across racial, gendered, national,

---

[550] Williams 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and ideological differences. But, given the historic inequalities the border has imposed upon Mexicans and Chicanos in the Southwest, Mexican activists show particular interest in working with other native and Spanish-speaking North American ethnic groups that have experienced U.S. colonialism. Carmen Valadez (CDM/GFX) also expressed a deep interest in working with Asian-American and African-American organizations around women laborers' experiences of neoliberal development within the U.S.[552] Naachiely López (MEBAC) has argued that coalition-building has provided an educational opportunity for Mexicans wanting to learn about U.S. corporations, labor or environmental regulations, law enforcement, and other movements in the effort to strategize about development alternatives.[553] But in a phenomenon that theorists of resource mobilization may consider common sense, possibly the greatest benefit to Mexican activists has been the sharing of vital economic and organizing resources for communities who can barely meet survival needs, much less build the support to withstand various forms of repression. Indeed, despite often deep suspicions of U.S. solidarity efforts which sometimes verge on reactionary resistance to any U.S. collaboration whatsoever, most Mexican activists seem encouraged by these exchanges and have taken greater initiative in contacting U.S. organizations.

---

[551] In Kidder and McGinn 1995: 3.
[552] Interview, July 1996.
[553] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

One interesting characteristic of these coalitional exchanges is that they have been pursued by organizations composed of a higher proportion of people of color, women, and rank-and-file members of unions or environmental organizations. This is in clear contrast to more established international unions and environmental groups which have tended to limit transnational networking to the organizational strata of directors and officers, who traditionally have been more homogeneous in their identity politics – white, men, and older. Coalition-building thus possesses a greater degree of democratic participation through which rank-and-file members are involved in cross-border education and agenda setting. But also, the formation of transnational coalitions may include greater heterogeneity and have closer ties to feminist, anti-racist, and youth politics. This widens the base of transnational coalitions now and in the future as it restructures or expands political agendas towards greater democratization, decentralization of power, anti-imperial critique, social movement unionism, and environmental justice.[554] The shift towards less hierarchicalized or centralized forms of transnational movement organization is, as Kidder and McGinn argue, not necessarily more democratic since a lack of authority and structure can evade accountability,[555] but the flexible inclusion of formerly marginalized interests and grassroots members is a step beyond the often imperial forms of transnationalism with which the left has been complicit. Nicola Zeuner of ATI confirms this sentiment when she argues that the most essential task for achieving social change in the

[554] Kidder and McGinn 1995: 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

borderlands is a "real spirit of binationality and cooperation, without nationalistic, cultural, and political boundaries between people trying to address common problems. Essential for this is decentralizing not only decision-making but also funding towards local communities."[556] Further, at this very nascent stage of transnational coalition-building, a feminist emphasis on inclusive models of personal and group empowerment or developing a culture of solidarity, rather than specific goal-oriented products of activism, is more crucial for long-term success of grassroots transnationalism. Indeed, these tendencies towards grassroots and coalitional organizing have taken shape in a feminist organizing that has arisen from the local experiences of women workers and their activism. Through this grassroots feminism the union and environmentalist movements could make significant strides towards struggling for gender equality on a transnational scale.

Highlighting a related contribution of transnational coalition-building, Frank Martín del Campo of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has described a trans-issue education in which activists have learned about the intersections of labor identity and environmental, race-, ethnic-, or gender-based movements in North America:

> I'm an organizer around identity politics, but not in a narrow or exclusionary way. And that's where, in the course of organizing around identity and culture, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, or any of the other things that gel us as communities, we must ensure outside of those that we don't frame ourselves by those

---

[555] Kidder and McGinn 1995: 3.
[556] Zeuner 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> boundaries. For several reasons: number one, we cut off effective allies and thereby undermine our own success. Secondarily ... we limit our own understanding of society to a "them and us," and in some ways that supports the power structure as it currently exists.[557]

In a poignant way, Martín del Campo is articulating a strategy of coalition that negotiates a path between the often exclusionary dichotomy of class-based ideologies and essential identity claims, suggesting a new possibility for movement politics at the end of the century. Practically, as transnational coalition-building brings together people of different interests and identities, they often begin to speak not merely across national boundaries, but across those boundaries of race, gender, or class. As they do so, there is greater acclimation to the needs and concerns of others and an acceptance of difference not as a point of conflict but as a point of education and expanding concern.

Environmentalists have become more cognizant of labor health and safety as well as urban ecology, while labor leaders recognize environmental conditions as central to workers lives in and outside the workplace. López (MEBAC) argues that she has been politicized through her coalitional work and come to see issues of urban development, poverty, infrastructure, and industrialization as issues central to environmental politics.[558] Through the high levels of participation of women in unionization and labor support endeavors referenced above, there has been an expansion of the definition of labor to the domestic sphere and to workers'

---

[557] Interview, June 1996.
[558] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

communities. Community centers for workers have embraced domestic concerns of spousal abuse and juvenile delinquency, training labor leaders and women's activists to address these problems in every phase of their activism.[559] These cases and their limits will be discussed below, but they are examples which help to illustrate that dialogues across these different, often separate arenas of political interest prohibits any reification of differences into essentialized identities or dichotomous social ontologies. Instead, these differences are politicized and contextualized to form the basis of strategic coalitions and more unified solutions across many borders. Movement specializations and geographic locations are networked in ways that make them more efficient and flexible in responding to ongoing crises along the border and beyond. Referencing these themes of strategic alliances and difference-in-unity, Martha Ojeda, current Executive Director of CJM, stated in an address to border activists: "All of you are part of the puzzle, in your workplace, company, union, and religious community. Each of you are a piece of this puzzle. If one piece is missing, it will not be complete. Each part is not only necessary but needed."[560] In confirmation, José Morales (EcoSol) proclaimed, "we should take each other's hands and work for a common goal."[561] Indeed, each movement has a strategic role in the weak but unfolding opposition to neoliberalism, but none can survive much less be effective if all do not commit their knowledge and their actions to struggle.

---

[559] Interview with CDM/GFX organizer Montoya, March 1997.
[560] Ojeda 1996.
[561] Morales 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Certainly, the problems of coalition building are extensive and conflicts have erupted into small cracks and fissures in the edifice of border networks. However, even when conflict occurs, many who have experience in the formation of cross-border networks argue it is not necessarily a problem. With a more dialectical approach to conflict and resolution, Mika[562] (CJM) and Tong[563] (SCMW) see it as an expected occurrence in the development of solidarity amongst such a wide diversity of movements and with such urgent concerns as extreme poverty, abuse, repression, and health crises. They further claim that a non-polarized and non-defensive form of conflict can be beneficial insofar as differences are made clear and are negotiated in an open and supportive fashion. Many conflicts have arisen in the process of coalition that have greater or lesser consequences, ranging from broad ideological fights over how to prevent NAFTA to more petty differences over scheduling events. And certainly, because democratic coalitions often take considerable amounts of time to debate and decide a course of action, impatience has bred frustration and conflict. But Mika (CJM) describes how finding common points of agreement and establishing supportive settings of mediation are productive ways of creating alliances in difference.[564] Similarly, Kjos (ECSDTJ) has argued that making all projects and conversations immediately binational and collaborative channels any conflict into discussions of "common ground," and from there, a "willingness to listen" and a

[562] Interview, March 1995.
[563] Interview, July 1996.
[564] Interview, March 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

productive relationship can develop.[565] And of course, with each successful coalitional campaign or event, the mutual trust of participants increases.

In the effort to build coalitions, border environmental and economic justice movements have realized the strategic possibilities of dynamic and flexible networks which can respond to immediate crises and develop long-term transnational agendas for democracy. In so doing, they have participated in the construction of public spaces in which standards for our global economy may be redefined, and thereby new roles for transnational citizens as guardians of basic human rights. This process has involved organizational linkages, strategic resource allocation, and extensive information sharing, but these would not be effective in even the most minimal way if coalition building did not also transform the identities and worldviews of its participants. Not only have members of solidarity networks begun the difficult process of confronting and accepting differences (within the general parameters of seeking justice), but in the process they have come to redefine themselves and the boundaries of their own self-concepts. Here, formerly nationalist, ideological, or narrow issue-driven identities have expanded to embrace a diverse range of claims and analyses of the common dilemmas facing citizens of the North American region and a neoliberal capitalist economy. Borrowing from the border's unique ability to allow transnational and local action, and a cultural hybridity cited by authors such as

[565] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Anzaldúa[566] and Alarcón,[567] coalition building has often benefited from an intimate familiarity with both cultural hybridity and the violence of imperialism. Indeed this setting has enabled many frustrations with global injustice and neo-imperialism to be focused towards cross-border collaboration and substantive solutions. Unlike reactionary movements of religious fundamentalists, economic protectionists, or racial/ethnic nationalists that have responded to the crises of globalization by essentializing local traditions and positing some external corruption,[568] border movements have refused any absolutist identity politics and have worked towards democratic transnational coalitions, or *redes*. Coalition-building not only provides more effective strategic collaboration but it constructs a broad culture of solidarity that educates, politicizes, and unifies a diversity of people who often have regarded themselves as objects fragmented by various political oppressions.

Transforming the State

One central organizing principle of this coalitional solidarity has been the expansion of governance structures that can protect workers and the environment. The means by which this is done vary but typically involve litigation against corporate actors under state law, lobbying for the expansion of state regulations, and direct action to pressure government controls on corporate abuses. Further, there have been increasing numbers of formal complaints made by border movement organizations to

[566] Anzaldúa 1987.
[567] Alarcón 1994, 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nascent transnational governance structures such as the National Administrative Office established under NAFTA, and the beginnings of long-term visions for what an anti-neoliberal system of fair trade could be. In the process of expanding or inventing transnational governance, each strategy requires interesting, sometimes conflict-ridden coalitions between state institutions and non-governmental organizations. Thus, there have been precedent setting examples of direct action and litigation that portend the formation of at least some mechanisms by which popular classes and ecological conditions can have transnational representation. Given that the neoliberal models that have become hegemonic in North America favor the downsizing of state institutions through privatization and deregulation, most of these efforts to expand state protections encounter disinterest or outright reaction from neoliberal interests. This can result in many movement members suffering ideological obfuscation, intimidation, and often bouts of cynicism. But despite much skepticism and the many temptations to abandon the state as a potential source of redistributive justice or regulatory oversight, most regard it as an undeniably vital starting point for a more radically democratic transnationalism. As Laclau and Mouffe have argued, "it should not be forgotten that the state can be the seat of numerous democratic antagonisms, to the extent that a set of functions within it – professional or technical for example –

---

[568] Castells and Kiselyova 1996; Juergensmeyer 1993; Amin 1997: 101-3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

can enter into relations of antagonism with centres of power, with the state itself, which seek to restrict and deform them."[569]

Although labor movements have looked to legal reform and (inter)state regulatory apparatuses to oppose repressive governmental regimes in Mexico, the state has been especially important for cross-border environmental justice movements. This is so because Mexico traditionally has had few powerful environmental regulations or enforcement agencies, thus necessitating greater legal actions for the elaboration of state protections. Also, compared to unions in the labor movement, environmental organizations have made relatively few inroads into corporate institutions, which has rendered the state an ever more important structure of power to be mobilized. But also compared to the labor movement, federal and state governments in the U.S. and Mexico, since NAFTA, have made greater investments in new transnational environmental commissions and agencies, making state-based avenues of change more available to environmentalists than unionists. Thus, although strategies of transforming state institutions have not been insignificant to labor movements, those discussed below are particularly familiar to environmental justice organizations along the border.

One precedent setting and interesting case of state-movement relations, in which there was a use of regulations to enforce transnational environmental standards, was that against the toxic imperialism of the corporation Alco Pacifico. From 1987 to

[569] 1985: 180.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1991 Alco Pacifico, a U.S.-owned corporation based in Los Angeles and one of many salvage operations along the border, operated a secondary lead smelter in El Florido. The plant imported leaden auto batteries from the U.S., reconditioned them, and sent them back to the U.S. for sale.[570] Due to bankruptcy and complaints from labor, human rights, and environmental activists who protested the release of 33,000 tons of lead slag into surface and ground water, the smelter was abandoned in 1991 with no clean-up. Under the 1983 La Paz Agreement between the U.S. and Mexico, any corporation shipping hazardous chemicals across the border for production is legally responsible for returning all of the waste generated from this production to the chemicals' country of origin. As the EPA and many local communities along the border will testify, this agreement is poorly respected and enforced, and Alco Pacifico was no exception. A San Diego State University study found twenty-nine of sixty-one samples of soil from colonias nearby the smelter to have concentrations equal to or greater than the one thousand ug/kg level considered a hazardous waste by the Center for Disease Control (CDC).[571] Further, Jaime Cota (CITTAC) reports that nearby cattle ranchers have found extremely high levels of lead in the milk of their cows.[572] But beyond the obvious effects on the health of human and non-human residents, the lead slag is clearly visible since it has made the soil turn a luminous white adjacent to the site, making the land all but arid.

[570] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, July 1996.
[571] Environmental Health Coalition 1994: 1.
[572] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Once the communities approached organizations on the U.S. side of the border for assistance, the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC) and the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice (SNEEJ) based in San Diego began to meet with the community organizations of El Florido. There, they dedicated their scientific, legal, and organizing resources to the locally-designed strategies for redress. José Bravo (SNEEJ) described their approach to legal cases as different from that of other, less grassroots organizations:

> I think it's also fair to say that we have a very different way of looking at a legal model than maybe mainstream environmental groups. Mainstream environmental groups look at the issue and then come and dictate what's going to happen legally. What happens with us is we look at the communities and find some response from the community in regards to whether we're going to take a legal [action] ... or [whether] we are going to [use] community pressure. Once the decision is made to do it legally, then those community members are part of the legal team, and at all times ... they can either stop it, keep it going, or do whatever they want.... We try to do more things from the bottom up. We give it more democracy, and that's what's ... made it ... much easier, because unlike the mainstream environmental groups, communities are the ones who are leading the charge on a lot of things.[573]

César Luna of the EHC adds that this frequently includes many extra-legal strategies designed by and for local communities:

> We don't look at it in terms of just a lawsuit per se. We look at, you know, testifying in front of a board of supervisors, ... or port districts, or file petitions to administrative agencies like the EPA, instead of actually filing a lawsuit. We try to look into the law [and ask], "Well what other recourses do we have even before we get into it, before we launch a lawsuit." And ... sometimes those mechanisms do work, and they're almost as efficient as a full fledged lawsuit. It's good because

[573] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> now I think we have the capacity to have two attorneys now that can at least give somebody ... a legal answer [to community questions], and if they like it ... then we'll ... see if they want to organize or have a vigil, or go talk to representatives and give them a hard time, or just write letters, or clog the faxes or the phones, or do some community strategy.[574]

Indeed, in many cases the EHC and SNEEJ have participated in direct action strategies which have been so successful that litigation was not even necessary, saving very precious resources.[575] In one case, Colonia de las Playas in Western Tijuana mobilized protests and letter campaigns against a Chemwaste project to build nearby an incinerator for hazardous waste, ultimately provoking then President Carlos Salinas to deny the construction permit. But in the case of Colonia El Florido, the community did urge the EHC's Border Health Project to seek legal remedies, and through their work they were able to network with the California EPA, its Mexican counterpart, Secretaría de Desarrollo Social (SEDESOL), and the U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation (USMBPF). This coalition of interests then mobilized the support of David Eng, District Attorney for the Criminal Environmental Crimes Division, Los Angeles, to prosecute the parent corporation and another company, RSR Químico, for illegal transport of hazardous waste materials. This resulted in a $2.5 million settlement which Eng agreed to forward to the Mexican government for clean-up, minus $200,000 for litigation fees.[576] Through the original contacts of the EHC and its grassroots organizing this community's problems were tested,

[574] Interview, July 1996.
[575] Interview of SNEEJ affiliate José Bravo, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

publicized, and brought into an international forum for settlement. The EHC, assisted by the SNEEJ, had a philosophy of organizing that recognized the local expertise and autonomy of the El Florido colonia, and thus the EHC participated only in the manner and to the extent the community desired. The Colonia pointed out the evidence of lead toxification and asked for the EHC to help gain legal representation and research to support their case. The EHC did this and was successful in facilitating a generally positive precedent for protection.

At the same time, an alliance of corporate and government organizations promoting a free market vision of sustainable development along the border, the USMBPF, also was approached by Colonia El Florido, with quite different results. Promoting sustainability through corporate volunteerism and the calculus of cost/benefit analyses, the USMBPF provides a forum for private-public cooperation in the management of environmental crises and public relations. Elsa Saxod, a former appointee of California Governor Pete Wilson's administration and the Executive Director of the USMBPF, regards "most" of the toxic problems on the border to be a result of the public's unsanitary practices. And despite overwhelming evidence that suggests U.S.-backed trade policy and U.S.-owned enterprises are the basis for the mounting problems of nonsustainable development in the border region,[577] she argues corporate violations of legal environmental standards occur only in a "minority" of

[576] Environmental Health Coalition 1995: 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cases. In contrast to the EHC, Saxod described the moment when the Colonia petitioned the USMBPF for help: "We could either tell them to go burn down city hall, and in doing so close a lot of doors that are open to us, or we could help them to better cope with the situation."[578] Stopping short of challenging officials in both nations, the USMBPF embarked on a plan to continue study of the problem. After concluding that lead dumping was not a significant problem, they initiated an environmental education program in five Tijuana neighborhoods to help residents "cope" by hiring *promadoras* (educators) who advised locals on how to avoid contact with lead, going so far as to teach residents how to wash their hands.[579] Not only did this insult many local residents by assuming that they did not know the risks or how to minimize them, but it also refused to challenge Alco Pacifico's responsibility until the official governmental agencies from Mexico and the U.S. decided to pursue litigation. And to add further insult, merely for promising to engage in environmental education, the USMBPF received $300,000 of the court settlement for their efforts, which it is using in conjunction with the Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) to monitor and inventory pollution problems in the area.[580] As an interested party, representatives from the EHC visited Saxod to receive reports on the progress of the educational campaign and the monitoring, which were incomplete. The local

---

[577] Treviño and Fernandez 1992; Land 1993; Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994; Barry and Sims 1994; Environmental Health Coalition 1994; Kadetsky 1994; Farquhar 1995; Kelly 1995; Fox 1995; Kamp 1996; Public Citizen 1996; Peña 1997; Clifford and Sheridan 1997.
[578] Interview, July 1996.
[579] Interview of USMBPF Executive Director Elsa Saxod, July 1996.
[580] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, November 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

community residents surrounding the Alco Pacifico dump have yet to see any benefit from the USMBPF projects.[581]

But compared to the other difficulties with this settlement, the research and education of the USMBPF appear extremely helpful. According to César Luna (EHC), when District Attorney Eng hired environmental engineers to estimate the costs of the safest form of cleanup at the Alco Pacifico site, they stated it would take approximately $32 million, making the $2.5 million settlement comparatively paltry.[582] Also, the settlement entailed no accompanying enforcement of Alco Pacifico's future actions. Possibly most problematic, however, were the actions of the Mexican government subsequent to the settlement. Eng was forced to freeze the Mexican government's portion of the settlement until it designed a clear cleanup plan to which the money would be dedicated. This should not have been too difficult since $2.5 million would pay for only a very basic and simple cleanup effort, including a chemical neutralization of the lead slag and a cement cap on site.[583] But because the Mexican government refused to design a plan, this freeze lasted from 1992 to May 1996. This was partly because they did not want U.S. officials mandating how the money should be spent and partly because, many speculate, Mexican leaders wanted to spend the settlement on other concerns – a suspicion that later was confirmed. Eng ended the freeze when he himself proposed a cleanup plan and the Mexican

[581] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, November 1996.
[582] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, November 1996.
[583] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, November 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

government consented.[584] However, upon receiving the money, the Mexican government scrapped the plan and its engineers in favor of hiring a corporation to remove the slag and transport it to the desert where there was no hazardous waste confinement. This was a much cheaper operation that merely replaced one dump with another, but enabled the Mexican government to pocket the remainder of the funds.[585]

Unlike the EHC, the USMBPF chose to act on its own priorities for a corporate form of sustainable development rather than the more radically democratic and redistributive forms advocated by the colonia adjacent to the dump. Indeed, the USMBPF educational campaign and Saxod's comments regarding corporate responsibility suggest that the organization chose to blame the victims of toxic exposure rather than the transnational polluter. Meanwhile, the Mexican government abdicated its responsibility to Colonia El Florido, not to mention desert ecosystems in northern Mexico, by performing inadequate cleanup of the site. And despite the efforts of the LA District Attorney the settlement with Alco Pacifico and RSR Químico was not sufficient to ensure either compensation or a rehabilitation of community health. However, this revealed how the very difficult legal issue of documenting the sources, levels, and effects of toxic releases can be solved with local knowledge from community residents, with some potentially positive results. Despite the shortcomings, the case of Alco Pacifico also helped to enforce existing

---

[584] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, November 1996.

[585] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, November 1996; and Interview of MEBAC coordinator, Naachiely López, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transnational standards for environmental health and it began to set precedent for holding transnational corporations accountable for their abuses abroad in their countries of origin. Therefore, this is not merely a case of grassroots opposition to one corporate violator, but a beginning for continued development of state-based mechanisms for regulation and enforcement at the transnational level.

Similarly, as was discussed in Chapter Three, the combination of legal and direct action against American United Global's EMOSA maquila not only enforced existing laws, but it set precedent along the border for being the first case in which Mexican laws were upheld in a U.S. court. After several workers were forced to participate in a video taped bikini contest at a company picnic, and after the plant illegally closed and fired workers without notice, the Mexican government refused to acknowledge there was any corporate wrongdoing. However, Los Angeles Superior court ultimately disagreed and urged a settlement. The company relented when a sympathetic action by the United Auto Workers would have had the Big Three auto-makers shift their purchases of O-rings away from EMOSA, threatening eighty percent of their business. This was possible through a provision in the UAW's contract with the Big Three stipulating the companies buy only from suppliers who are good corporate citizens.[586] Therefore, in a historic case, there was at once a transnational legal enforcement of Mexican labor law and a use of a relatively strong union's labor solidarity to grant restitution to injured workers. In the first instance,

---

[586] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

when one nation was resigned to its clientelistic role of protecting corporate interests and abdicating its legal responsibilities, legal authorities from its free trade partner ensured enforcement, setting valuable precedent for resisting downward harmonization of labor standards. In the second, it was revealed that strong unionism in one nation can benefit workers elsewhere through transnational solidarity efforts, enabling union contracts anywhere to codify the basis for labor standards globally. Thus in both instances there was an extension of transnational codes for corporate treatment of labor, and strategically, it became clear that litigation and union contract bargaining can be most effective when used together.

Even under the threat of downward harmonization of labor law, union contracts and labor regulations are a more firm basis for movement pressure campaigns than environmentalists have had in the border region. This is clear when one considers the difficulties many Mexican fronterizos have had merely gaining some consistency, much less effective administrative relations, between municipal, state, and federal governments in the regulation of toxics.[587] But it is probably most evident in Mexican efforts to establish public right-to-know legislation. Indeed, the case of Alco Pacifico highlights indirectly the continuing problems workers and colonia residents experience in the borderlands without proper right-to-know legislation that would pressure corporate actors to publicize any use or discharge of

[587] Interview with MEBAC coordinator Naachiely López, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

toxics. As Bravo[588] (SNEEJ), Luna[589] (EHC), and Browne[590] (IHRC) have argued, the projects of neoliberal development along the border have promoted a deregulation and privatization that cause transnationals to view the region as a very profitable pollution haven. The public's right to know about toxic abuses inside or outside the workplace is a fundamental condition of any development of popular ecological consciousness or any democratic planning around environmental sustainability. More immediately, it is an essential basis for any prevention of toxic exposure and hence personal health. Thus, the absence of right-to-know legislation was a problem of personal physical autonomy and long-term environmental stability to which many local activists dedicated their resistance. It is no accident, therefore, that César Luna and other EHC coordinators prioritized this issue, "Our primary concern is the toxics and the toxics use and reduction, and also community right-to-know."[591] Naachiely López (MEBAC) also expresses the need for right-to-know legislation at all levels of government in Mexico as a first step in achieving greater regulatory oversight.[592] Further, Arizona Toxics Information (ATI) has seen right-to-know as a primary goal for public participation in the reduction of toxics,[593] including the identification of chemicals, the characterization of hazards of materials, standardization of nomenclature, tracking mechanisms, as well as proactive citizen and worker

588 Interview, July 1996.
589 Interview, July 1996.
590 Interview, May 1996.
591 Interview, July 1996.
592 Interview, February 1997.
593 Zeuner 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

education.[594] Michael Gregory, Director of ATI, summarizes the democratic import of right-to-know law:

> Like democracy, of which it is a major component, right to know is open-ended.... The test in a democratic society should be, not what does the public have a need for, but what does the public not have a right to know, and ... what information, if any, can we be sure will not be useful to members of the public in defending ourselves from the dangers of our technologies.[595]

But arguably the most successful and committed right-to-know activist in the San Diego/Tijuana area has been Laura Durazo of Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental (PFEA), who was partly responsible for the federal implementation of right-to-know legislation in Mexico in 1996.

A bilingual fronteriza originally from Mexico City, Durazo worked translating the La Paz agreement for the Border Ecology Project (BEP) and decided to form the PFEA in 1991.[596] Primarily an educational organization committed to ensure public awareness and consciousness-raising regarding environmental problems, the PFEA, along with the BEP and EHC, saw it as no mean task to lobby for right-to-know protections. Before there was this legislation, very basic scientific research regarding suspected hazards was extremely difficult, since transnationals were not compelled to inform against their own interests and since government had no legal mandate for public awareness. As Durazo summarized, "We simply brought the issue up and found people frightened, found people scared, found people as ignorant and unknowing as we

[594] Gregory 1997.
[595] Gregory 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were, and with nowhere to go because it's confidential information.... [W]e just felt that it was important that we begin to shed some light on the matter."[597] Even today, despite the new legislation, Durazo claims public pressure is still the only means of receiving Mexican governmental oversight and enforcement of environmental law.[598] So, now that there exists some very basic legal framework for corporate responsibility, the PFEA has engaged in monitoring and public education about common risks and problems in the region. Attempting to work with grassroots, government, and corporate institutions (primarily via grants), Durazo regards the educational mission of PFEA as one that requires implementation in all relevant social institutions, from elementary schools to the training of professional monitors. She argues this is difficult work since many have had little environmental education whatsoever, but also because dire poverty has made many workers all too willing to concede long-term health for wages that can meet immediate family needs – illustrating the existentially absurd decisions that confront workers everyday:

> people are starving, people are hungry, they're begging for a job. They're not going to be combative. They're not going to be demanding. They would rather know that they are going to die in fifteen years from cancer of the liver or something than not take home a paycheck to feed their children today. They don't care if they are going to die in fifteen years, as long as they can put food on the table today. So ... it's been difficult.... We need to learn to walk before we can run.[599]

---

[596] Interview of PFEA coordinator Laura Durazo, February 1997.
[597] Interview, February 1997.
[598] Interview, February 1997.
[599] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, she argues that the rapid growth of the region and the prohibitive effects of corporate profiteering and desperate resource-poor communities have caused a very slow lag in the growth of knowledge about long-term ecological impacts of neoliberal development. To counter this entails in-depth research regarding the levels of toxics and their potential effects. But more than many other organizations in the region, the PFEA conceives of this as merely a beginning to standards of sustainable and democratic development discussed in successive Earth Summits.[600] Although, like most movements along the border, basic research and education must precede broad public self-empowerment, the PFEA has pursued right-to-know legislation as part of a vision for sustainable development deriving from the Rio Summit's *Agenda 21* organized by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Now the PFEA is working with the many member groups of the Environmental Committee of the San Diego/Tijuana Region (ECSDTJ) on a toxic release inventory (TRI) to be used to normalize enforcement of federal legislation along the border.[601] Thus for the PFEA, the ultimately successful pursuit of right-to-know legislation in Mexico was merely the beginning of a campaign to implement emergent transnational standards for environmental health and sustainability in Mexico, to which all will be held accountable.

Such a mechanism of oversight and enforcement of environmental health standards has begun to emerge in the last decade and especially since the passage of

[600] Interview of PFEA coordinator Laura Durazo, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

NAFTA, including new transnational institutions such as the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), the North American Development Bank (NADBank), the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC). The mandates of these organizations vary. The CEC, mostly referred to as the NAFTA Environmental Commission, is based in Montreal and is composed of a Council, a Secretariat, and a Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) which has fifteen representatives from Canada, the U.S., and Mexico, each representing the highest environmental authorities in their nation. It began in 1994 as a part of the environmental side accords of NAFTA with the object of bolstering regional cooperation, promoting the effective enforcement of environmental laws, and preventing potential international conflicts resulting from environmental problems. Under Article 14 of the environmental side accord to NAFTA – the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) – any person or organization may submit to the CEC Secretariat a complaint against a NAFTA country for not enforcing its environmental laws.[602] Generally, border NGOs have regarded the CEC as a potentially useful institution, but presently one which has little political momentum to do more than merely monitor NAFTA's impacts. The *Wall Street Journal* has reported that after several years and many complaints, only one has resulted in an

[601] Interview of PFEA coordinator Laura Durazo, February 1997.
[602] Silva 1997a.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

investigation, and thus the CEC remains basically a think tank.[603] Indeed, Maurice Strong, the chair of the Rio Summit, described the CEC as a "fragile institution" which does not have either the required level of public participation for effectiveness or a "sufficient degree of independence" from pro-NAFTA government interests to carry out its responsibilities.[604] Therefore, due to limited access and skepticism about its immediate results, the CEC has been less a target of border environmental movement organizations than has the more local commission, BECC.

As Williams describes it,

> the BECC was created by a parallel agreement to NAFTA for the purpose of preserving, protecting and enhancing the border environment by helping communities develop and finance viable environmental infrastructure (water, wastewater and municipal solid waste) for financing from the North American Development Bank (NADBank), and other sources.[605]

The BECC has a binational board of directors composed of business people, educators, and government representatives. Once the projects are submitted, reviewed, and accepted by BECC, their funding and construction can be arranged through the NADBank, BECC's sister institution. Many have regarded the best of the BECC and NADBank projects as attempts to develop the urban and rural infrastructure necessary for safe and healthy living conditions in the impoverished borderlands. More broadly, it was conceived as a mechanism by which some of the environmental problems of free trade along the border – especially those resulting

[603] *Wall Street Journal*. 1997.
[604] Silva 1997b.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

from extensive population and industrial growth – could be mitigated. Indeed, the BECC continues to have a free-market sustainable development orientation, which may be defined generally as "that which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," a definition borrowed by BECC from the 1987 Brundtland Commission (UNWCED). Thus, the purpose of BECC is to resolve public infrastructure needs with government funding and private contractors, providing for greater public health and fewer industrial impacts. Projects reviewed have included a sewage pump station in Tijuana, the Ecoparque sewage treatment plant also in Tijuana, wastewater reclamation in San Diego, and new landfills in Sonora, just to name four. In 1997, BECC Director Ygnacio Garza recognized the accomplishments of BECC which included the approval of twelve projects worth nearly $100 million and benefiting more than 800,000 residents, the strengthening of ties between border NGOs and government actors, and the facilitation of transnational cooperation.[606] With greater involvement in borderland communities than the CEC, the BECC represents for many border NGOs a potential apparatus through which there can be a more equitable compensation of locals for a neoliberal development that tends to externalize environmental costs.

However, there have been many criticisms issued by border organizations which reveal that the BECC has a long way to go before it can evade the

[605] Williams 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contradictions of sustainability and neoliberalism, and thus be a firm basis for environmental justice in the region. The critiques are several. First, according to Bravo[607] of SNEEJ, NGOs at several public BECC meetings have challenged the Commission's accessibility to working communities along the border, suggesting that the criteria for project approval are too obscure, project reviews are often classified or unavailable to the public, and technical advice often is not present when needed. Its sister institution, NADBank, has been even more removed from the public eye, and can circumvent some BECC public participation criteria.[608] This form of unaccountable environmental governance is not new to the borderlands. Similarly, the U.S. EPA issued the infamous Integrated Border Environmental Plan (IBEP) establishing conservation standards and regulatory projects with little consultation from local residents and environmental justice organizations. Thus, the EPA asked for local review of the subsequent 1996 plan, Border XXI, but even then Bravo (SNEEJ) and Luna (EHC) claimed the review period – forty-five days – was too short for such a long document, especially one that was not originally available in Spanish (not to mention that the plan does not address community concerns for congressional funding guarantees, for regulation of corporate actors, and for reforming regional policies of economic development).[609] The problem of inaccessibility and thus lack of accountability of the BECC has been challenged by organizations such as Arizona

[606] Williams 1997.
[607] Interview, July 1996.
[608] Coronado 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Toxics Information (ATI) and the BEP who have signed, along with others, alternative proposals for BECC procedures, expanding the notification period before BECC public meetings, ensuring project information is available for public viewing, allowing for greater public discussion of projects, and de-classifying documents as confidential except in cases of trade secrets and/or intellectual property concerns, just to name a few.[610] Mexican organizations also have asked for financial assistance to attend meetings and greater access to BECC reports in Spanish.[611] Second, accompanying this critique has been the argument that it is not enough to have funds available for local NGOs to seek through project proposals, since local communities need basic environmental, legal, and economic education to build their capacities for proposing projects.[612] Many project proposals, therefore, come from more academic, professional, and middle class wings of the environmental movement, which traditionally have been concerned more with pro-development infrastructure, wilderness protection, or cleanliness campaigns, but usually not social justice issues of worker health and safety.

But there also have been more serious critiques which suggest that there has been an institutionalization of BECC and NADBank within the neoliberal regime of free trade, causing both to serve the interests of capital rather than public need in the borderlands. Thus a third critique has been that the funding of regulatory projects to

---

[609] Interviews, July 1996.
[610] Reed 1997.
[611] Interview of EHC representative César Luna, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

restrict hazardous wastes by private interests has been relatively ignored in favor of infrastructure for water, wastewater, and municipal solid waste, although this is technically not outside BECC's mandate.[613] This has caused many to argue that BECC is willing to neglect corporate transgressions and accept projects that do not challenge the current privileges of transnational investors. Fourth, and this has been issued by anyone from José Bravo[614] of SNEEJ to Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda,[615] the architect of the NADBank and now head of the North American Integration and Development Center (NAID, a technical assistance center based at UCLA), if NADBank is to be a significant force of compensation for the environmental costs of neoliberalism in the region, it needs to receive a budget from Congress and the U.S. Treasury of at least $40-50 million, as opposed to its original three million dollars and its December 1996 award of $28.9 million.[616] Hinojosa-Ojeda regards this as necessary for the funding of sufficient economic and environmental projects to assist fronterizos to achieve sustainable incomes and communities.[617] Bravo claims that this is why many infrastructure projects are or soon will be insufficient to deal with the rapid growth of the region,[618] and it is one reason Browne (IHRC) reports that many environmental activists have been disappointed with the relatively low

[612] Interview of SNEEJ affiliate José Bravo, July 1996.
[613] Spalding 1997b.
[614] Interview, July 1996.
[615] Interview, October 1996.
[616] United States Department of the Treasury 1996.
[617] Interview, October 1996.
[618] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

standards of sustainability adopted by the BECC.[619] But what is more problematic is that, given this low budget and the fact that the NADBank distributes loans not grants, the NAID and the NADBank are interested in funding projects that will have some profitability or return on investment or profitability in the region, marginalizing projects that address unprofitable public needs. As Bravo (SNEEJ) states, "they're in the money *lending* business, they're not in the money *giving* business."[620] Even Hinojosa-Ojeda himself has stated that, because one cannot persuade corporations to do the work of non-profits, the NADBank has limits in fostering economic and environmental health.[621] This thereby extends the clientelistic capacities of government in the service of neoliberal models through ostensibly redistributive entities.

Related to this is a fifth critique, made by local community representatives from Carlos Maréntes[622] of the Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos (CETAF) in El Paso to Democratic Representative Esteban E. Torres[623] of California, who have claimed that the BECC has worked on projects that essentially have helped private companies reach legally required levels of environmental safety. Not only does this make the BECC an agency of enforcement rather than one of improvement,

[619] Browne 1997.
[620] Interview, July 1996.
[621] Interview, October 1996.
[622] Interview, February 1997.
[623] Torres 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

it also furthers export-oriented development by subsidizing private costs of meeting environmental regulations. In the words of Representative Torres,

> From a sustainable development standpoint, such government subsidization of pollution control directly contradicts the generally accepted principle of requiring polluters to internalize the costs of their pollution. Even if a private-only project promises to create jobs, generate tax revenues, spur investment and stimulate a local economy, these benefits are not central to the BECC's mission and thus even in concert are insufficient justifications for certification.... It should not, therefore, be in the business of bringing private sector actors into line with legal minimums, a function already assigned to other agencies in both countries.... I suggest that an acceptable private-only project would have to entail cooperation with municipal authorities and a broad cross-section of community representatives to develop an integrated needs assessment of what specific activities could be designed to provide substantial benefits to the environment of the community.[624]

These latter critiques thus make a persuasive case that eco-Keynesian sustainable development projects like BECC and its governmental resources have been institutionalized in ways that make them clientelistic participants in neoliberal agendas, and thus inherently prone towards internal contradictions and the neglect of local communities. Indeed, Chris McGinn of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch has gone so far as to suggest that these critiques amount to an indictment of the CEC, BECC, and NADBank as a three-headed scylla of a public relations campaign that has worked to "greenwash" NAFTA.[625] That is, like environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club which refuse to challenge the structure of capital, North American governments through these institutions have done little but further non-sustainable

[624] Torres 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

neoliberal development. But worse, through their superficial pretensions for sustainable development, these environmentalist institutions have painted a green face on NAFTA and thus attempted to pacify much public outrage at ecological crises on the border.

In all of these critiques we may see an attempt on the part of local border communities and the many environmental justice organizations with whom they work to alleviate a basic contradiction between free market development models and long-term environmental sustainability. This contradiction has been polarized by the very presence of the border, which in essence has helped to divide neoliberal production from the ecological reproduction of human and non-human life.[626] Thus, while some environmental NGOs, academics, and government officials have regarded organizations such as the BECC and NADBank as institutions with resources that need to be mobilized for public benefit, many, especially grassroots activists, have been frustrated with the inaccessible, underfunded, and neoliberal character they have taken. Indeed, these institutions may be hegemonic, but those attempts by grassroots organizations to publicly challenge BECC to become more democratically accountable and abandon its neoliberal posture, as well as those efforts by groups such as the PFEA, BEP, and ATI which have mobilized BECC funds for public benefit, have revealed a public interest in a new transnational ecological democracy in North America. Certainly, any strategy of (re)shaping transnational environmental

---

[625] McGinn 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

governance poses significant threats of co-opting movement groups through the processes of professionalization, institutionalization, and compromise. Indeed, this has been a specter haunting border environmental justice movements. However, these movement organizations have engaged in the difficult work, from within and outside the state, to solve the border's most significant environmental problem – the lack of democratic transnational development standards and planning.

Similarly, in the regional labor movements, global labor standards have been the object of struggle for many affiliated organizations. In January 1991, the Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras (CJM) and its forty member organizations (at the time) went public with their Standards of Conduct for transnational corporations and government. Noncoincidentally, this corresponded to the Gulf War and the emergence of a New World Order in which corporate capital was more thoroughly transnational than ever before, and state governments everywhere were urged to comply with its demands. The idea for these standards was a common one during the discussions of social charters among the British and German labor movements during the formation of the EC and have followed a broadly humanist universalism common to human rights discourse. Both of these orientations were familiar to the labor and human rights activists that helped form the CJM. With the growing fervor of debate and mobilization around alternatives to NAFTA, the ideals of a global standard for corporations became popular among fair trade activists,

---

[626] Verduzco 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

including those in the Alliance for Responsible Trade (ART) in the U.S., Canada's Action Canada Network (ACN), and the Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comércio (RMALC). CJM's standards represented the minimal foundations for a just transnational economy with which over fifty member organizations (at the time) could agree.[627] Drawn from existing Mexican and U.S. law, as well as the labor standards of the International Labor Organization (ILO) of the U.N., they include 1) adherence to federal environmental regulations in the mitigation of water and air pollution; 2) compliance with U.S. OSHA and Mexican health and safety standards, including adequate safety training; 3) provisions of fair wages, reasonable hours, and safe conditions; and 4) corporate obligations to recognize the responsibilities they have to their local communities, not merely their global shareholders.[628] In and of themselves, these standards are merely guideposts for a variety of movement strategies throughout the borderlands, and thus they have received some criticism for being impractical relative to the immediate needs of workers.[629] But in the history of the CJM and cross-border coalitions in general, it arguably was necessary for the initiation of coalition building since it entailed inclusive statements of principle which gave direction and focus. Also, as day-to-day campaigns along the border develop and proliferate, these standards of conduct have provided a common denominator of

[627] Interview of CJM former Executive Directory Susan Mika, March 1995.
[628] Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras 1994: 4.
[629] Interview of AFL-CIO Strategic Projects coordinator Ed Feigen, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

struggle, and in the future they may become the normative basis for more realizable transnational forms of state regulation and redistribution.

One set of strategies that directly addresses this transnationalization is the utilization of trade agreement provisions or inter-governmental organizations to prevent the downward harmonization of labor, environmental, and human rights standards. Not only have the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and institutions such as the Organization of American States (OAS) been sources of moral arbitration on problems facing working communities under neoliberalism, but trade provisions such as the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and Section 599 of the Agency for International Development (AID) stipulate trade sanctions if basic rights are not honored. More notable cases of enforcement have included the International Labor Rights Fund's (ILRF) worker rights petitions under GSP against Mexico and many other nations, as well as the USGLEP GSP case in 1992 against Guatemala for violations that included refusing to recognize two unions organized in garment maquilas, not implementing labor law, and failing to raise minimum wages.[630] On the border, there has been a variety of examples of this strategy. The CJM has worked with Mexico's ANAD and the ILRF to initiate hearings in the U.S. National Administrative Office (NAO) of NAFTA when the Mexican government and its official unions have violated rights to organize as sanctioned by the ILO and NAFTA. Further, Human Rights Watch in conjunction with ANAD has submitted

[630] Armbruster 1995: 79.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

NAO complaints against corporations participating in discrimination against pregnant workers and in the violation of reproductive freedoms. The NAO was also sought by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) on behalf of the Telefonistas (STRM) or telephone workers who were denied the freedom to unionize by the Mexican government's illegal recognition of a non-elected affiliate of the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicana (CTM), the largest and most government-affiliated union in Mexico. And possibly the most well-known NAO complaints have been filed by the United Electrical Employees (UE) and the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT) against various corporate-government collusions against worker unionization in Mexico.

Yet, the most recent, interesting, and precedent setting of NAO complaints filed by border movements occurred in the Winter of 1997-1998 by a coalition of the SCMW, ANAD, the ILRF, and the Sindicato de Trabjadores Independiéntes de Metal, Acero y Hierro (STIMAHCS, an affiliate of the FAT). It was filed against the Mexican government for refusing to recognize STIMAHCS, an independently elected union, at the Han Young maquiladora in Tijuana. This case will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Five, but for the purposes of this discussion Han Young is a subcontractor of Hyundai and its workers sought to organize an independent union. Despite intimidation, harassment, and election rigging, STIMAHCS was elected by the workers to be their union representative. As in the U.S., for STIMAHCS to begin contract negotiations, this election had to be ratified by Mexico's analog to the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the Junta Nacional de Conciliación y Arbitración (JNCA). However, the JNCA, in a clear statement of its paternalism, refused to recognize STIMAHCS on the grounds that a democratic affirmation of workers' desire for STIMAHCS did not represent their best or true interests.[631] In response, the SCMW, ANAD, ILRF, and STIMAHCS filed a complaint in January 1998 under the NAO, arguing that the Mexican government was denying freedoms of association and collective representation under NAFTA's North American Accords on Labor Cooperation (NAALC). Although the NAO has no legal recourse but to initiate a dialogue with Mexican labor relations officials regarding the alleged offense, the complaint arrived at a time when governmental interest was high, since the U.S. Congress was debating Presidential Fast Track authority – the Presidential privilege to establish further terms of NAFTA without congressional approval. With great interest in the Han Young situation, David Bonior, the Democratic Whip in the U.S. House of Representatives, visited Tijuana during the union election and was personally appalled by the level of interference in workers' rights. Following his visit, he mobilized other congressional representatives to support a defeat of Fast Track authority, which many regard as another anti-democratic component of free trade legislation. Fast Track did not pass, and further, Bonior received support from the President's Office which ultimately led to a Han Young/JNCA recognition of STIMAHCS – *the first officially recognized independent union in the maquiladora*

[631] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sector of Mexico.[632] Certainly, timing and favorable structural political-economic conditions in this case were conducive to democratic unionization, but it also suggests that worker solidarity, movement coalition-building, and a pursuit of formal transnational standards through trade law can work in concert to set clear precedents for more radically democratic forms of globalization.

In a similar case at Echlin's ITAPSA plant in early 1997, auto parts workers wished to organize a union to help them gain adequate safety equipment and protection from exposure to deafening noise, asbestos, and other chemicals. After five months of clandestine organizing in small groups, discussing abusive managers, sexual harassment, low wages, and arbitrary changes in wages, they too chose to affiliate with STIMAHCS. After secretly organizing eighty percent of the plant's workers, they went public and in late May FAT filed a petition with the JNCA for an election, to which the company responded by firing workers – about twenty percent of the workforce – and by initiating speedups in areas of the factory sympathetic to the FAT. At the election, which was not conducted by secret ballot and eventually was postponed, CTM "thugs" were present to intimidate and harass workers, and many loyal to the FAT were fired on the spot. If it had not been for help from the UE, the Teamsters, UNITE, the United Paper Workers, the USWA, and the CAW, the FAT and the ITAPSA workers would certainly have faced far greater reprisals, and during the subsequent repression they assisted in drafting a complaint to the NAO against the JNCA, the CTM, and Echlin for

---

[632] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

unfair elections, intimidation, and illegal firings.[633] That same day at another Echlin subsidiary near Mexico City, American Brakeblock, leafleting ITAPSA workers were assaulted by twelve workers some of whom were wearing brass knuckles, sending one worker to the hospital with severe head injuries. Two days after the filing the company agreed to meet with workers and discuss a code of corporate conduct, but it appears that the company is willing to postpone any reconciliation until the NAO ruling in May 1998.[634]

According to Mary McGinn, although this alliance was not as precedent setting as that in the Han Young case, it was significant since it was an on-going coalition that strengthened the resolve and the campaign of all unionists involved, and since it has enhanced transnational union solidarity throughout the continent.[635] Indeed, at the NAO hearing, the AFL-CIO, the Canadian Labor Congress, and the newly formed UNT, along with the STRM, the Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (STUNAM), and the airline service workers union, Independencia, all joined as petitioners in the complaint, the first time that the labor federations of the three nations have participated in a complaint under the labor side agreement of NAFTA. Generally, the problems usually associated with workers' rights petitions – the provocation of capital flight, the prevention of capital inflows to Mexico, the political dilemmas of foreign intervention and enforcement – constitute

---

[633] Rosen and Smucker 1998.
[634] Kincaid 1998a.
[635] Rosen and Smucker 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

serious obstacles to their success. But as these latter two cases reveal, if they are pursued with significant transnational solidarity and in league with community-based strategies for empowerment throughout the continent, there is a greater possibility of overcoming these obstacles to create alternative and just models of transnational governance.

Throughout these many contexts in which social movement organizations have struggled for consistent and enforceable development standards and more just ideals of transnational governance, one is led to question the ultimate vision of the state these NGOs desire. Clearly, beyond the strategies of upwardly harmonizing standards and gaining compensatory resources for the ravages of neoliberalism, most border movement organizations have had little involvement in state electoral parties or in ideological pronouncements about what form of state governance would be best. In part, this has been because border movements have so few resources and have so little power relative to neoliberal interests, they have been consumed with efforts to promote very basic political education and a consciousness of entitlement. It also has been a result of new border organizations attempting to gain popular interest and coalitional support, which is best done by working towards widely accepted standards for development rather than towards potentially exclusionary ideological visions of state power. This desire for inclusiveness and solidarity is further aided by a populist sensibility within U.S. support organizations such as the SCMW which wishes to avoid being interventionist or anti-democratic in its efforts to work with Mexican

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

movements. Lastly, there are significant popular sentiments of cynicism regarding the co-opting or repressive mechanisms of (inter)state bureaucracy, and thus the ideologies of reform or revolution fall flat. Even the PRD has come under scrutiny by many border activists, such as CITTAC's Jaime Cota, because of their lack of involvement in grassroots or community-level organizing, and because of its historic roots in the PRI electoral apparatus.[636] When this is combined with the perspective that states are becoming disempowered vis-à-vis corporate capital, many organizers regard it as more practical and beneficent to organize directly against transnationals. Therefore, while representatives of some border organizations – such as CDM/GFX and the IHRC – may privately discuss visions of a feminist democratic socialism, transnational government, cooperative development corporations, or national autonomy from the world system, even they most often regard it as utopian to advocate such distant agendas for governance in the context of neoliberalism.

However, in analyzing the many strategies of transforming the state, it is clear the general model that has emerged calls for a transnational version of either a liberal Keynesian regulatory state or a democratic socialist form. The former is best seen in strategies for greater regulation and green capitalist investments in compensatory infrastructure or entrepreneurial projects, like expanded and more democratic versions of the BECC or the UN. More normatively, the former is evident in the demands for a global system of corporate responsibility to a global citizenry that will accompany

[636] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

an expansive transnational mobility. The latter is present in the proposals for fair trade made by the FTC, ART, and RMALC, with which border movements such as the CJM have expressed affinity.[637] One of the most eloquent exponents of this proposal was the PRD's leading political figure and current Municipal President of Mexico City, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, who argued before the implementation of NAFTA:

> The exploitation of cheap labor, energy and raw materials, technology dependency, and lax environmental protection, should not be the premises upon which Mexico establishes links with the U.S., Canada, and the world economy.... We cannot be satisfied with the kind of future that would emerge from a simple economic liberalization. This would extrapolate present trends and exacerbate present vices.[638]

More specifically, his suggestions entail eight interrelated points. Principally, Mexico and the U.S. are not capable of equal trade; thus the U.S. must reduce or remove its non-tariff barriers and U.S. corporate access to Mexican markets should be more gradual and accompanied by additional resources. Second, the maquiladoras must be restructured to foster backward linkages and generate equitable capital resources for the Mexican people. Third, Mexico should be able to obtain adequate compensation for the use of its labor and resources from foreign investors. Fourth, more encompassing than the European Community's model, a social charter would be established to standardize real wages, work conditions, bargaining rights, and occupational safety and health standards. Fifth, environmental standards should be

---

[637] Ojeda 1996.
[638] Cárdenas 1992: 95.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

upwardly harmonized, setting limits to foreign access to resources and establishing better legal enforcement of preservation. Sixth, Mexico should receive funding to adjust for the investment needs required by NAFTA, especially in infrastructure, education, and technical improvements. Seventh, there must be an equal and binding process of dispute resolution mechanism in addition to GATT. And eighth, Mexicans should not need to leave Mexico to find jobs; thus there need to be liberalized guest worker arrangements and fair Mexican employment standards.[639] As Roberto Martínez (AFSCBP) has argued,

> You can't allow merchandise to come across the border freely but not labor. Because they're the ones that are going to be affected the most. You know NAFTA is about labor, not about goods.... Immigration was something that they [NAFTA policy makers] would not allow us to debate. They would not put it on the table, because it was something that could bog down NAFTA negotiations.[640]

Clearly, this plan and its liberal Keynesian counterpart need further specification to come anywhere close to implementation, but as the examples of EMOSA and Han Young would remind us, until there is greater education and direct pressure placed on private transnational actors, none of these strategies will come to fruition.

Climbing the Corporate Barricades: Transnational Labor Solidarity

> If transnational companies talk together and coordinate to defend their interests, if governments make deals and coordinate to defend their interests, then unions have to work together to defend our common interests – the interests of working women and men! We know that neither business nor governments make decisions that benefit workers.

---

[639] Cárdenas 1992: 96-8.
[640] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> unless they are forced to by a strong, vocal and coordinated trade union movement!
> – Lawrence McBrearty, National Director, United Steel Workers[641]

By way of discussing the history and founding strategies of cross-border labor organizing against transnationals, one case in particular stands out. From 1978 to 1986, sharecroppers in Ohio struggled to gain collective bargaining rights against their contractor, Campbell's, the soup corporation that dominates the U.S. soup market. Interestingly, these sharecroppers were not Campbell's employees, but they did supply the tomatoes for the company, and they wanted better terms of compensation. During this eight year period, the 2,600 sharecroppers conducted direct actions and went on strike, for which they faced arrests, harassment by the Sheriff's department, beatings, violent attacks, and cross burnings by the Klu Klux Klan.[642] However, in 1986 Campbell's agreed to sign a contract with them and their representative organization, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), forming the first multiparty bargaining agreement in U.S. union history. In the midst of bargaining for a raise from $3.35/hour (the minimum wage at that time) to $4.50/hour, Campbell's threatened to shift its operations to Mexico.[643] So in 1987, in an effort to deter corporate "whipsawing" – or what many have termed an extortion or blackmail of workers – and to ensure strong labor representation in Mexico, the president of FLOC, Baldemar Velasquez, established contact with the National Union

[641] La Botz 1997b.
[642] Velasquez 1996: 172
[643] Velasquez 1996: 173

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of Farm Workers (SNTOAC) in Mexico. SNTOAC is one of the more progressive unions affiliated with the CTM. It has almost five thousand members nationally and has settled contracts covering over 180,000 migrant farm workers.[644] But possibly most importantly for FLOC, SNTOAC represented workers at the Campbell's tomato paste factory in Sinaloa, Mexico. FLOC thus began a research project to look into common labor issues at Campbell's transnationally and established the U.S.-Mexico Exchange program to enhance worker-to-worker education. Further, FLOC worked to develop common strategies and union policies across the border, which they hoped would lead to transnational collective bargaining.[645] Then, as now, this represents a primary strategy of transnational labor organizing insofar as it can put a brake on corporate flight, worker wage extortion, and downward harmonization globally. In 1989, not only was FLOC able to prevent Campbell's southward move, but with the support of SNTOAC, FLOC was able to win a wage increase that was seven percent above the legal government cap of ten percent.[646] At the same time, SNTOAC's workers were more empowered at Campbell's in Mexico to demand higher wages and better working conditions. But this transnationalism has not been novel for farm labor in the U.S., which has led the campaign for cross-border organizing with its often deep cultural and political ties to the communities and institutions of Latin America, especially Mexico. This may be witnessed in the history of the UFW whose

---

[644] Farm Labor Organizing Committee 1998.
[645] Moody and McGinn 1992: 49.
[646] Alexander 1994: 48.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

biculturalism and internationalism has been obvious and immediate to its participants. Further precedent may be seen in the Arizona Farm Workers who, in 1979, won clauses in many contracts requiring employers to contribute ten cents per worker per hour to a development fund which was to be used towards agricultural and community projects in the workers' Mexican hometowns.[647]

But in 1991, the relationship between FLOC and SNTOAC deepened when SNTOAC president Diego Águilar told the FLOC convention that his union would be collaborating with them and the UFW to create parallel union contracts for housing, health care, and other work benefits. And, in a display of transnational solidarity that is still uncommon, SNTOAC agreed to support farm worker strikes in the U.S., not only morally and strategically, but financially as well. Further, FLOC and SNTOAC have been working to enable guest workers from Mexico to be temporary members of FLOC while in the U.S., by taking advantage of provision H2A of the 1986 Immigration Act which requires legal "guest workers" from Mexico to have a sponsor.[648] Both unions also have committed to a "wage parity model" in which they will work towards equal real wage levels across the U.S. and Mexico, hopefully narrowing the wage gap over time and reversing the downward harmonization of labor standards through corporate threats of relocation in Mexico. Although FLOC and SNTOAC have not achieved coordinated bargaining, and wage parity still seems distant, they have harmonized their goals and they have traveled further than most

[647] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1994: 335.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

unions in building the basis for transnational collective bargaining. And the struggle continues. In 1992, they collaborated in organizing pickle sharecroppers in North Carolina and Michigan as well as over five thousand farmers in the Mexican states of Michoacan and Guanajuato supplying Dean Foods, Heinz, Green Bay, and Vlasic. Like Campbell's, these companies signed multiparty agreements that eliminated sharecropping and child labor in 1993, allowing workers to have bargaining rights, greater earnings, new housing, sanitary facilities in migrant camps, and to enjoy full rights as employees.[649] In 1994, FLOC was granted a charter by the AFL-CIO.[650] Velasquez reports that after these structural changes, FLOC is working with SNTOAC to gain standard – transnational – benefits in their contracts.[651] "This effort brought home to FLOC the realization that what we were attempting to do was build a borderless community of workers."[652]

Astutely commenting on the erosion of state power and the increasing questioning of coherent national identities under transnational corporate regimes, Baldemar Velasquez has stated, "We are not citizens of two countries – we are citizens of one giant company. We must struggle together."[653] In a more lengthy explanation of the need for transnational solidarity, Velasquez states:

> We need an organizing response, not a political response.... We must fashion a union with workers in alliance, state by state, country by

[648] Moody and McGinn 1992: 49.
[649] Velasquez 1996: 174; Farm Labor Organizing Committee 1998.
[650] Farm Labor Organizing Committee 1998.
[651] Velasquez 1996: 173.
[652] Velasquez 1996: 174.
[653] Moody and McGinn 1992: 50.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> country. We must insist that workers' rights to wages and benefits such as health, education, and environmental safety be protected everywhere. As Americans and Mexican alike, we are now less citizens of the nation in which we are born, and more citizens of the company for whom we work. This makes us equal. We must insist that this equality be reflected in our paychecks, our work conditions, our living conditions, our environmental conditions – for which the common company is responsible. This should impact the security of our jobs here and in Mexico.[654]

Moreover, he states

> Only when we organize workers and communities, wherever a particular corporation does business, will we be in a position to stop companies from pitting us against each other. Organizing an entire industry is not a radical idea, it's just that we have to do it internationally. This will turn the downward spiral of competition into an upward spiral of worker collaboration.[655]

And unlike those border organizers above who have interests in transforming the state, Velasquez's experiences have led him to argue that legislative strategies to work within the NAFTA framework are ultimately moribund means of challenging free trade, since it is grassroots and union pressure against transnationals that will bring the most clear successes: "We at the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) believe that we must treat the internationalization of the economy as an organizing issue, not a legislative one.... FLOC considers political and legislative maneuvering to be a dead-end response for labor in this country."[656]

Here, Velasquez overlooks the ways by which unions, unlike other social or environmental justice movements, have an immediate lever against corporations

---

[654] Alexander 1994: 46.
[655] Velasquez 1996: 174.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

through workplace actions. Thus, strategies that refuse to engage state institutions may not be as readily available to other movements. Nevertheless, his grassroots tactics of solidifying cross-border solidarity have grounded much of the new transnationalist strategies within North American labor movements. Indeed, a variety of strategies have grown out of the FLOC campaigns, not least of which is the practice of holding corporate buyers responsible for the actions of their contracted vendors, which is significant in a global economy ever more characterized by flexible capital networks. Indeed, in the campaigns of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) against designer Jessica McClintock and the clothes retailer, the GAP, as well as in the publicized opposition to Kathie Lee operations in Central America, even former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich has argued that transnational buyers should be held responsible for the actions of their subcontractors. For this discussion of transnational solidarity, however, FLOC has also set much precedent in its philosophies of global citizenship and its opposition to transnational corporations. Non-state-based strategies such as worker-to-worker exchanges and cross-border education have been discussed above, but Velasquez clearly argues that this is merely the beginning of deeper organizational ties between union movements of different countries, ties which can result in transnational actions, collective bargaining, and contracts.

[656] Velasquez 1996: 171.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

By way of a summary of cross-border solidarity strategies between the U.S. and Mexican labor movements, Dan La Botz[657] has argued that there are four distinct but parallel endeavors. The first is a community-based approach common to borderland labor organizations and Mexican urban popular movements in which neighborhood and union support organizations strive to empower workers in their communities vis-à-vis transnationals. Most of the organizations discussed here fall into this category, and their tactics include leadership training, legal rights education, emergency response networks, grassroots coalition-building, protests, and other forms of public pressure. A second strategy has been corporate campaigns, like that against Stepan Chemical above, that target specific companies or industries which are especially abusive and publicly known, proceeding by tactics of worker-to-worker exchanges, legal pressure, stock-holder measures, and possibly joint strike actions. A third approach would include participation within networks of cross-border support committees, labor information organizations and economic justice coalitions. These can be effective crisis response networks and they have the possibility to foster anything from immediate information sharing to more distant transnational unionization. Lastly, there exists a more direct strategy of building "clandestine cells" or small groups of workers from one or more work sites which would help to organize entire company workforces into independent unions. Because of extensive repression of independent unionization throughout Mexico, and especially the maquila sector,

[657] 1995: 143.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

clandestine organizing is crucial to evading government or corporate counter-movements until there are sufficient numbers of workers and public awareness to insulate organizers. Beyond La Botz's categories of strategy, we may add the endeavors of many unions to fortify the International Trade Secretariats (ITS) as transnational union organizations with the potential to oversee and organize entire global industries.[658] Although these strategies are distinguishable and possess their own unique sets of advantages, it is clear that they represent deeply interconnected theories and practices of labor resistance, and the most clear route to a radically democratic globalization is in the pursuit of each simultaneously. Together, they offer a powerful lattice work of challenges to neoliberal regimes and the new world order they portend.

If the border has been an experimental laboratory for the development of trans-american neoliberalism, it also has been the site of new efforts at cross-border solidarity. However, since cross-border coalition-building has been tainted with the legacies of imperialism, these efforts on the U.S./Mexico border have faced extreme difficulties catching up to the transnational organizing of corporations. Ed Feigen of the AFL-CIO has described the lack of knowledge, clarity, and purpose that inhibited the early – pre-NAFTA – unionization campaigns, and thus have limited the number and strength of current union efforts:

> Well, historically I don't think ... that any labor unions had a good handle on what was going on in the maquiladora industry.... People knew

[658] Bendiner 1987; Herod 1995; Kidder and McGinn 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> about it. Occasionally, ... there was some people who went down and looked at the maquiladoras, but there was not much work that had been done prior to the efforts I initiated. We're talking about 1989.... I put together a funding proposal, and the AFL-CIO decided to support a project which I coordinated.... There has been very little meaningful cross-border organizing, if you want to define that as attempts to organize workers into unions so that you have an ability to negotiate and bargain for wages and working conditions.... There's been very little in the way of ... those types of organizing efforts.[659]

He summarized the condition more succinctly by saying that "no one has figured it out yet," since the transnationals are just "better organized than we are."[660] Because the industrialization of the border region has corresponded with the relatively recent history of export-processing and rapid population growth, the borderlands is an industrial context in which unionization has had little time to gain a significant foothold. And clearly there have been very successful corporate and state endeavors to demobilize these struggles. But beyond this, democratic unionization has been thwarted by the union movement itself. Certainly, as will be explored further in Chapter Five, a neoliberal hegemony has been reflected in the older and more hierarchical incarnations of the AFL-CIO, with their open support of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, their protectionism, and their alliances with the corrupt "official" unions of Mexico. Also explored more in Chapter Five, this hegemony is evident from Tijuana to Matamoros in the ways by which the "official" unions of Mexico have repressed and disarticulated democratic unions. It is precisely because of these difficulties that early cross-border endeavors to facilitate a radically decentralized and social movement unionism in the

[659] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

borderlands have had to engage in broader and more basic strategies of mobilization, including the development of grassroots support networks and transnational worker education discussed in previous sections. But throughout these early stages of organizing, which are far from complete, many U.S. and Mexican independent unions have worked to build ties and create the power base necessary to organize in the maquiladoras.

Local labor support organizations along the border, such as the SCMW, the CFO, and the CJM have worked with U.S. unions such as the UE and independent Mexican unions like the FAT to deepen the relations between local maquiladora workers and unionization campaigns, nationally and transnationally. The roles each support organization may take in these efforts vary according to their location, expertise, or resources, but Mary Tong (SCMW) has described the most urgent and important outcome of this solidarity – the right to organize:

> Well I think, as far as worker organizing, the main source of protection is if we can bring pressure to bear on this side of the border, so that the company has to respond to the fact that there is tremendous public sentiment here. [If] the company thinks that they can get rid of the demands by firing workers or beating up workers in Mexico, they will just leave it at that. But if they know there's a force on this side of the border that's watching things and acting in solidarity with workers there, it's much more difficult to do that. So I think that's ... the first initial form of protection.[661]

This works through a broad effort to publicize border labor issues and educate workers so that their consciousness and political capacities are raised to new levels of

---

[660] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

empowerment. As basic protections of workers' rights to organize are won, the potential for unionization increases and thus the organizational structures for continued labor solidarity become strengthened, enhancing accountability and transnational networks. Although borderland unionization is minimal at this time, especially in the maquilas, there are ever more frequent and militant interests in union organizing among workers. Further, the mutual assistance existing between unions and local support organizations reveals a tendency to make union movements more accountable to grassroots interests, which places greater pressures on unions to embrace social movement forms of activism through solidarity with other political interests such as gender, environment, class, and development. Thus, besides providing a transnational process of opposition to capital flight and global divisions of labor, the grassroots-union alliances created by support committees are developing the potential to address critical questions of national dependency, free trade, nonsustainability, and neoliberal patriarchy. One facet of this expansion of labor movement concerns is most obvious in the increasing involvement of Latino and Chicano opposition to transnational corporations within U.S. unions, reforming many historic absences within U.S. labor politics and noncoincidentally enhancing cross-border solidarity campaigns.

Much of the early and more successful transnational solidarity work that has been done between U.S. and independent Mexican unions has involved U.S. unions that have relatively high proportions of Latinos, Chicanos, and Spanish speakers, such as

---

[661] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

FLOC, the SEIU; the UFW; the UE; UNITE; and United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). By way of explanation, Frank Martín del Campo[662] of the SEIU and Roberto Martínez[663] of the AFSCBP have argued that Mexicans and Chicanos in the borderlands always have had historical reasons to recognize the economic and political relationships between the two countries, and that this has led to many needs for transnational solidarity. Whether it is in opposition to over 130 years of U.S. imperialism in Mexico or resistance to cultures and policies of anti-immigration in the states; whether it is the contestation of U.S. corporate abuses on Mexican soil or human rights dilemmas that have resulted from military alliances between the two federal governments throughout Mexico, clearly there have been many reasons for the U.S. labor movement to seek coalition with their radically democratic Mexican counterparts. Yet, despite the general transnational cultural and political ties between the U.S. and Mexico, until recently, bi-national labor movement connections have been notoriously few. But when they have occurred, immigrant-based U.S. movements often have led the way. In the San Diego/Tijuana area, the work of Chicano artist communities and activists, especially those protests of immigrant control staged along the border fence and in Centro Cultural de la Raza, have been rallying points for Mexicans on both sides of the border.[664] Although, Chicanos and Latinos in the U.S. have not been immune to protectionism and support for a U.S. labor aristocracy, and immigrant-based labor

---

[662] Interview, June 1996.
[663] Interview, July 1996.
[664] Interview with AFSCBP coordinator Roberto Martínez, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

movements have been far from conflict-free or the basis for an authentic transnationalism, it is possible to argue that demographic changes in the U.S. workforce – its "Latinization"[665] – in recent decades, especially in the Southwest and in the major metropolitan areas, have facilitated greater cross-border cultural, familial, economic, and political connections. This, in turn, has provided at least some organic basis for current and future transnational solidarity efforts. Speaking of the UE's special relationship with Mexico's Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT), Hart stated,

> We have such similar organizations, the FAT and the UE.... We also have a large Spanish speaking membership, so that gives us a sensitivity to these issues. We had had some international relations throughout our history, but NAFTA was what brought us to a realization of the importance of international solidarity and led us to this alliance with the FAT.[666]

As further examples, FLOC and the UFW forged campaigns which have protected Mexican immigrants and agricultural workers south of the border. More recently, the SEIU has gained health care coverage in Mexico for Mexican citizens working in the U.S.[667] Also, because many immigrant communities, along with low-skilled, non-unionized, and workers of color throughout the U.S. and Canada, have been among the first workers to loose jobs to capital flight, many immigrant organizations have worked to forge coalitions with labor groups throughout the U.S. and Mexico. For instance, organizations like Fuerza Unida and La Mujer Obrera have promoted economic and environmental security for immigrant women and Mexicanas in the U.S. who have

---

[665] Salinas de Gotari, Carlos et al. 1991; Olalquiaga 1992.
[666] In La Botz 1997b.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

suffered from job exportation to Mexico.[668] Describing Fuerza Unida's interests, co-coordinator Petra Mata said, "This is the ... strategy Levi's used on us: to work you and then throw you away like trash. They have no respect for workers' rights as human beings, and their contractors abused seamstresses in other countries."[669] And, in many transnational campaigns against garment sweatshops contracted by retailers such as the GAP and fashion designers like Jessica McClintock, UNITE has begun the difficult work of building transnational coalitions from San Francisco to Costa Rica against the exploitation of children and women workers.[670]

But possibly the most extensive attempt to organize cross-border coalitions between the U.S. and Mexican industrial sectors, especially in the maquiladoras, has been done between the UE and the FAT. The FAT is one of the more democratic and militant independent unions (not belonging to the CTM), which represents approximately ten thousand workers throughout Mexico and has been active both in coalition-building with U.S. labor organizations and of course among Mexico's independent unions, helping to form the independent union coalition, the Unión Nacional de Trabajadores (UNT). The FAT endeavors to have rank-and-file members share the floor equally with representatives; they are frequently successful, despite some internal resistance from an exclusionary machismo, in their attempts to have proportionate representation of women workers on committees; and they have forged

[667] Interview of SEIU International Vice President Eliseo Medina, March 1997.
[668] Cook 1997: 531-3.
[669] Fuerza Unida 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

coalitions between labor and social movements. Indeed, the FAT has divided its organizing into four sectors – cooperatives, communities, peasants, and unions – integrating unions within the broad struggle for economic justice. This has caused them to be broad in their concerns, lobbying against NAFTA, against PRI-backed repression of unionists and peasants alike, and creating ties with independent labor movements in Chile, Brazil, and Guatemala. In the words of Helen Bouneaud from the French Confederation Generale de Travail (CGT), "We are very much interested in FAT because of its new forms of organization, for example, with the community groups. FAT is exploring new forms of citizenship, and working on the relationship between the unions and civil society. We are also impressed by the FAT's insistence on democracy."[671] Or, according to Annie Labaj of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW),

> It is very important that women's issues have a chance to come forward and that they are included in your documents. When we are all working together and you include the women's issues, you make the whole movement stronger.... It is very important that we unite as workers across borders and across gender to fight together for a decent salary and a safe environment.[672]

On the border they have worked in Juárez with the Teamsters to establish the Centro Taller de Labor (CETLAC), and in Tijuana they have struggled with the UE and local support organizations such as CDM/GFX and CITTAC to organize workers against exploitative and injurious labor in the Dae Wan and Ley Mex maquilas, both affiliates of Hyundai. Benedicto Orozco, a representative of the FAT, also reports

[670] Interview of UNITE supporter/organizer Edna Bonacich, March 1997.
[671] La Botz 1997b.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

working with the UE in Juárez during the 1992 campaign to educate and empower workers against General Electric's low pay and unsafe work conditions, as well as in the more recent campaign against Sony over similar problems.[673] Further, there was the 1993 cross-border collaboration between the UE and the FAT in organizing both Mexican immigrant workers in the Milwaukee Aluminum Casting and Engineering Company (AceCo) and Júarez workers for GE wanting independent representation. This campaign politicized Mexicans on both sides of the border as to the possibilities of democratic organizing and transnational collaboration. As Roberto Valerio, a FAT organizer, stated, "The UE and the FAT fight for the same ideals: workers uniting to progress.... I feel proud to see my countrymen demanding their union rights. And it's moving to see workers of all races and nationalities joining forces.... Keep on, borthers and sisters. The way to the future is the union!"[674] These solidarity efforts between the UE and the FAT has even been commemorated in a bi-national mural project painted both on the FAT office buildings in Mexico City and on UE headquarters in Chicago. But probably the most extensive solidarity work they have done recently has been in the actions against Echlin's ITAPSA plant discussed above and Hyundai's Han Young maquila in Tijuana. In the Fall of 1997, workers at the Han Young maquiladora, who make tractor trailer chassis for Hyundai, wished to organize a union so as to prevent real wage decreases and further safety violations, since many workers had been injured by

---

[672] La Botz 1997b.
[673] Orozco 1998.
[674] Davis 1995: 28.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

industrial accidents caused by inadequate safety procedures and equipment during lead soldering and chassis transport. They wished to organize with the FAT through its affiliate STIMAHCS, and in doing so, encountered state-corporate repression through the government-backed union, the CROM, leading to a walkout and a hunger strike. With organizing assistance from the UE and the local SCMW, a wide campaign of resistance began. The SCMW facilitated protests at Hyundai dealerships in over twenty U.S. cities, the Teamsters and the UE organized sympathetic protests at Hyundai affiliates, all mobilized journalists to publicize the issue, and through a letter campaign to corporate and government officials even greater public relations pressure was placed on the company. Further, with legal support from the above organizations, the ILRF, and ANAD, STIMAHCS filed a complaint with the NAO (discussed above) ultimately causing the company and the Mexican government to have more public relations problems than they cared to tolerate.[675] Thus, in concert these local and transnational ties of solidarity functioned to organize the first officially recognized independent union in the maquiladora sector.

In investigating these transnational solidarity links, it is clear that reforms in both national labor movements have enabled each to have greater interest in, and appreciation for, the possibilities of cross-border organizing. In the U.S. it is clear that the labor movement's participation in the struggles to defeat NAFTA was crucial in the transnational politicization of many officials and rank-and-filers alike within the AFL-

[675] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

CIO. Transnational solidarity on the border, although originally prone to protectionism and paternalism, is now expanding to include more radically democratic and social movement forms of unionism. Noncoincidentally, this has corresponded to the recent reforms within the AFL-CIO prompted by a new leadership that is more invested than its predecessors in grassroots organizing, transnational coalitions, and an inclusion of racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, and women in union campaigns. Indeed, this new leadership was ushered into office on the backs of much grassroots organizing and the participation of formerly marginalized workers in the AFL-CIO election campaigns, which in many instances was facilitated by the more democratic elements within the organization's unions, including such factions as Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) and progressive unions like the increasingly powerful SEIU. AFL-CIO relations with Mexican unions have been enhanced ever since the organization conflicted with its former union allies, the CTM, over NAFTA, prompting greater coordination with more democratic independent unions and their new federations, particularly the FAT and the UNT. The moderate reformers at the AFL-CIO under President John Sweeney have found new allies in leaders such as Hernández Juárez of the UNT, and in precedent setting meetings national conventions of the UNT and the AFL-CIO have invited representatives from the other member unions to attend. Similarly, the AFL-CIO has attempted to cement connections between itself and the FAT, by scheduling meetings to discuss common interests and collaborative possibilities. In one such meeting, Stan Gacek, Assistant Director of the International Affairs department of the AFL-CIO,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

argued that the labor movement needs to "globalize our methods, whether they be work stoppages, boycotts, political mobilizations or corporate campaigns against the target of the multinational corporations."[676] In the first visit by an AFL or CIO president to Mexico since Samuel Gompers in 1924 and John L. Lewis in 1938, Sweeney traveled to Mexico in January of 1998 with representatives from UNITE and the USWA, and during his stay he not only visited President Zedillo and officials from the CTM, but also the UNT, the FAT, and STUNAM. In the meetings with the latter, Sweeney stated that the AFL-CIO wished to find solutions to the problems of globalization and that he had come to

> work with the leaders of Mexican unions and other democratic forces in the country.... We want to work with our brothers and sisters in all parts of the Mexican labor movement and with freedom lovers throughout Mexican society.... [And we want to] find practical ways to work together by seeking and developing coordinated cross-border organizing and bargaining strategies.[677]

Although his meetings with President Zedillo, Leonardo Rodríguez Alcaine, President of the CTM, and Mexican Labor Secretary, Javier Bonilla García entailed veiled pronouncements against the AFL-CIO's infringements of national sovereignty, the U.S. contingent felt encouraged by the relations it is founding with the UNT. But if reforms within the AFL-CIO have provoked optimism, the July 1997 electoral changes in Mexico appear to open an even wider door for its independent labor movement.

---

[676] La Botz 1997b.
[677] Sherman 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Indeed, beginning with the EZLN uprising in 1994 and continuing through the Mexican economic downturn throughout the late 1990s, political opposition to the authoritarian regime of the PRI reached a breaking point in the Summer of 1997 as the PAN and the PRD won a majority of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies, ending a seventy year rule by the PRI. In further signs of reform, PRD leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas took the powerful Municipal Presidency of Mexico City, and in the latter half of 1997, many independent unions formed coalitions, including the UNT and the more radical Comité Inter-unión del Primero de Mayo (CIPM) formed by unions such as the Ruta Cien bus drivers union. This change has also sent ripples throughout the CTM, causing its leaders to at least feign democratization. Indeed, although the CTM maintains a neoliberal position in support of free trade and the PRI, a window of opportunity has opened for certain democratic factions within it, seen most notably in the general strike of the CTM-affiliated Sindicato de Jornaleros y Obreros Industriales (SJOI) in Matamoros under Agapito Gonzalez Cavazos. In January 1998, over thirteen thousand workers, over two-thirds women and one-third of the total workforce of Matamoros, participated in a strike for wage increases and an "English" week of five work days, not the standard Mexican week of six days. Government raises on already low wages were slated to be sixteen percent, but along the border the rate of inflation is substantially higher, causing SJOI to organize a massive strike at ten maquilas, owned by transnationals including Lucent Technologies, GM, and Sunbeam. In February, although the Asociación de las Maquiladoras de Matamoros condemned the act as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

harmful to the local economy – estimating that up to ten thousand jobs had left the city since SJOI actions in 1992 – the companies and the SJOI settled on a wage increase of no less than twenty-five percent.[678] Clearly, there are many reasons to be skeptical of these changes, especially given the Mexican government's long history of incorporating opposition, the still close relations existing between the UNT and the PRI, and the intensity of governmental repression from the border to Actéal, Chiapas. And certainly, the economic crisis that Mexico confronts at the turn of the century continues to have devastating effects on the Mexican people. However, it is also clear that the transformation of the political and labor movement structures in Mexico have enabled the resurgence of a democratic left which portends continued impacts both in Mexico and throughout the continent, as the struggle to find radically democratic alternatives to neoliberal corporate regimes continues. Indeed, as the repressive neoliberal mechanism of the CTM appears to lose power, with its contradictory and selective use of nationalism to block transnational solidarity efforts with U.S. unions, more thorough and effective cross-border campaigns should develop and the independent union movement in Mexico can elaborate more critical responses to a reterritorialized corporate imperialism.

These promising shifts within the union movements of the U.S. and Mexico have many causes, including political and economic crises, the struggles over neoliberal policy, and internal union reforms. However, it is possible to argue that one

---

[678] La Botz 1998b.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

considerable force in the transition from more nationalistic, narrow, bureaucratic, and centralized organizations to transnational, coalitional, decentralized, and democratic unions has been the impact of a growing network of local labor support committees, fair trade associations, and grassroots economic justice groups. Of these, those that have had possibly the greatest impact on the transformation of U.S. and Mexican union efforts of transnational solidarity have worked on and along the U.S./Mexico border. Many of the coalitional strategies above, such as worker-to-worker exchanges, have aided this reform of North American unions, but a guiding organizing principle of this endeavor has been a grassroots feminist orientation which has respected local knowledge, consciousness-raising, and the strong resistance of women in a disempowering international division of labor. Indeed, through associations with grassroots and feminist organizing at the local level, national and transnational union organizations become more accountable to the rank-and-file, the interests of coalition-building across movement interests, and thus more radically democratic. That is, there is no contradiction between the local and the global, since for both forms of organizing to be realized each are necessary.

Further, feminist methods of organizing on the border have expanded the definition of labor, and hence the labor movement. This has occurred in several ways. First, because many maquiladora women work double shifts, at the factory and at home, and because their labor is therefore both productive and reproductive, the definition of labor is expanded to encompass the domestic sphere, the community, the family,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

activism, and indeed, almost any creative work in one's life. This has widened the purview of labor organizations to address a range of issues such as sexual and reproductive freedoms, environmental health and security, familial education, government services, and community cultural centers – not merely shop floor concerns for benefits and wages. Related to this is a second organizing issue, which is the unique political socialization of women workers in the region. Carmen Valadez and Reyna Montoya (CDM/GFX) have spoken at length about the ways in which formerly frightened employees, through consciousness-raising groups, find the courage to redefine their identities.[679] They argue that, through day-to-day discussions of conflicts over problems in the maquilas and in the home, many women expand their realm of concern from the family, to their co-workers, to their community, and often to a transnational strata of working class women. Clearly, enhancing the already strong cultural traditions of care and compassion in the family to a broader community makes many women workers formidable activists in the struggle for union representation, government services, and environmental justice. Third, as was evident in the EMOSA case, many women workers have expanded the definition of exploitation on the job to include sexual exploitation and the invasive prohibition of reproductive freedoms. Besides the mutilating injuries and toxic exposure that is all too frequent to corporate regimes of productivity within the maquiladora industry, women workers and organizers have helped to raise consciousness about the ways in which these regimes are

[679] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

maintained through sexual intimidation, patriarchal structures of authority, and paternalistic belittlement of women's demands. Therefore, unions and labor support organizations have found it crucial to address the ways in which gender, class, and state power intersect to bolster corporate power in the borderlands. As will be discussed in the following chapter, there are clear differences among women in Mexico, and more between women transnationally, that make such coalitions difficult at best. However, through the expansive critiques offered by labor organizations, the labor movement of North America shows signs of emerging from its moribund ignorance, if not marginalization, of gendered analyses and women's interests. And in so doing, it becomes more cognizant and critical of issues of class and community identity, corporate structure, and neoliberal development.

Concluding Remarks

Through the local/global organizing facilitated by unions and their support organizations, transnational political opposition to corporate power is developing a broad range of strategies. The above discussion of borderland movement organizations reveal the history and possibilities of corporate campaigns, direct actions, and the beginnings of cross-border strikes for transnational collective bargaining. These efforts are just starting to have an impact on workers' lives in North America, and without doubt, it will take many more years of painstaking coalition building and networking to be able to place limits on, much less restructure, the growth of neoliberal development.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

But the theories and practices of worker empowerment are taking a more definite shape, and the commitment of North American labor movements to the realization of radically democratic process reveal the outlines of new alternatives. As they develop and the general political-economic crises of neoliberalism mount, these strategies may begin to have a more common formative opposition to current economic structures, pressuring for non-exploitative wages that are not dependent on location, healthy/safe workplaces, worker participation in policy, gender equality, sustainable environmental conditions, and greater mutual accountability between local and global political processes. But in advance of these larger goals, or those of a transnational governance structure discussed above, the community-based movements of the U.S./Mexico border have begun the difficult process of building dialogue into consensus. As coalitional action agendas emerge and a new internationalism takes shape, it is these local movements that are shouldering much of the burden for mobilizing state, union, and community resources in effective and complementary ways. Indeed, only through this balanced combination of the regulatory and enforcement capacities of (trans)national state institutions, the effective leverage of large numbers of workers by union organizations, and the oppositional identities and cultures of resistance resting in local communities, can this empowerment be realized. Yet if we are to thoroughly appreciate the strides that these efforts on the border have made towards a decentralization of wealth and power, and if we are to engage in the critical work necessary for expanding them, it is necessary to explore the absences and dilemmas that thwart them.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 5
Hegemonies in Movement

> Hegemony is, quite simply, a political *type of relation, a form*, if one so wishes, of politics; but not a determinable location within a topography of the social. In a given social formation, there can be a variety of hegemonic nodal points.
>
> -Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe[680]

The politics of contesting neoliberalism in the borderlands are rife with transformative potential, but they clearly are bounded by a multi-layered and multi-vocal hegemony which can have normalizing if not demobilizing effects on regional movements. This experimental zone of neoliberal development is one with high stakes since transnational capital and the state institutions of North America have sought to make it a model of modernization and liberalization for the entire Western Hemisphere. Thus, as the borderlands have become a site of new imperial power relations and social crises, the concomitant growth of extractive export-processing and externalization of costs have been defended zealously by the apparatuses of social control. As has been mentioned throughout previous discussions, transnationals have been publicly unaccountable and have perpetrated egregious violations of workers' rights to organize, while local, national, and transnational governance institutions throughout North America have fulfilled their clientelistic roles by overlooking or enforcing neoliberal discipline. These actions have placed severe restrictions on local community-based labor and environmental justice organizations, closing so many

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

opportunities for structural social change, making it undeniable that state and capital forces have constructed a formidable and well-organized counter-mobilization. However, it is imperative to note that although the effects of such exclusionary instruments as anti-union campaigns, mechanisms of patronage, or deregulatory efforts often may take the form of conspiracies, they need not be intentional or planned. Indeed, the sometimes conflicting interests of different political and economic strata favoring neoliberalism frequently converge through more unintended structural consequences. These structures intermingle the cultural, the economic and the political, but the effect has been to close off avenues to radically democratic political representation and forms of development that are redistributive and sustainable. If borderland movements are making history, they definitely are doing so under circumstances not of their own choosing. It is this set of limitations which the following discussion will explore by examining the organization of counter-movements.

Yet, as in many hegemonic power relations throughout the history of development, that which is typical of neoliberalism in the borderlands works not merely through prohibitive limits from without. Clearly, any hegemony also exists through more insidious means of defining the terrain of discourses from which resistance movements begin to construct their identities and strategies. Whether it is the movement discourse of anti-imperial revolution, national autonomy, democracy,

---

[680] 1985: 139.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

corporate responsibility, or a liberal regulatory state, each has been appropriated by North American government and capital in ways that marginalize working people and nature in favor of free market models of development. Indeed, although local border movement organizations have endeavored to negotiate more empowering and radically democratic articulations of these discourses, each of these oppositional identities have the potential to inscribe local movements in compromised and ineffective positions. It is this tension between resistance and containment that is reflected in the internal difficulties local labor and environmental justice movements face. Primarily, these include problems of coalition-building and strategic blind spots which, if addressed more intensively, could promote broader critiques and more transforming movements. Although there may be no total freedom or autonomy from hegemonic power structures, these movement organizations are combining new and old oppositions to carve out spaces of resistance along the margins – the borders – of neoliberal regimes. The latter discussions of this chapter, therefore, will address the bounded efforts to build more empowering coalitions and more comprehensive strategies.

Counter-Mobilization and Structural Dilemmas of Resistance

The Case of Han Young

By way of illustrating the multi-layered opposition to local labor and environmental movements, the case of STIMAHCS at the Han Young maquiladora in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Tijuana is particularly useful. In the first months of 1997, workers at the Han Young maquiladora, a Korean subcontractor of Hyundai Precision, were concerned with several healthy, safety, and wage issues. The employees of Han Young produce chassis for Hyundai tractor trailer units, which, among other phases of the labor process, requires lead welding and the use of cranes to transport chassis from one location in the factory to another. Lead welding is a highly toxic task when performed without proper training, precautions, or equipment, and many welders experienced toxic exposure and eye injury due to a lack of proper goggles and other safety devices. Further, the cranes required to lift and move chassis across the factory were failing, causing some extremely heavy chassis to fall during transport, resulting in mutilating injuries to several workers. Indeed, the Mexican government conducted eleven inspections of the Han Young facilities in recent years and found many serious violations, but never forced the company to adhere to standards. Gareth Brown of the Support Network for Occupational Health in the Maquiladoras (SNOHM) has stated, "the Labor Department inspectors' own reports describe near-fatal accidents that have already occurred and conditions that immediately threaten workers' lives at Han Young – but the agency has failed to act. I fear that only multiple worker deaths in a catastrophic accident will jolt the Mexican Labor Department into action."[681] Additionally, the factory's management refused to pay workers the profit sharing

[681] La Botz 1998c.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

bonuses legally required under Mexican law, making workers stretch already low paychecks very thin.[682]

After much clandestine discussion of what should be done, and consultation with members of the Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT) facilitated by local labor support organizations including the SCMW and UDLC, many Han Young workers decided to organize a local of the FAT-affiliated union, Sindicato de Trabjadores Independiéntes de Metal, Acero y Hierro (STIMAHCS). The workers already discovered that the Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreras y Campesinos (CROC), an official "ghost" union affiliated with the CTM, had bargaining rights at the plant, but was unwilling to challenge corporate investors like Han Young. Therefore, they decided to sign up fellow employees as STIMAHCS members and thus force an election that would determine whether CROC or STIMAHCS would be the workers' certified representative. They then could urge Han Young to concede to their demands, which would rely in part on direct pressure against Hyundai, since under Mexican law Hyundai is the sole contractor and thus responsible for Han Young's actions.[683] By May, organizers had signed up seventy percent of the Han Young workforce as members, and in June they instigated a work stoppage to prompt factory management to recognize and bargain with the union.[684] In response, Han Young managers stated that they would not interfere with STIMAHCS and indeed would

---

[682] Tong 1998.
[683] Comelo 1997.
[684] Faulkner 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

negotiate with workers on their demands. But ultimately, Han Young was willing to defer to the repressive tactics initiated by Mexican authorities.

To become a legally independent representative of a bargaining unit, STIMAHCS had to be certified through a factory election, which required them to register the election with the Mexican Junta Nacional de Conciliación y Arbitración (JNCA), Mexico's analog to the U.S. NLRB. The JNCA board is composed of three representatives, one from the corporate sector, one from government (traditionally the PRI), and one from the official union movement (typically the CTM), which has made it not merely an unwavering opponent to the official certification of independent unions, but also a participant in their demobilization. Indeed, because formal certification of STIMAHCS as a legitimate independent union would set an unwanted precedent for labor organizing in the maquiladoras – since it might deter future investment[685] – the JNCA forced Han Young to hire as its new human resources manager, Luis Manuel Escobedo Jiménez,[686] a union busting consultant who would conduct, in their words, "psychological warfare."[687] Escobedo set a moratorium on negotiations with the union until the election, and then began strategies of repression by firing workers suspected of organizing and by paying CROC supporters in the workplace to spread damning rumors about STIMAHCS unionists, depicting them as self-serving, corrupt, and influenced by outside – foreign – agitators. In past

---

[685] Personal conversation with SCMW organizer Mary Tong, 1997.
[686] Faulkner 1997.
[687] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

occurrences this form of "warfare" has been successful in crippling union movements by promoting fear and distrust among organizers and by heightening nationalist suspicions of traitorous actions, which is an accusation that mobilizes great hostility among a cynical public that is familiar both with U.S. imperialism and corporatist patronage. However, despite firings and rumors, the organizing continued, primarily because workers were all too familiar with the tactics and were able to ignore the temptations to disunity by continuing meetings, solidarity efforts, and protests.[688]

In the midst of this "psychological warfare," the JNCA was ordered by the PANista Governor of Baja California, Teran Teran, to disallow any union election. Noncoincidentally, the JNCA deferred the election for a month because it had an "incorrect docket number."[689] Because this would grant union busters even more time to de-mobilize workers and corporate officials, the workers prepared to protest in the JNCA headquarters immediately following this announcement.[690] The President of the JNCA, Antonio Ortiz, then appeared and surprisingly yielded to pressure by setting a date for the election. Although it was never acknowledged directly, it has been an "open secret" that this action led to Ortiz's subsequent resignation, which was demanded by the Governor.[691] Although a union election was slated for October 6, the campaign of repression was far from over. Immediately before the election, the Mexican media received press releases on the letter head of the UDLC stating that the

---

[688] Tong 1998.
[689] Tong 1998.
[690] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

election was canceled, causing Mexican journalists not to show. The UDLC sent no such message and most organizers believed this was an obvious attempt on the part of the government to restrict public knowledge of both the independent unionization effort and the repressive tactics that were to be deployed at the election.[692] This prompted Ed Feigen of the AFL-CIO to write the Hyundai unions in Korea to gain their assistance in pressuring Han Young to recognize the union, to which Hyundai workers responded by condemning any Han Young support of worker intimidation.[693] On October 6, 1997, the election did indeed occur and many activists from throughout the U.S. and Mexico were present as observers to hold the JNCA accountable, including members of the UE, FAT, SCMW, UDLC, CAFOR, CDM/GFX, CITTAC, ANAD, and ILRF. But at the election a bus appeared carrying many self-proclaimed Han Young workers and CROC supporters. Workers from Han Young had never seen them before and knew that they had to be members of the CROC, brought in from other locations to rig the election and intimidate workers from voting. As confirmation, the "ghost" workers did demand to vote, a couple of Han Young workers were pushed around, and foreign observers were ordered to leave the premises since they were interfering in national affairs. Protests from workers and activists fell on deaf ears at the JNCA and the strangers were allowed to participate, even though they had to be coached by management at the voting booths on which

---

[691] Faulkner 1997.
[692] Tong 1998.
[693] Faulkner 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

names on the ballot represented STIMAHCS and which were CROC. However, despite this interference, the CROC and its conspirators miscalculated the number of votes they would need to win, and STIMAHCS was elected in a vote of 55 to 32.[694]

Although the victory was clear, the counter-mobilization continued. Governor Teran Teran placed a regional gag order on press coverage of the Han Young voting until three days after it had taken place, and the Secretaría de Gobernación told reporters that the SCMW staff were being served papers barring their future entry to Mexico.[695] Throughout this post-election period, Governor Teran Teran and the JNCA representatives even had the audacity to assert that the STIMAHCS victory was engineered by "foreign political interests" and that the vote in favor of STIMAHCS therefore did not represent the will or interest of the Han Young workers.[696] Thus, on November 10, 1997, the JNCA refused to recognize the election and thus STIMAHCS as the sole legitimate bargaining union. In response to this, the FAT, STIMAHCS, SCMW, ANAD, and ILRF filed a complaint under the NAO, stating that workers were being denied their legal rights to organize and unionize, and that the JNCA failure to render a timely decision on the election allowed management to further suppress organizers. Further, the SCMW and the UE organized letter campaigns to Hyundai Precision's President and CEO Ted Chung, Governor Teran Teran, and to Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo. And they stepped up their protests

---

694 Tong 1998.
695 Faulkner 1997.
696 Personal conversation with SCMW organizer Mary Tong, 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

at Hyundai dealers in twenty five cities throughout the United States, demanding for a consumer boycott of Hyundai products.[697] Han Young promptly fired twelve workers sympathetic to the FAT, vowed to fire all others who might support independent unionization, and replaced them with workers bused in from Veracruz, a state on the south central coast of Mexico.[698] The government responded also, sending two hundred police officers into the nearby communities of Han Young workers, arresting suspected STIMAHCS supporters and intimidating others.[699] But rather than demobilize union efforts, these tactics only strengthened the resolve of Han Young workers, and on November 20 three recently fired employees, Fernando Flores, Miguel Meza, and Miguel Sanchez, decided to initiate a hunger strike, which they would stop only when STIMAHCS was given recognition.[700]

As discussed in Chapter Four, during the union election, U.S. Congressional Representative and Democratic Whip, David Bonior visited Tijuana with the SCMW and became interested in the Han Young case. It was particularly interesting to him given that Congress was debating Presidential Fast Track authority, and when he returned to his seat he cited these incidents as examples of why NAFTA required greater democratic oversight, and thus no fast track negotiations should be allowed. In his words, the Han Young workers' efforts to unionize is a "test case" of Mexico's willingness to comply with its commitments to labor rights under NAFTA's labor

---

[697] Tong 1998.
[698] Comelo 1997.
[699] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

side accords.[701] Ultimately, fast track was defeated, but a personal phone call from President Clinton urging Bonoir to support the measure was an opportunity Bonoir seized to gain the President's involvement.[702] Clinton agreed to assist Han Young workers by conferring with Vice President Al Gore and Mexican President Zedillo, and by pressuring the NAO to investigate the complaint against the maquila through consultations between Minister of Labor Javier Bonilla and Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman. Many workers believe was central to the eventual success of STIMAHCS, since subsequent to these talks Minister Bonilla went to Tijuana to facilitate the union's certification by the JNCA.[703] Hyundai Precision thus became increasingly concerned about political entanglements, as well as the growing public relations dilemmas and potential dip in sales of its products. They therefore urged Han Young to initiate further dialogue.[704] In partial compensation for the damages incurred by workers, Han Young agreed to rehire all fired workers, return all lost wages to fired workers, and pay full indemnity to any workers who chose not to return. Clearly, this seemed to be the first step in a broad victory for the Han Young workers in their attempts to gain fully independent STIMAHCS representation and fair working conditions.

---

[700] Comelo 1997.
[701] Tong 1998.
[702] Tong 1998.
[703] Tong 1998.
[704] Calvo 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Yet, after the tentative compromise between state/federal government, corporate, and union interests on December 13, 1997 to recognize STIMAHCS, Han Young hedged against this recognition and claimed to have over ninety signatures of workers wishing to have representation under the CROC. Actually, this list of Han Young worker signatures was compiled before the election when Han Young managers called employees into the personnel office, one at a time, to sign a sheet confirming that they would participate in the election and that they would vote for the CROC. Because of the obviously high levels of intimidation and fear in the factory, workers did indeed sign in favor of the CROC, but organizers for STIMAHCS argue that clearly no coerced and signed ballot can equate to a democratic and free expression of worker interests. However, the ongoing conflict was brought to an abrupt end, at least temporarily, when the NAO decided, with its albeit limited powers, to investigate the complaints against the Mexican government and continuing complaints against Han Young safety violations.[705] Indeed, after firings, "psychological warfare," harassment, extensive intimidation, election rigging, corporate intransigence, government negligence of the law, painstaking organizing, protests, legal actions, letter campaigns, and a nearly fatal three week hunger strike, on January 14, 1997, the JNCA and STIMAHCS signed an agreement granting STIMAHCS sole bargaining power at Han Young and mandating that the CTM and CROC halt interference at the plant. This made STIMAHCS the first formally

---

[705] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

certified independent union in the maquiladora sector of Mexico. Since then, in partial confirmation of the Mexican government's fears of a domino effect in the maquiladoras, workers at Hyundai's Dae Wan and Ley Mex maquilas have stepped up their pressure for independent unionization, while farm workers from San Quintín and hospital workers from Tijuana have contacted STIMAHCS organizers seeking advice. To facilitate these collaborative efforts, one organizer of the Han Young struggle and several Han Young workers have formed the "October 6th" union (the name commemorates the election victory for STIMAHCS) which hopes to enable further independent union efforts.[706] However, despite the compelling and precedent setting victory for transnational labor solidarity and the undoubtedly positive outcomes of a collaboration between communities, unions, and legal/political pressure tactics, problems persist.[707]

Under Mexican law, negotiations with a certified union cannot begin until one year after the signing of the previous contract, and since this was signed in May 1997, STIMAHCS negotiations were deferred until May 1998, prohibiting basic wage and safety protections, and allowing more time for new corporate counter-tactics. Indeed, Han Young has hired several pro-CTM workers from Veracruz, and they have planned to hire approximately eighty more workers after which management may call for another election. The company also has pressured union supporters to quit by

[706] La Botz 1998d.
[707] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

offering bribes of approximately $1,200.[708] While STIMAHCS representatives have been barred from the maquila, a CROC member still works as human resource manager and the CTM is reported to have met with the company in violation of the one-year legal prohibition on negotiations and the January 14 agreement recognizing STIMAHCS as the sole bargaining representative. Management also effectively eliminated worker bonuses and set higher production quotas, causing speedups and greater risk of accident. This has prompted STIMAHCS to engage in several work stoppages, including a full shutdown of the plant on January 23 when all workers refused to enter the plant. This, in addition to continued NAO investigations into Han Young safety violations, which could cost up to fifty billion dollars in fines to the maquila if guilty, caused Hyundai to commit to repairing faulty cranes.[709] More recently, on May 22, 1998, despite management's attempts to admit non-workers into a STIMAHCS election, workers at Han Young voted to begin a full strike to pressure the company to stop its union busting and negotiate with STIMAHCS.[710] Yet, the government continued its opposition when, on June 2, the Baja California state Subsecretary, Ricardo González Cruz, delared the strike "non-existent" (since, he argued, strike banners were posted a few minutes before or after the 8:00 AM), and police forces tore down strike banners at Han Young, physically attacked workers,

---

[708] *Labor Notes* 1998.
[709] Kincaid 1998b.
[710] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1998a.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and demanded that they return to work.[711] When workers refused, arrest warrants were issued for a STIMAHCS legal advisor and organizer, and on June 3, hundreds of Special Forces and Public Security police arrived to burn more banners and escort scabs into the plant, in clear violation of Mexican labor law which prohibits factories to operate during a strike. In response to this latest wave of opposition, Representative David Bonior implored a tighter monitoring and enforcement of labor law under NAFTA,

> Han Young management, the Tijuana labor board, and the Mexican government are engaged in a systematic effort to deny Han Young workers their right to an independent union through harassment, intimidation and fraud.... In the last few days, Han Young management and government officials appear to have broken Mexican law and engaged in blatant voter fraud to crush the independent union.... These actions could have long-term implications for U.S. trade policy. The United States has a moral obligation to exercise leadership to ensure that our trading partners respect basic democratic rights.[712]

To increase pressure, the SCMW has coordinated a fax campaign and a multi-city protest in the U.S. to implore the U.S. and Mexican federal governments to intervene to uphold Mexican labor law and the national constitution, as well as the labor code of the ILO to which Mexico is a signatory.[713] Therefore, it is clear that the benefits to be reaped from unionization have not emerged due to corporate and government resistance to any limits on the profitability of transnationals. Indeed, the Mexican government's temporary affirmation of STIMAHCS and the NAO's investigative

[711] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1998b.
[712] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1998b.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

efforts – despite Bonior's urging – do not appear to be enough to ensure continued oversight of worker health, safety, and wages, nor do they provide any incentive for Han Young's compliance with worker demands.[714] The currently small size of the FAT also makes it a limited force in changing the practices of maquiladora owners.[715] Although these forms of counter-mobilization have been common to Mexican labor movements in the maquiladoras, Mary Tong suggests that the free trade era will facilitate similar problems in the U.S., as is becoming evident in the case of a newly organized Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) local in California which has failed to gain certification from the NLRB.[716]

Clearly, this case illustrates the potential for success of independent unionization efforts, transnational solidarity, community support, corporate campaigns, strike and protest actions, and political pressure tactics – and indeed all were necessary given the extreme levels of counter-mobilization. Further, in view of other less successful campaigns for unionization, such as that of Dae Wan, also a subcontractor for Hyundai, it is clear that favorable structural conditions were necessary for the success of this endeavor. Mary Tong (SCMW) has argued that the STIMAHCS certification may not have occurred had Han Young had more than one buyer, had the workforce not been relatively skilled, male, and thus harder to replace, and had fast track authority not been a lever with which to pressure Congress and the

---

[713] Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers 1998b,
[714] Faulkner 1998.
[715] La Botz 1998a.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

White House.[717] Indeed, independent unionization, as this case helps to illustrate, represents the one form of resistance that free traders and corporate investors have feared the most, since it may decrease the profitability deriving from (super)exploitation of Mexican workers and it may sabotage the political agenda of neoliberalism. Therefore, multiple border labor movement strategies were necessary to gain even the most minimum of legal rights. And although the Han Young workers have set an amazing precedent in the borderland laboratory of free trade, prompting La Botz to argue that this is a historic moment in the North American labor movement,[718] what is also evident is the immense power structure that faces border communities as they search for better working and living conditions. The hemispheric, if not global, political and economic tendencies towards greater privatization, dependent development, and state clientelism – the resurgence of modernization in neoliberalism – have limited severely the opportunities for change available to popular movements. Yet, even though the structural convergence of technological innovation, economic crisis, and rent-seeking dependent governments have facilitated capital and state interests in neoliberal development, the Han Young case demonstrates how neoliberalism results not through anonymous or passive processes, but through active and thorough counter-mobilizations.

Transnational Corporate Institutions and the Defense of Neoliberalism

---

[716] Tong 1998.
[717] Tong 1998.
[718] La Botz 1998f.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Beginning with organizations of corporate capital, it has been clear throughout the development of maquiladoras in the borderlands and the NAFTA debate process that transnationals have organized concerted political campaigns to ensure neoliberal strategies of profitability. Whether it was Chase Manhattan Bank's warnings to the Mexican government to "control" the Zapatistas, or the extensive lobbying that ultimately worked to draft NAFTA and frame the ensuing debates, North American transnational capital actively constructed the current economic conditions of neoliberalism as a means to regain or secure their competitiveness in the world market. In the borderlands, possibly the most prominent embodiment of these interests is the national maquiladora association and its regional counterparts, which work with local chambers of commerce and government officials from both sides of the border. Not only do they work with shelter operations to facilitate maquiladora developments through the everyday neoliberal instruments of legal, tax, and infrastructure assistance, but they also form the institutional basis for continued corporate-state collaboration in framing regional development policy. An essential component of this endeavor is the control of information, through which corporate institutions marginalize alternatives and thus retain the exclusive power to structure the discourse of neoliberalism.

Through their work with companies such as the North American Manufacturing Corporation (NAMCO), MexUS Services Corporation, and the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mexico Business Development Company (MBDC) in exclusive workshops and conferences costing over a thousand dollars per participant, maquiladora associations and shelter companies examine opportunities for deregulated investment and union-free profiteering. Because of the national significance of the maquiladora industry, these fora often become the basis for future planning of Mexico's development policies, elaborating free market models and promoting state clientelism. Indeed, Alejandro Bustamante, formerly of the AMM, was involved in running shelter operations and forging NAFTA policy simultaneously.[719] In their more direct confrontations with local labor and environmental organizations, they promote free trade discourses not dissimilar to those issues by North American governments during the NAFTA debates. Here, free trade is regarded as mutually beneficial for all signatory nations since it sponsors upward harmonization of labor and environmental standards, increases employment throughout the continent, and promotes general economic dynamism – an exemplar of the liberal free market, cooperative transnationalism, and modernization for less developed partners. Bustamante has suggested that the short-term problems of little Mexican economic autonomy and high poverty will be alleviated as domestic industry eventually benefits from increased contact with U.S. capital through new supplier networks, technologies, and labor processes. Indeed, Bustamante[720] and Angelica Muller,[721] of Honeywell, claim that,

[719] Interview, July 1996.
[720] Interview, July 1996.
[721] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

even in those problematic maquiladora operations, they are the result of backward Mexican standards of production that will undoubtedly rise through NAFTA's upward harmonization. Unlike border organizers who cite corporate greed and political corruption, Bustamante regards the most significant cause of Mexico's uneven development and misery to be, on the one hand, the prejudices – or "barriers of perception" – that many North American consumers have against buying products made in Mexico, and on the other, the lack of education and discipline among Mexican workers.[722] Clearly, for many maquila supporters, the problems of development do not rest with themselves, but rather consumers and workers who have not taken the great leap forward. The aspirations and hopes for the generalized modernization of Mexico thus take on an almost religious quality, since they require a devout faith to overlook the everyday evidence of corporate imperialism and to believe in the coming miracle of a benevolent transnational capitalism. This faith rests on a rather cavalier tendency common to authoritarian forms of populism in which public and corporate interests are represented as commensurate, despite the lack of public access to the NAFTA process and regional development planning.

Indeed, in statements similar to those of many border maquiladora associations, Bustamante has made arguments regarding the problems associated with maquila developments which directly contradict the experiences of workers in the region. These are not only representative of generally accepted beliefs among the

[722] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

maquiladora community, but they have become the basis for a broader ideology of neoliberal policy makers which minimizes related social problems and deflects the culpability of neoliberal models. On environmental problems, Bustamante suggests, like Saxod of the USMBPF,[723] that there indeed does need to be an enforcement of Mexican environmental legislation and education to promote a climate of ecological health. However, they argue that only limited regulations are necessary since a vast majority of maquilas have no interest in polluting and will set their own high standards; and, when problems do arise the complaint mechanisms are adequate and responsive. In fact, Angelica Muller, Plant Manager of the Tijuana MEXHON maquila, argues that what problems do exist are being resolved completely by official government institutions such as the BECC and the CEC, which are ultimately indicative of the positive push towards sustainability that NAFTA has enabled. In this logic, it seems sensible that Bustamante would reduce the high number of cases of corporate pollution to a small number of anomalies and suggest that popular fears of toxics and their associated health crises are pure hysteria, like that embodied by the myth of the vampirish Chupacabra.[724] Similarly, although he rightly suggests that corporate abuses of workers are not the exclusive property of Mexico, he minimized problems of sexual harassment and physical abuse by arguing that the few cases which have occurred have been merely the incidental results of "stupid" individuals

[723] Interview, July 1996.
[724] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

or foreigners (i.e., Japanese and Koreans) still learning Mexican/U.S. standards.[725] Not only does he seem to ignore structural inequalities of gender, economics, or environmental justice through liberal ideologies of individualism, but in so doing he neglects the prevalence of abuses in U.S. and Mexican-owned maquilas.

On the issue of how the maquilas support an international gendered division of labor, he failed to problematize the gendered inequalities of income and labor conditions, much less patriarchal labor processes, but instead naturalized the high proportions of women as a marriage of convenience between women's naturally "nimble fingers" and market demands. In this logic, if gendered inequalities exist, they are as unavoidable as continental drift and certainly not the proper subject of regulatory or legislative action.[726] He also goes so far as to argue that high turnover rates in the maquilas are not a result of exhaustion, injury, sexual abuse, or other commonly cited causes among workers, but the effect of the capricious and fickle desires of a youthful workforce which wishes to change jobs frequently, as well as undisciplined workers who want vacations,.[727] Bustamante, like other representatives of maquiladora associations and public relations offices, uses the rhetoric of a naturally growing market, ever expanding trade, benevolent investors, individualism. and the choice of consumers and workers to legitimate the presence of maquilas in Mexico and the structural problems they promote – reducing any fears of social or

[725] Interview, July 1996.
[726] Interview, July 1996.
[727] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environmental cost to an unnatural and fantastic hysteria. As an example of how these discourses have been put into practice, Fred Quintana of the Asociación de las Maquiladoras in Matamoros opposed the regional anti-anencephaly campaigns' portrayals of transnationals as anything but good citizens and stewards of local economic welfare.[728] Meanwhile, he and his association worked with government institutions to ensure continued deregulation and supported the legal defense of corporate polluters. Thus, although they often have not been involved directly in the facilitation of transnational corporate violations of worker health and well-being, maquiladora associations have provided much of their ideological legitimation and have actively promoted a permissive and laissez-faire environment in which corporations may act with a general disregard for local communities. That is, corporate representatives and their associations marginalize any challenge to the faith of neoliberal development in the region, no matter how popular and democratic, by interpreting it as a deviant, illogical, and ultimately destructive to the imperatives of a modernization.

Yet another interesting case of corporate mobilizations is that of the U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation (USMBPF) cited in the Alco Pacifico incident in Chapter Four. In this case, the U.S.-based lead smelter closed its Tijuana facilities after financial and public relations problems, leaving 33,000 tons of lead slag, which prompted community environmental organizations from both sides of the border to

[728] Hawkins 1991.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

work towards clean up and compensation. Through assistance provided by the EHC, the community received legal aid and by way of a successful lawsuit initiated by the Los Angeles District Attorney, the company was forced to pay the Mexican government over two million dollars for illegal transportation of hazardous waste which was earmarked to fund clean up measures. Despite these positive results being marred by the substandard clean up provided by the Mexican government, the USMBPF and the EHC remained involved with the affected community. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the USMBPF chose to pursue a politically non-confrontational and paternalistic strategy of promoting lead education – including teaching residents how to wash their hands – while the EHC was involved in community designed strategies to protest and pressure the Mexican government for a restoration of environmental health. Here, a more conservative corporate-public partnership for sustainable development, the USMBPF, elected to spend its share of the legal settlement in ways that did not represent the long-term environmental health concerns of the colonia, while the EHC, an organization focused on achieving environmental justice, was committed to the colonia's desire for the elimination of toxic colonialism.

The USMBPF is a prominent example of free market orientations towards sustainable development, since its representatives traditionally have advocated for development reforms that only minimally restructure the environmentally destructive processes of neoliberalism. The binational organization is composed of a board of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

corporate representatives in the region and an Executive Director who was a former appointee of California's Republican Governor, Pete Wilson, funded in part by the EPA and supported by the White House, SEMARNAP, as well as past and present Mexican Presidents, Salinas and Zedillo. This corporate vision consists of limited regulatory reforms, new infrastructure projects to benefit colonias and maquilas, as well as environmental corporate philanthropy. One of the USMBPF's major projects was dubbed, "Bringing the Border to the Boardroom," a workshop series designed to familiarize corporations and their foundations operating on the border to the social, environmental, and health issues that impact local communities. Although transnationals and their financial institutions certainly require education about the many problems that have resulted from decades of unregulated development in the region, it is unclear whether this information has been used for anything other than public relations, cost-effective philanthropy, and the continued privatization of border environmental policy. As an example of one of its successes, their Executive Director, Elsa Saxod, happily cited the case of a Sony maquila – a company that has participated in labor repression elsewhere along the border – which donated Styrofoam and plastic wrap to local colonias, with the help of MEBAC,[729] to be used as home building materials. Not only did she cite this example as a case of corporate compassion but also as an illustration of how sustainable environmental conditions and capital development are compatible, since Sony saved about 150,000 dollars per

[729] Interview of MEBAC coordinator Naachiely López, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

month by not having to pay dumping fees to the local landfill. In her words, "We believe that sustainable development is good for business, it's good for the environment, it's good for everyone.... [I]n fact, if you are environmentally conscious, you are probably going to do better.... [N]ot only are they [Sony] saving money, they're making money."[730] However, since Sony decided to reconfigure their television boxes, less scrap material has been created and they therefore elected not to grant the colonia any more waste. Clearly, this self-interested philanthropy was only a minimal adjustment to the extensive maquila waste streams on the border, and it made only small improvements to local infrastructure. Yet, when asked if such practices of source reduction and reuse, not to mention maquila subsidization of local infrastructure, could be enforced through regulation, Saxod replied, "Well actually it is not something that the government *should* regulate."[731]

Thus, as evident in the Alco Pacifico case, the USMBPF will support existent regulatory law, however much it tends to advocate for purely educational and free market campaigns to promote environmental health. Further, to ensure the continuation of privatized corporate visions of social policy, the USMBPF has displaced the blame for toxification and nonsustainable border conditions from transnationals to the victims, which Saxod did repeatedly by shifting discussions of corporate abuses to the responsibilities of local citizens and Mexican small businesses

[730] Interview, July 1996.
[731] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

– "mom and pop" enterprises.[732] Further, she explicitly argued that population growth, traffic, and human waste were the primary problems that plague the border, while minimizing corporate transgressions of pollution, much less their involvement in perpetuating economic dependencies that both attract desperate pools of workers to the border and help denude government of infrastructure resources. Therefore it did not seem illogical when Saxod then suggested that increased environmental taxes placed on border citizens would be a more effective means of funding ecological restoration and infrastructure than would corporate taxes, regulatory law, or enhanced enforcement.[733] Thus, the USMBPF envisions sustainable development, much like the eco-modernizationists cited in Chapter One, to be compatible with neoliberal development. In the words of Harry Browne of the IHRC, the notion of sustainable development – a multivocal phrase denoting a policy agenda in which industrialization is modified or regulated so as to be compatible with environmental sustainability – "has been appropriated by free trade proponents as part of their attempt to persuade the public that international agreements such as the GATT and NAFTA will actually benefit the environment."[734] Indeed, the USMBPF promotes a neoliberal agenda by furthering a discourse in which there is an unchecked industrialization; state institutions and resources are downsized; the working public is shouldered with increased tax burdens to subsidize irresponsible government (and

---

[732] Interview, July 1996.
[733] Interview, July 1996.
[734] Barry, Browne, and Sims 1995:229.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

indirectly, maquiladora infrastructure, utilities, and tax breaks); local citizens and businesses are patronized and blamed for environmental problems; and transnationals are envisioned as the rightful and benevolent purveyors of consumption and waste practices. While the USMBPF recognizes a generalized environmental crisis in the region, it fails to acknowledge either the profound responsibility of neoliberal planning or the corporate externalization of environmental costs in promoting toxic colonialism and grave public health problems faced by millions of fronterizos.

With such organized support for corporate irresponsibility as the USMBPF and the regional maquiladora associations, it is not surprising that individual corporations like Han Young and Hyundai Precision guard their profit margins zealously by conspiring with state institutions in the suppression of local movements of working people. Han Young was willing to defer to state strong-arm tactics by postponing negotiations with workers until formal certification, thus allowing more time for counter-tactics. They then permitted a CROC union-buster to work as a human resource manager, promoting intimidation, harassment, firings, and "psychological warfare" against workers. The company supported CROC thuggery and election rigging at the October 6 vote. And even after the perfunctory JNCA recognition of STIMAHCS, Han Young has continued to conspire with labor board officials by pushing for CROC representation, claiming the STIMAHCS election victory was invalid, and hiring scabs from Veracruz. However, throughout the conflict with independent unionists, Han Young denied it was committing violations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of worker health and safety, and denied complicity with any tactics of suppression, all by arguing that it was merely abiding by Mexican authority and law, wishing not to interfere with Mexican sovereignty. Yet, the evidence of corporate repression of workers' movements is undeniable. And claims to respect Mexico's national autonomy are laughingly ironic given the ways in which transnational advocacy of neoliberalism and Salinas's promotion of free trade have all but made a mockery of Mexico's historic nationalism and all but eroded its economic sovereignty. When transnational mobility enables transnationals to evade the costs of higher wages, infrastructure investment, taxation, and environmental regulations, they argue for the removal of national economic barriers to investment and trade; but when popular transnational pressure for corporate responsibility makes itself felt, operations like Han Young argue that they merely are abiding by national laws and must respect Mexican sovereignty, conveniently permitting the violent repressive tactics the government perpetrates in the name of free trade. Indeed, this example shows that transnational corporations are willing to embrace alternately both nationalism and transnationalism, depending on which is most strategic in securing profitable conditions for investment.

Other examples discussed earlier in Chapter Three could be cited as confirmation of the corporate prioritization of profits over wages, safety, even development, or environmental health. Indeed, there are the relatively casual brutalities of transnationals along the border which include regularly

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

undercompensating workers for their labor, especially women; exposing employees and nearby communities to toxic substances; creating safety problems through poor training, equipment, or speedups; firing workers to avoid profit sharing; committing acts of sexual intimidation and harassment; appropriating workers' land; make corporate records unavailable to the public; and making relatively few contributions to the autonomous and even development of the Mexican economy. And these actions are often in direct and brazen contradiction to Mexican law. But beyond these everyday behaviors, transnationals like Han Young frequently participate in the demobilization of workers' movements by firing and blacklisting organizers, hiring union busting consultants, and intimidating workers. However, unlike Han Young, which had a predominantly male workforce, Mary Tong (SCMW) reports other maquila personnel to have engaged in sexual terrorism of women activists by sexually assaulting them.[735] Workers resisting exploitation at the work site, through organizing or more subtle and common actions such as slowdowns – or *tortuguismo* (working at a turtle's pace)[736] – have been physically abused, locked in "punishment rooms" (as in the case of Dae Woo), and verbally assaulted. Claudia Vargas, a worker at MataMex (a subsidiary of Mattel) reports that several women workers handing out pro-union flyers were "kidnapped" and detained in factory facilities by armed company guards, and accused by management of being part of a "guerrilla

---

[735] Interview, July 1996.
[736] Peña 1997: 262-4, 274-5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

movement"[737] – suggesting that there is a fear of the EZLN sparking a revolutionary contagion along the northern frontier. Some companies, like EMOSA or Alco Pacifico, have been willing to close entire facilities if public pressure and workers' movements threaten significant profits. Manuel Mondragon of CustomTrim in Matamoros states, we have a "very repressive situation," where transnationals treat unionists with impunity, "dismissing them, threatening them, ... and workers are frightened."[738] In one case, Magneticos Mexico, a Sony subsidiary, responded to an independent unionization effort by allowing police to enter the plant, threaten to arrest workers, and firing over three hundred of the one thousand member workforce.[739] In yet another well-publicized incident, employees fighting for safer working conditions and an independent union at the Ford maquila in Cuautitlán were fired upon by CTM thugs hired by the personnel office to disrupt unionization, injuring many and killing Cleto Nigno, who died from stomach wounds.[740] These violent and repressive tactics of corporations and government employers have been especially common throughout Mexico as neoliberal policies create oppositional movements, which is evident in the case of the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Educación (SNTE), a radically democratic and independent teachers' union which has suffered over one hundred murders of its supporters.[741] As the latter case makes clear, this atmosphere of terror

[737] Vargas 1996.
[738] Mondragon 1996.
[739] Solis 1996.
[740] American Labor Education Center 1995.
[741] American Labor Education Center 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

at the workplace, although often perpetrated by transnationals in the search for unmitigated profitability, is enabled by a permissive state which not only limits enforcement and refuses to grant certification to independent unions, but also constructs coercive apparatuses through its affiliated unions like the CROC, the CROM, and the CTM. Indeed, throughout conversations with workers and activists, it is clear that they frequently regard the transnationals and the different levels of the Mexican government to be essentially one monster with many heads.

Repressive State Apparatuses and Subordinated Unionism

In the case of Han Young, there is a clear demonstration of a variety of repressive strategies. First, although Mexican law mandates profit sharing and safe working conditions, the many safety violations found by eleven different inspections of the plant never resulted in any government fines or other enforcement measures. Second, when workers attempted to organize, they found that the CROC, an affiliate of the PRI-backed CTM, already had exclusive bargaining rights with Han Young, yet it was barely known to workers, much less successful in representing their interests. Indeed, it was a "ghost" union that blocked any changes in safety provisions and profit sharing at the factory, possessing a contract that was worth less than the paper on which it was written. Third, once workers wished to challenge the CROC through an election, they found opposition in the form of JNCA, traditionally a PRI-dominated institution but also backed by the PANista Governor of Baja California.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The highest levels of government in the nation effectively stated that there would be no challenge to the CROC and its corporate unionism, ensuring continued legal violations and worker exploitation. Fourth, after protest pressure tactics yielded a government-sanctioned election, the PAN and PRI alliance disciplined the JNCA representative which scheduled the vote, then they mobilized the CROC to initiate union busting at the factory and at the election itself, through brutal intimidation, firings, rumor mongering, and the hiring of "ghost" workers to stack the vote. Fifth, they manipulated the media so as to reduce public knowledge and government accountability, and they articulated obscurantist versions of nationalist autonomy to promote popular fear of foreign influence in the domestic economy. Sixth, when the NAO was served with a complaint against Han Young and the Mexican government, police were sent in to workers' communities to intimidate and arrest STIMAHCS supporters. Seventh, even after the JNCA formally granted recognition to STIMAHCS, they continued to work with the CROC and Han Young to deny a contract and force a new election. And lastly, even though the NAO and the President were successful in pressuring for formal recognition of STIMAHCS and some restitution to fired workers, they signify only a superficial and relatively powerless commitment to enforcement of transnational labor or environmental standards, especially in light of their unanimous support for anti-democratic trade agreements and their expansion.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

But probably the largest concern of border organizations, especially independent unions and those interested in the protection of workers, is the counter-tactics of official unions which march in lockstep with neoliberal planning by aiding transnational investors and blocking workplace democracy. According to Bertha Luhan, a member of the FAT's National Executive Committee, throughout Mexico, official unions such as the CTM, the CROM, and the CROC hold about eighty percent of union-employer contracts.[742] Although the maquiladora sector has a much lower proportion of union contracts than does Mexico's domestic industry because it is relatively new and non-unionized, the official unions probably have an even greater proportion of union contracts given the high level of protection granted to transnational investors. Thus, these corrupt unions represent the primary means by which corporate and government campaigns of repression are waged. All along the border, independent union efforts and economic justice organizations have numerous stories to tell about corporate, "ghost," *charro*, or "white" unions and the ways they have blocked democratic unions from forming or becoming certified. Badillo (CAFOR) argues that they are in effect "companies within companies because they look out for their interest and management's interest.... Political campaigns in the country are supported by unions, and unions are supported by corporations, so what kind of commitment can they have to the worker?"[743] Jaime Cota (CITTAC) reports that there is no way these unions could represent workers' interests given that "leaders

[742] Luhan 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

take dues directly from the company, not from the workers. They're on the corporate payroll."[744] Alfonso Hernández (PRD) agrees, "Trade unions sell the protection [of workers] to the employees. They work against workers in accordance with the labor authorities."[745]

Cirila Quintero Ramírez's historiography of government-affiliated Tijuana unions from 1970-88 describes the many ironies and contradictions of a unionization that has undermined workers' interests – a "sindicalismo subordinado" (or subordinated unionism).[746] She summarizes the problem as follows:

> It is a unionism that is unknown to the workers, dominated by a marginal labor power, the CROM, openly pro-business, and paid by the company itself to discount traditional union dues from workers. Also, it defends an anti-worker politics in work conditions and labor benefits, and it permits in its collective contracts the introduction of pro-business clauses. In synthesis, it is a unionism that has subordinated and conditioned its labor struggle to the needs of the maquiladoras.[747]

Indeed, from Manuel Mondragon, a CustomTrim worker from Matamoros,[748] to Eduardo Badillo (CAFOR) of Tijuana,[749] activists and workers cite the official unions of Mexico as the most immediate and grave problem workers face, since they do much of the work to enforce labor discipline in the maquilas. In countless examples, including that at Ley Mex and Plasticos Bajacal maquilas, independent unionization

---

[743] Badillo 1996.
[744] Cota 1996.
[745] A. Hernández 1996.
[746] Ramírez 1990.
[747] Ramírez 1990:115.
[748] Mondragon 1996.
[749] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

efforts have been put down, making new strategies of resistance necessary.[750] The CROM and the CTM have created such pervasive fear and intimidation in the region that basic human and legal rights education has become a central organizing goal of many borderland movement groups. And Benedicto Orozco (FAT) claims that the FAT has spent as much if not more organizing resources against general education deficits and the "devious" tactics of official unions, as it has against the transnationals themselves.[751] As workers learn their rights and begin to create the solidarity networks necessary to overcome these repressive state apparatuses, they are facing the fears of firing, abuse, and arrest. This, in turn, contributes to some degree of quietism and distrust among workers, limited strike capabilities, and high turnover rates, the latter leaving workers' activist endeavors with little institutional memory and hence experience. Strategically, aside from education and movement solidarity, forming emergency response support networks and training professional organizers from the ranks of those fired or blacklisted have been the primary means by which local organizations and the FAT have combated repression. But despite some of the limited successes of Han Young, Echlin, the SJOI faction of the CTM, and the consolidation of independent unions in the UNT – not to mention the general window of opportunity presented by the electoral shifts and CTM changes in 1997[752] – most

[750] Interview of CDM/GFX organizer Carmen Valadez, July 1996.
[751] Orozco 1996.
[752] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

independent unionists in Mexico seem to agree that there is much more work to be done before repressive "subordinated unionism" is overcome.

But if a transnational unionism is to emerge it also must rise from the dust of corrupt unionism within the United States, and the latter's legacy of support for repressive unionism throughout the Americas. One of the major ghosts haunting coalitional endeavors across the U.S.-Mexico border has been the AFL-CIO history with the American Institute of Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a CIA advised and funded organization within the AFL-CIO that has been responsible for sabotaging independent democratic union efforts in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Costa Rica. Sparked by the Cuban revolution in 1959, the creation of AIFLD was the beginning of a very close relationship between the AFL-CIO, the CIA, and the U.S. State Department in the endeavor to uphold the Monroe Doctrine and stop communism in the Americas.[753]

> The overriding purpose of AIFLD is not to support efforts by workers and peasants to achieve a better life in their own countries but to serve as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy. It does this by creating paper organizations and financing unrepresentative conservative unions that support the United States, while attempting to break up more progressive unions.[754]

In so doing, AIFLD, the AFL-CIO, and U.S. transnationals shared an anti-communist ideology and a mutually beneficial relationship in which the CIA had additional strategies to demobilize socialist movements, transnationals could procure new cheap

---

[753] Barry and Preusch 1990: 4, 6.
[754] Barry and Preusch 1990: 1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

raw materials, and the AFL-CIO would have new markets for the sale of goods produced by U.S. union members.[755] Thus, the AFL-CIO slowly became more permeated by an imperialist tendency to support a U.S. labor aristocracy, mobilizing the U.S. workforce around an isolationist protectionism and Cold War nationalism, rather than a more transnational class identity through which workers of the world would be united. For this reason, La Botz argues the AFL-CIO has been known by many dissenting U.S. unionists as the "AFL-CIA."[756] Cantor and Schor argue that this was ultimately supportive of the development of a "Wall Street internationalism," in which a business unionism allowed free trade, capital mobility, and currency speculation to become the principles of transnational economic regimes, not labor solidarity and working people's democracy.[757] This form of unionism has had even more insidious effects by causing the AFL-CIO to be organized in a way that has been overly bureaucratic, anti-democratic and staff-driven (with organizers and officials defining union policy for rank-and-file members, not vice versa), compromising with corporate interests and the Democratic Party, as well as phobic of ties between unions and social movements. Indeed, these methods of organizing transnationally came to have devastating internal effects on union organizing within the U.S., providing an interesting object lesson on nationalist unionism.

---

[755] Barry and Preusch 1990: 6.
[756] La Botz 1998f.
[757] Cantor and Schor 1987: 22, 40-4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Because the AFL-CIO before NAFTA had close relations with Mexico's CTM, an important wing of the long one party rule of the PRI, Mexican unions already were incorporated into a political agenda commensurate with U.S. interests. Therefore, although AIFLD was present in Mexico, it had little direct involvement relative to its campaigns in Central America. Indeed, after NAFTA, when the AFL-CIO began to have differences with the CTM and the PRI around free trade, and when its member unions began to have closer ties with their independent Mexican counterparts, AIFLD was not welcomed by the CTM. As Mary Tong (SCMW) argues, "in Mexico they never had to do that much, because they had direct relations with the official unions, and could just deal through the official union apparatus. But the CTM really started breaking down on them with the passage of NAFTA."[758] Further, the Cold War had ended and AIFLD was being written out of existence by changing foreign policy within the CIA, State Department, and AFL-CIO, weakening any attempts to interfere in cross-border solidarity campaigns. Nevertheless, for border labor activists who have participated in and tracked the relations between U.S. unions and those in Central America, the AFL-CIO's and AIFLD's imperialist orientations, however dismantled, remain a haunting legacy. Tong (SCMW) claims,

> There are many people who work in the AFL-CIO who don't want to have anything to do with AIFLD.... [I]ts history has been much more negative towards global organizing and sabotaging organizing. But AIFLD does everything in the name of AFL-CIO, so whatever AIFLD does ramifies back on the AFL-CIO organization.[759]

---

[758] Interview, July 1996.
[759] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This specter has been enhanced by the fact that in 1994 AIFLD was funded for two full-time agents to work on the border to monitor and promote documentation of Mexican unions – presumed by Tong to be disinformation campaigns – and all of this was due to the general fears of revolutionary movements sympathetic to the EZLN and the many incipient workers' unionization efforts.[760] Further, AIFLD was successful in intimidating many union local staff members to not participate in the Free Trade Coalitions, and by extension, subsequent cross-border solidarity with independent unions. But thanks to the work of Tong (SCMW), Feigen (AFL-CIO), Browne (IHRC), and members of the regional Free Trade Campaigns, who actively educated fellow organizers about the history and potential demobilizing impacts of AIFLD's organizing in the region, AIFLD has been unable to gain a significant base of support in the region.[761] Further, now that AIFLD is being phased out of the AFL-CIO, its impacts on the region are minimal. Yet, the legacy of protectionism, imperialism, and corruption has scarred coalitional endeavors across the border, since many critiques may be made of the current AFL-CIO and suspicions exist about lingering opportunism within U.S. unions.

Mechanisms of Incorporation

Indeed, if it is not outright coercion of borderland movements, it may be the efforts of incorporation and co-optation that limit the effectiveness or compromise the

[760] Interview of SCMW organizer Mary Tong, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

aims of radically democratic movements for justice in the region. These tactics have been most notorious in the work of the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (PRONASOL) established by President Carlos Salinas which granted funding for urban popular organizations throughout Mexico, and thereby provide some alleviation to urban social problems. However, this was a double-edged program since, even though it gave much needed resources to many local communities and their reform projects, it extended the reach of the PRI's networks of patronage, requiring that local organizations support the PRI and its national policies. This created some substantive change, but ultimately served to extend the PRI's corporatist model of the state and free trade agendas.[762] Because Baja California has been the political purveyance of the PAN, this program had more limited impact, but the PAN has instituted a similar plan of *subsidiaridad* (or subsidiarity) with comparable results. In a model akin to the flexible and popular social movement coalitions in the region, the PAN has designed a plan that is distinct from PRONASOL in that it has originated in form and content from popular demands for government responsiveness to such social needs as housing, education, health, and child care. Martín de la Rosa of Tijuana's COPLADEM describes the subsidarity philosophy as one of establishing more locally-based and decentralized forms of governance, with a local council of neighborhoods – el Comité de Vecinos – and a professional movement coalition that arranges resource sharing and mutual development plans which can become the basis

[761] Interview of SCMW organizer Mary Tong, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for official PANista policy. Here, each level of governance is a subsidiary of the next, with clear lines of accountability. De la Rosa claims the development of trust among these organizations for positive community-government relations has been difficult, but that the autonomy granted locals, in funding and in planning, has become self-evident.[763] Yet local activists have been mixed in their reviews. Some, such as Kjos of ECSDTJ,[764] claim that this is a positive step forward in gaining government accountability in a completely privatized neoliberal order. Others, including Bravo[765] (SNEEJ) and Pelayo[766] (CAFOR) have claimed the PAN and the PRI are no different, supporting minor reforms and local organizations that will bolster and not threaten their free trade, pro-maquiladora agendas. Naachiely López of MEBAC also argues that the PAN's efforts at more democratic community relations were circumvented, since the representative of each social service sector were PAN members appointed by the PAN municipal government; since, non-accidentally, many Tijuana community movements claimed no one in government was listening; and since there were no clear criteria for determining which community groups were admissible into the city-wide funding network.[767] More generally, it is clear that the populist rhetoric of government decentralization is perfectly compatible with the structural tendencies towards privatization and corporate irresponsibility in the borderlands, as it has been

---

[762] Bruhn 1996.
[763] Interview, February 1997.
[764] Interview, July 1996.
[765] Interview, July 1996.
[766] Interview, February 1997.
[767] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for much of the U.S. and Mexico throughout recent political administrations, whether it is the Contract with America or PRONASOL.

As one major tactic of government counter-mobilizations, maquila workers organizing independent unions or protest campaigns have been approached regularly by government representatives, maquila managers, and official union organizers with offers of financial gain or political power. This has been reported by Tong[768] (SCMW) and Valadez[769] (CGM/GFX) as almost a ritual problem faced in organizing. López claims that at the beginning of MEBAC's environmental work in Baja California, her father was approached by industry offering money in return for the organization's support; and once their advances were refused, intimidating tactics began in the form phone calls threatening loved ones with violence.[770] Indeed, she reports that a few many environmentalists in Baja have accepted money from corporate interests, and political careers from government, selling out their own communities and credibility in the process.[771] However, labor movement activists are far more worried about strategies of repression than incorporation, since this seems to be the more common means of government-corporate opposition to organizing. Environmental justice movements in Mexico also have suffered from coercive repression, such as the break-ins and destruction of property in the facilities of Enlace Ecológico and Equipo Pueblo which many believe was part of a federal effort to

---

[768] Interview, July 1996.
[769] Interview, July 1996.
[770] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interfere with NGOs actively involved in monitoring the July 1997 electoral process.[772] For local environmental movements, however, strategies of incorporation are encountered more frequently than severe repression, for several reasons. First, environmental organizations do not have such a direct lever against maquiladora operations as do labor unions or support groups with strike actions, and thus, since they have appeared less of a direct threat to free trade, they have been less a target for stringent repression. Second, the labor movement in Mexico has had a long and tumultuous history in Mexico, and its central representative organizations have been incorporated into repressive state agendas since the post-revolutionary consolidation of the PRI. By comparison, the environmental movement in Mexico has a relatively short history. Third, this movement has grown significantly during the free trade era of North American integration, bringing greater binational public attention to environmental concerns in Mexico just at a time when government strategies of securing free trade against environmental regulation were taking shape. Some, such as Angelica Muller of the MEXHON (Honeywell) maquila in Tijuana, argue that environmental conditions in Mexico actually have improved due to greater binational attention to sustainability.[773] Thus, the mechanisms of incorporation adopted a distinctly binational character, as official Mexican institutions and their counterparts in the U.S. have worked cooperatively in entities such as the BECC and the CEC.

---

[771] Interview, February 1997.
[772] Becerra and Casasbuenas 1997.
[773] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

And these institutions have grown stronger as maquila supporters have regarded them as a public confirmation of free trade's sustainable possibilities in North America and as a conduit of government resources towards financial compensation for the environmental costs of free trade. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, activists such as Bravo[774] (SNEEJ) and Luna[775] (EHC) have had reason to be critical of the power and interests of these organizations – especially the BECC – as they fail to institute locally accountable non-corporate visions of environmental health and sustainability. In the case of the BECC, this occurs as a result of professionalized project design requirements, the participation of the business sector, relative neglect of maquiladora toxics, publicly unaccountable decision-making, and the tendency to lend to projects with some financial return – ensuring that neoliberal tendencies within borderland environmental policy are secure from challenges and reforms posed by more radically democratic movements for environmental justice. However, because BECC provides resources in a depressed region and it has the potential to initiate sustainable projects, it has been a prime target of many borderland environmental groups, while others have seen it as little more than a distracting and corrupting influence.

The sheer presence of BECC, the EPA, and SEMARNAP has created profound conflicts within and between environmental organizations as they struggle to define a movement strategy that adequately engages the assistance of scientific,

[774] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

professional, and state institutions, while retaining a populist accountability to local communities and their interests. This conflict has thus helped to define the borderland confrontation between sustainable development and environmental justice principles of resistance.[776] In a movement context where the most basic forms of research, education, and collaboration are primary, and where resources are extremely limited, it is tempting for many border activists to embrace more professional, bureaucratic, and less communal strategies in the effort to gain some limited form of legal or political change. Some, such as Laura Durazo of the PFEA, who represents more sustainable development reforms claim any resources that are available should be accessed for local assistance, even if this requires a degree of professionalization and bureaucratization.[777] She argues that the Mexican political context is one that is very desperate and thus the structural opportunities to gain political entitlement should be seized.[778] Here, although Durazo regards liberal market reforms as inadequate to the task of bringing environmental health to a majority of fronterizos, she also sees participation within these sustainable development policy circles to be crucial if local groups are to gain any long-term change. López (MEBAC) has even claimed that public meetings with corporate interests have yielded some moderate reforms to toxic practices – "I think they're changing the way in which they're doing business" – that should not be overlooked in a region where any detoxification is

[775] Interview, July 1996.
[776] Verduzco 1997.
[777] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

helpful.[779] Harry Browne (IHRC), who has argued that maquiladora developments in the region constitute a new U.S. "imperialism" and who advocates "grassroots democracy," seems to agree, since he claims that some participation in professional state institutions like the BECC can grant organizations credibility and power among other movement groups and government entities in both nations.[780] Because this community-government interaction seems sensible within limits, Durazo, along with Border Ecology Project (BEP) coordinator Richard Kamp,[781] expresses frustration with those activists who make criticisms of her tactics as compromised and unaccountable to fronterizos. She claims that the most "radical" tactics are not always appropriate and that direct professional ties can be effective in brining significant legal reform. And given her successes in instituting new Mexican right-to-know legislation and her work with the BEP, she is optimistic about how this institutional access to policy, however constricted, may be a vehicle for even greater future changes.[782]

Others however find this near traitorous to the interests and democratic participation of local communities, since involvement in more bureaucratic state or corporate endeavors will fail to challenge corporate agendas and dependent neoliberal development ir the region.[783] Badillo (CAFOR) has suggested that many sustainable

---

[778] Interview, February 1997.
[779] Interview, February 1997.
[780] Interview, May 1996.
[781] Interview, February 1997.
[782] Interview, February 1997.
[783] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

development organizations, despite some benefit they may provide to fronterizo communities, tend to be compromised since they are less accountable to their local colonias and may pursue personal political or financial gain at their community's expense.[784] Bravo[785] (SNEEJ) and Luna[786] (EHC) concur and argue that sustainable development organizations' hopes for social or environmental transformation are futile as long as they are vested in unresponsive, under-resourced, and ineffective borderland environmental institutions. Although they recognize that there may be limited reason for optimism since there have been minor improvements in environmental law, as the EPA has attempted to gain more public input on Border XXI, and since some BECC money has been spent on public need, Bravo is clear that very little social change has occurred or could occur with these institutions as long as their problems of inaccessibility, lending policies, and resources continue. As evidence, even though the EPA, attempting to compensate for past exclusions with the IBEP, sought public opinion for its more recent protection plan, Border XXI, its effectiveness in addressing community concerns is severely restricted given there are no funding guarantees from the U.S. Congress for full implementation, no resource allocation whatsoever for enforcement, corporate responsibility for pollution was not even mentioned, and economic development policy in general was not cited as a significant environmental issue. Therefore, it may be seductive to have normalized

[784] Interview, February 1997.
[785] Interview, July 1996.
[786] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

relations with official institutions, but they argue the lack of effectiveness and publicly inaccessible character of these institutions make them a poor target for limited social movement resources.[787] Further, this seduction has lasting consequences since it requires movements to adapt their resources, knowledge, and strategy towards the requirements of state institutions rather than the interests of local communities – interests that often are diametrically opposed. But this movement orientation is exactly what the federal governments of the U.S. and Mexico, as well as the World Bank,[788] have facilitated through the common stipulations that regional funding for infrastructure and regulatory oversight will be granted if movement groups accept professional training on how to work with government. Indeed, Bravo argues that these mechanisms of centralizing environmental policy have had a corrupting influence on environmental movement groups insofar as they have been required to become politically professional, bureaucratic, and removed from issues of central importance for fronterizo communities.[789]

Thus, more conservative sustainable development movements may become supportive of a benevolent technocracy, in which professionals and bureaucrats are envisioned as the rightful designers of environmental policy, and public participation, if it occurs at all, is post hoc and thus tightly circumscribed around official agendas. But this may have its ideological effects as well, swaying many movement activists to

---

[787] Interviews with EHC organizer César Luna and SNEEJ affiliate José Bravo, July 1996.
[788] Saxod 1996.
[789] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

pursue environmental policy that is less focused on transformative environmental principles – such as democratic resource planning, wealth redistribution, regulatory stringency, occupational and community health provisions, preservation, environmental taxes, or corporate subsidized ecological restoration – and instead environmental planning that does not challenge the long-term destructive consequences of neoliberalism – such as conservationist resource efficiency, government subsidized environmental cleanup, urban beautification, ecotourism developments, population reduction, recycling programs, citizen education, or infrastructure growth. Indeed, many of the latter policies actually facilitate further neoliberal adjustments to the region by downsizing government and subsidizing the corporate externalization of resource or pollution costs. Hence, incorporation by official institutions can promote extreme tension among environmental movement organizations, not merely because of mere accusations of corruption or reformism, but because they touch upon deep historical differences of ideology and environmental philosophy. Thus it is not accidental, especially in a region where fear and cynicism are escalated because of repression, that these ideological and strategic debates can become polarized and create subterranean fissures between organizations through heightened distrust and resentment.

The general structure of this coalitional conflict between more or less official, professional, and bureaucratic movement forms is common to the labor movement as well, since there are obvious historic differences between, on the one hand

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

bureaucratic- and business-unionism, and on the other community-based, social movement orientations.[790] Most border labor support organizations have been community-based and focused on coalitions with social movement concerns of gender equality and even development. Additionally, there have been few disagreements over the strategy of using legal tactics in combination with direct actions and corporate campaigns to promote corporate responsibility. Most seem to agree with the sentiments of Baldemar Velasquez[791] (FLOC) who has argued that a reliance on the state as a guarantor of social welfare is questionable given its economic dependencies on private capital, and given that few movements have ever been successful without extra-state strategies of social change. However, conflict has arisen between community-based labor support groups and the more established unions of the AFL-CIO and, of course, those official unions of Mexico. Aside from the subordinated unionism of the CTM or AIFLD, local labor support groups have found relations with more established unions in the AFL-CIO to be strained because of more professional and bureaucratic tendencies. Although the opposition to NAFTA, the sporadic growth of the Labor Party, and current organizing and cross-border priorities in the AFL-CIO have indicated a shift away from a unionism supportive of a U.S. labor aristocracy and the compromised interests of corporate unionism or the Democratic Party, old models of staff-driven organizing and a unionism un-accountable to community groups are dying hard. Their primary reason

[790] Moody 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for survival seems to be the union concern for funding cost-effective, efficient, and winnable campaigns. Ed Feigen (AFL-CIO) has stated openly in CJM meetings that cost considerations are a priority in campaign design.[792] Not only can this make the AFL-CIO appear instrumental and opportunistic, creating tensions between local community-based labor organizations and established unions, it also can have the unintended consequences of movement competition and infighting, top-down decision-making, and the alienating rationalization of movement activity at all levels. Further, as discussed in Chapter Four, traditions of bureaucracy and professionalism have been associated with the promotion of limited labor coalitions with movements for gender equality, community health, and anti-imperialism abroad.

Therefore, although coalitional difficulties have not been caused exclusively by state institutions and their mechanisms of incorporation, they certainly have facilitated the bureaucratization and professionalization of grassroots movement groups and their social movement orientations. One consequence has been the all too limited connections between labor and environmental organizations along the border. These have been the two most active areas of movement activity in the region and they share many of the same ethics and strategic orientations. They have participated in many borderland conferences and they have granted each other general economic and educational support on many different campaigns for occupational and community health, including the notable case of Maclovio Rojas. Indeed, activists

---

[791] Velasquez 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

such as José Morales[793] (EcoSol) and Father Justus Wirth[794] have implored fellow organizers to work across movement sectors, and to see land claims and agricultural labor issues as potential points of collaboration between environmental and labor movements. But, despite the common concerns many community groups have for both environmental health and labor justice, the CJM has been one of the few systematic efforts to create common spaces of collaboration between these movement interests. Durazo[795] (PFEA), Browne[796] (IHRC), and López[797] (MEBAC) have commented that there has been far too little substantive strategic collaboration between environmental and labor organizations. Even some very well-networked labor activists on the border have no knowledge of prominent environmental organizations based in their own cities, and vice versa. This occurs for several reasons.

First and foremost are the divergent political histories these movements have had in both Mexico and the U.S., which in part is caused by distinct class differences among environmentalist and labor constituencies. This is observable in the legacy of debates between advocates of economic growth and supporters of habitat preservation throughout much of North America. José Bravo[798] (SNEEJ) argues that there has been all too few initiatives on the part of North American environmentalists to define

---

[792] Feigen 1996.
[793] Morales 1996.
[794] Wirth 1996.
[795] Interview, February 1997.
[796] Interview, May 1996.
[797] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environmental protection in a way that might be more commensurate with labor movement interests, by focusing more on the corporate practices of toxic exposure and dumping, the similarities between environmental and labor exploitation, and the necessity for long-term planning of both sustainable economic and environmental conditions. Likewise, neither country's labor movement historically has had an interest in advocating for economic development that would regulate or phase out ecologically destructive sectors and technologies, since many unions have been invested in maintaining jobs in those industries – preventing a broader coalitional movement and an expansive critique of the social/environmental consequences of industrialization. Second, Ed Feigen (AFL-CIO) argues that grassroots environmental groups exist along the border, but unlike the labor movement, the larger nationalist environmental organizations have placed extremely limited resources into health campaigns, with the exception of the Environmental Health Coalition.[799] He states, "it would be great if ... some of these organizations like Sierra [Club] and Greenpeace had major interests in trade issues and international issues, but they just haven't really got to the border."[800] Lehman (CFTSJ) has confirmed this experience by claiming that, even though Greenpeace and the Sierra Club have taken progressive positions against free trade, they have not committed extensive resources to grassroots organizing.[801] This is in part because more mainstream wilderness movements in the U.S. and

---

[798] Interview, July 1996.
[799] Interview, March 1997.
[800] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mexico have been more professionalized and bureaucratic, which also constrains interests in urban environmental justice. Moreover their middle class constituents frequently have few ties to the class or ethnic interests of many fronterizos, U.S. or Mexican.

But a fourth and significant reason for non-collaboration is that labor organizations have fewer institutionalized points of access to regional development policy in comparison to their environmental counterparts, who have the BECC, the CEC, IBWC, and binational EPA/SEMARNAP plans such as Border XXI. Morales (EcoSol) even claims that maquila managers grant environmentalists greater access to plant facilities than unionists, since their public relations efforts are targeted towards a popular and less threatening green development.[802] Clearly, the amount of resources and the number of institutions working on regional environmental health are extensive relative to the minimal efforts focused on raising labor standards for wages or occupational health and safety. This influence has created a discrepant transformation of environmental and labor movement strategy, tactics, and often, ideological orientations insofar as labor groups work against state repression and towards unionization at the work site, while environmental organizations more often work in colonia settings and with state institutions to promote greater regulatory and compensatory programs. Although Durazo (PFEA) states she is interested in establishing working relationships with labor groups, especially given a natural

---

[801] Interview, June 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

affinity around occupational health and safety issues, she also has expressed trepidation at working on labor concerns since, she argues, "it is a very charged issue."[803] Thus not only do these binational environmental institutions work as mechanisms of incorporation through the assimilation of local movements into state-corporate visions of environmental policy, but they also function to bolster the differences – many of which have been based on class – that exist between environmental and labor justice groups in the border region.

With labor and environmental movements along the border it is certain that the mechanisms of incorporation, whether in the form of state-based institutions such as BECC or subordinated unions like the CTM, have hegemonic effects on intra-movement coalition building beyond sheer repression. Bureaucratization and professionalization, fates that befall most social movements as they encounter state efforts at incorporation, have become concerns that prompt border organizations to further articulate their commitments, ethics, and vision for change. There is a stark division between those who have regarded such changes as corrupt compromises or merely limited adjustments to anti-democratic neoliberal development, and those who see any state or corporate openness to political change as a valuable opportunity to be seized, even if this requires some modification of tactics. Equally important is the way this debate is a lightening rod for ideological argument over different social ideals, in which discourses of the socialized market, legitimate state authority,

---

[802] Morales 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

democratic participation, sustainability, structural corporate interests, inter-identity coalition, and regional integration find articulation, however subtle. But, state and corporate endeavors of incorporation, whether they be through patronage, financial dependency, rationalization, or ideological influence, create internal friction and factionalization that limits the ultimate power of border movements to forge bonds of solidarity across various borders of identity and challenge neoliberal development. Indeed, even on occasions when incorporation is arguably very limited, a hostile and resource poor movement context can cause cynicism and resentment to fester into dis-unifying accusations of compromise and corruption. Although conflict can be creative and is crucial for growth, fragmentation based on incorporation – real or supposed – has hegemonic effects of disarticulating movements.

In sum, at every phase of organizing, activists opposing the abuses of transnationals, especially those representing independent unions, face extensive counter-mobilizations which have as participants some of the most powerful transnational corporations in the world and the most influential government institutions in North America. There are many reasons to argue that transnationals and development planners in the Mexican government conflict over means to facilitate national recovery and growth. And, it is certain that different regional and sectoral representatives of the Mexican and U.S. governments have contradicting interests of power and ideology. Indeed, Mary Tong (SCMW) argued during the Han

[803] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Young campaign that one of the primary reasons for success was the lack of unity in the U.S. Congress and the JNCA, the latter of which might have been aided by the victories of the PAN and the PRD in the July 1997 elections.[804] However, from the perspective of local movement representatives who face profound consequences for the most basic of actions, the alliance between foreign corporations and government institutions, in both the U.S. and Mexico, is formidable and largely united against any threats to corporate freedom and neoliberal discipline. But if the outwardly repressive or incorporating mechanisms of corporate and state actors are hindrances to democratic movements, possibly equally disruptive and more insidious are the ways these hegemonies have been reflected in coalitional tensions, closing off areas of strategic solidarity. Inter- and intra-movement conflicts over strategy and ideology have been common secondary effects of state and corporate counter-mobilizations, but as these differences become refracted through identity issues such as race, gender, and nation, the possibilities for broad transnational coalitions are constrained even further.

Coalitional Challenges across the Borders of Race, Gender, and Nation

When examining the coalitional efforts of border environmental and labor organizations, it is clear that many links of solidarity have yet to be made across the divides of identity. In a space subjected to multiple colonial histories, desperate immiseration, and rapid uneven development, there exists as much of an opportunity

[804] Tong 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for conflict as there is for coalition. Indeed, although borderland labor and environmental organizations have been successful in bridging these divides through education, dialogue, and cooperative strategy building, it is clear that frustrations and hostilities often seep through the fissures of profound differences. As discussed in Chapter Four, often these are the beginnings of new dialogues and endeavors of solidarity, but there are frequent examples of lingering opposition and distrust that, when exacerbated by fear and cynicism resulting from repressive campaigns, can severely constrain borderland resistance efforts. The following, therefore, is a discussion of the primary obstacles of difference in the growth of coalition building which border activists commonly cite. However, it is necessary to make the qualification that, since many border activists wish to avoid exacerbating differences or chose to make more subtle commentary for fear of alienating coalition partners, much of the critique below is, either deduced by the author, or kept anonymous. This has limited the accessibility of these issues to the most thoroughgoing understanding or critique, but the interviews yielded such a significant number of these stories and comments that certain generalizations are possible.

One such identity concern that is rarely spoken but nevertheless present is race. Racial difference along and across the border is complex and made even more so by the fact that border organizations openly disavow race as a major problem of coalition building. As an example, Maurilio Sánchez of Cañon del Padre made a statement common to many, especially environmentalist, organizers when he claimed,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"race and nationality do not matter to me, and they certainly do not matter to the environment.... Toxic wastes cross the border and the Border Patrol never even notices."[805] Adding to these sentiments of solidarity and ecological realism, Kaare Kjos[806] (ECSDTJ) and Susan Mika[807] (CJM) concur that racial difference is not a significant cause of tension among border activists, largely because they accept a model of racial pluralism. Also, Tong[808] (SCMW) has argued that race is not a major analytical category for border activists in comparison to class and gender, and thus not a primary subject of coalitional endeavors or mobilization campaigns. Although it seems dubious that race is not an issue for border organizers and their coalitional work, despite how progressive and internationalist these activists may be, the silence around race may have some explanation. As a region subjected to two very different forms of colonialism – one by Spain and the other by the U.S. – with consequently two different racial structures, the current racial formation of the borderlands is one with many levels and interpretations. Hence, a first explanation may be that it is a daunting task to understand, much less reform, race relations along the border. This might be especially difficult for those white members of cross-border coalitions who may experience some guilt that prompts them to repress race-based dialogue. A second explanation may be that the discourse of radical racial reform in Mexico is one that many suspect of being corrupt and contradictory. Indeed, Mexico's cultural

[805] Interview, March 1997.
[806] Interview, July 1996.
[807] Interview, March 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nationalism depicts the quintessential Mexican citizen – exemplified by Júarez and Zapata – as an authentic mestizo and revolutionary father, yet in everyday reality the predominant population of mestizos and *indios* are amongst the most impoverished and politically disenfranchised (often pitted against one another in economic competition), and the Mexican revolution – like many globally – has suffered from many perversions. Therefore, since in Mexico references to racial difference and any revolutionary mestizo populism have constrained or corrupted public dialogue about race, it is even more difficult for fronterizos to discuss its dynamics.

As a third explanation, these difficulties in discussing racial difference may lead many on the Mexican and U.S. lefts to substitute a dialogue about class in the new North American order for a dialogue about race, which may be easy to do given the historic convergence of class and race difference throughout the borderlands. Indeed, the contemporary form of neoliberal imperialism has modified prior U.S. forms of colonial racial hierarchy in the region by creating a new *caciquismo.* Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, U.S. corporations and their predominantly white representatives in Mexico often had local intermediaries to facilitate their agricultural and industrial appropriations, such as merchants or officials who were of European heritage or *ladinos* (indigenous or mestizo people who adopt Spanish culture and language).[809] The influx of maquiladoras along the

[808] Interview, July 1996.
[809] Knight 1995; Rex 1977: 27.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

northern border has modified this only slightly, since Carmen Valadez[810] (CDM/GFX) reports that ladinos and Europe-identified Mexicans are most common among the ranks of maquila supervisors and managers, as well as government officials, mediating the power of U.S. corporations in the management of a predominantly mestizo and indigenous labor force. In Mexico, as is true for much of the U.S. also, race, class, and imperial relations are often difficult to disentangle, and each has worked synergistically with the others to produce polarized social hierarchies over many different modes of production. Thus, in Mexico, those racial discourses that do surface often are means of referencing class conflicts, and vice versa. But for most border activists, race clearly takes a back seat to class and gender in the analysis and oppositional strategies of regional labor and environmental movements.

However, others, largely on the Mexican side of *la frontera,* have disagreed and suggested that racial stratification not only exists in the corporate and governance structures of North America, but in its shadow image within cross-border coalitions themselves. Valadez[811] (CDM/GFX) and Badillo[812] (CAFOR) have referred to the "*paternalismo*" of whites in unions who have nationalist and racist assumptions about the backwardness or inexperience of Mexican fronterizos, often spurred by protectionist fears of U.S. job loss and long histories of imperialist, anti-Mexican sentiment. As was discussed in the previous chapter with regard to unionists from the

---

[810] Interview, July 1996.
[811] Interview, July 1996.
[812] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

USWA, this paternalism has taken the form of U.S. activists wishing to teach democracy to Mexicans and has accompanied rather stereotypical prejudices. Bravo[813] (SNEEJ) reported what others have acknowledged as an all too common incident when in 1995 a Teamster delegation traveled to the border and, in the course of meeting with Mexican workers, voiced racist epithets including "wetback" and "greaser." Here, Bravo argued they were channeling their protectionist resentments for exported trucking contracts into xenophobic stereotypes of Mexicans as thieving and uncivilized.[814] These dynamics are even more commonplace in San Diego which, despite being a border city with many ties to Mexico, is home to a very conservative and insulated set of communities. As an example, Mary Tong (SCMW) reports that many San Diego unions, including those in the building trades have expressed race-based hostility to Mexican workers who they regard as competition for contracts in the region.[815] As Kaare Kjos (ECSDTJ) has said, "most people [in San Diego] don't even want to go to Tijuana, or want to recognize there is a foreign country just a few miles down the road. They are afraid of it, they blame it, especially in hard economic times."[816] Even those who do venture to Tijuana often go no further than Mexico's windowcase tourist attractions on Avenida Revolución,[817] and are oriented towards

[813] Interview, July 1996.
[814] Interview, July 1996.
[815] Interview, July 1996.
[816] Interview, July 1996.
[817] Interview with USMBPF Executive Director Elsa Saxod, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

consuming a packaged and wholly Other spectacle of Mexican culture via its gift shops, bars, dance clubs, and sex industry.

But xenophobic confrontations have escalated in recent years since, as Roberto Martínez[818] (AFSCBP) and Kaare Kjos[819] (ECSDTJ) argue, border history indicates that when economic conditions worsen, many whites channel their class anxieties into a racialized anti-Mexican resentment. In Kjos's words, "if history is any indication ... as soon as things get tough, we need a scapegoat."[820] This is evident in anti-immigrant hostilities that are ubiquitous in Southern California, whether it is in the relatively casual media scare around immigrant criminality or important policy reforms that have been grounded in political discussions of the "immigration problem." Indeed, the political economic relations between the Californias are extremely contradictory insofar as both regions support the transnational mobility of capital, but erect elaborate barriers to prevent free movement of labor – creating a cheaper and more desperate pool of labor on both sides of the border. As an example of anti-immigrant sensibilities, Martínez (AFSCBP) tells of the continuing death threats and harassment he receives every month in his attempts to expose the weekly, if not daily, violations of basic human rights by Border Patrol agents against immigrants.[821] He reports these violations have been especially common under the 1995 offensive, Operation Gatekeeper, a recent militarization of

[818] Interview, July 1996.
[819] Interview, July 1996.
[820] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Border Patrol which Dunn describes as a more proximate application of the low-intensity warfare developed by the U.S. in Central America.[822] Martínez also cites the phenomenon of white suburban residents of East San Diego County often donning NRA caps and paramilitary clothing, who have been arming themselves and shooting immigrants as they cross the border, even threatening to organize a Southern California militia.[823] This activity has accompanied a growing number of hate groups in San Diego, such as White Aryan Resistance and the KKK, which have escalated their efforts at intimidation and violence against Mexican immigrants, who they regard as the cause of U.S. decline.[824] Anti-Mexican sentiment is also evident in San Diego's more moderate middle class endeavor, the Light Up the Border Campaign, which has worked to enhance the funding and policing capacities of the Border Patrol. It's long time organizer, Murial Watson, uses the apocalyptic imagery of "flood" and "chaos" to describe Mexican immigration into the U.S., which she argues has accompanied lawless and violent acts against U.S. citizens, including "raping," "beating," and "killing."[825] And of course the general anti-Mexican fear of job loss and anti-immigrant nativism has been partly the reason for public approval of California Propositions 187 and 227, mentioned in Chapter Four. For many, the border may represent more than a place of immigrant crossing, but rather a harbinger

---

[821] Interview, July 1996.
[822] Dunn 1996.
[823] Interview, July 1996.
[824] Interview, July 1996.
[825] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of a more diverse and global world order and a return of the oppressed, causing many who are fearful to desire a thin (red, white, and) blue line between new and old. Martínez (AFSCBP) pessimistically compares the immanent social conflict over immigration to that of the L.A. rebellion in 1992,

> I know that it's going to get worse before it gets better. There's no question about it. It's already getting to the point where there's no return, unless there are some changes in the politics of this country which are driving the immigration issue to a point of explosion – a violent explosion, like what happened in L.A. before.[826]

Therefore, even the most critical and well-intentioned efforts at coalition building between whites and mestizos across the U.S.-Mexico border are wrought with a historic legacy of profound racial tensions which may threaten to unravel the limited ties that bind citizens in both nations.

Thus, there appear to be two often conflicting acknowledgments of race issues. One seems to regard race as an issue more ancillary to class which may be overcome through simple dialogue, grassroots education, and liberal pluralist values. The other seems to suggest that race is part of an overdetermined structure of privilege that has a history closely linked with U.S. imperialism, one that often is replicated by the left, whether through nationalist xenophobia or through liberal rhetorics of assimilation to U.S. models of democracy and civilization. Further, the latter argues that mere one- or two-dimensional analyses of class and/or gender are

[826] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

not sufficient to understand power in the borderlands. Indeed, Valadez[827] argues that poor, mestiza, Mexican women along the border rest at the intersection of four compounding oppressions, and the failure to recognize one of them can inhibit coalitional efforts and thus the entirety of cross-border campaigns. Clearly, as long as race is reduced to an epiphenomenon and not acknowledged as a significant matter for coalition building, the history of U.S. imperialism in the borderlands will be only partially understood and resisted.[828] Therefore, even though it may be understandable that discussions of racial difference often remain in the closet, their suppression or displacement into purely class- or nation-based terms may be a hegemonic means of eliding the imperial histories of the region and consequently ignoring new strategies of radically democratic development. If race-based resentments among working class whites in the U.S. remain unacknowledged and are not subject to critique, they only will succeed in fomenting a schizophrenic political mind in which the unrestrained globalization of capital is supported through the divisive nationalization of social policy and popular culture.

Another set of conflicts among borderland labor and environmental organizations is that of gender. Among these movement organizations, there are roughly equal proportions of men and women, and the discussions of gendered conflict within each appear to be relatively few. Indeed, most interviewed failed to even raise the issue, much less cite pronounced differences that required elaboration.

---

[827] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

However, Mary Tong[829] (SCMW) argues gendered differences become relevant when considering the relations between predominantly male activists from the U.S. and women community representatives from south of the border. Interestingly, many cross-border union coalitions that have occurred have been between male-dominated unions. This is a result of several factors: men are more numerous in the heavy industries which have had a longer history of unionism, both in the U.S. and in Mexico; these are jobs that are more highly skilled and thus workers are less disposable, making them less subject to demobilization; and the heavy industrial sector has represented the core of U.S. unionism and simultaneously that economic strata that has suffered extensively from job exportation, prompting transnational solidarity efforts. Thus, the general sectoral division of labor has reproduced itself in many cross-border campaigns, despite the efforts of coalitional border organizations to promote trans-issue collaboration and gender equality. The second major set of gender differences occur around strategic considerations. Carmen Valadez[830] (CDM/GFX) and Mary Tong[831] (SCMW) argue that, despite equal planning and sharing of responsibilities across gender difference, women often prefer structures that are less centralized and more participatory, while advocating for mobilization tactics that, at this stage, are focused more on consciousness raising and coalition building than direct action. Likewise, within border environmental organizations,

[828] Rex 1977: 47.
[829] Interview, July 1996.
[830] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

there is significantly greater participation of men among policy-based groups, while women predominate in the more community-based environmental justice campaigns. Although these latter strategic differences represent internal tensions rather than totally disruptive forces that threaten to fragment borderland movements, it is clear that more traditional gendered distinctions between the public political man and the domestic or communal woman are in effect. Thus, gendered differences find articulation in the broadest possible structures and tactics of cross-border solidarity, making relevant a feminist critique that the international gendered division of labor present in neoliberalism is indeed hegemonic and replicated in left forms of transnationalism. Hence, for smoother coordination between the private the public, the communal and the political, as well as identity and strategy, these organizations may need to continue a critical feminist endeavor to challenge the norms of patriarchal accumulation.

But a gender-based conflict also exists between those women activists that define themselves as *mujeristas* (womanists), and those who regard themselves as *feministas* (feminists) – a debate that it is not unfamiliar to gender politics in the U.S. as well. Reyna Montoya[832] (CDM/GFX) argues that these differences have been major stumbling blocks for coalitions among women activists in northern Mexico and a point of much debate within Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X. According to Montoya, the differences are multiple, including more or less conflicting positions on

[831] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sexuality, family, community responsibility, nation, class, and lifestyle.[833] Self-described mujeristas are those who have identified with the oppression of women and organize for women's self-empowerment, but they often retain some affinity to more traditional roles of motherhood, which has been defined through nationalist and Catholic discourses of the family. Although the politicization of motherhood can result in highly committed sensibilities of community responsibility and thus formidable activism, this frequently may accompany some resistance to alternative family structures or sexual identities. Further, many mujeristas disavow the intellectualism, inaccessibility, and thus middle or upper class tastes among much feminista discourse, preferring instead practical and working class visions of women's empowerment.[834] Consequently, they associate Mexican feminism with a more European intelligentsia, not a mestizo or indigenous politics of women's empowerment. In sum, mujeristas seem to regard feminism as a more external (imperialist?) politics that seeks to destabilize the nexus of community-nation-religion-family for a more individualistic, bourgeois, and U.S. form of women's empowerment.

By contrast, Montoya describes the typical feminista as supporting more anti-patriarchal family, workplace, and community structures in which men and women participate as equals. But beyond the mere acknowledgment of women's oppression,

---

[832] Interview, March 1997.
[833] Interview, March 1997.
[834] Interview with CDM/GFX organizer Reyna Montoya, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

feministas question the necessary existence of gendered structures of power altogether, and hence the totality of gender differences themselves. Here, there is not only a challenge to national and transnational gendered divisions of labor, but also a clear opposition to the patriarchal institutions of the Catholic church and the family. This also includes a respect for alternative families and sexual identities through challenges to heterosexuality, marriage, and subservient visions of motherhood. Also, rather than merely supporting working class populisms, these feministas regard the intellectual and international discourses of feminism as a contribution to rethinking a national culture built on the dual oppressions of the Holy Mother and virgin, Guadeloupe, or the traitorous whore, La Malinche. Indeed, many Mexican feministas along the border, like Chicana feminists in the U.S.,[835] appear to embrace a more transnational and coalitional vision of women's empowerment based on less essentialist and more selective or strategic oppositions to imperialism.

As Montoya (CDM/GFX) argues, the differences between mujeristas and feministas are profound, and define the orientations of competing women's organizations in the borderlands.[836] In confirmation, Martha de la Rocha of Colonia de las Playas in Tijuana demonstratively denied being a feminista and instead claimed a mujerista identity, citing significant familial, communal, and working class orientations as differences between herself and her feminist counterparts.[837] Clearly,

---

[835] Anzaldúa 1987; Sandoval 1991; Alarcón 1996.
[836] Interview, March 1997.
[837] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

this is a complex debate in which each offer highly useful critiques, such as the more or less subtle mujerista indictments of imperialism and intellectualism, or feminista resistance to the overdetermining patriarchal structures of corporate, state, religious, and family power. For the former, a potentially transformative class critique is subsumed under often essentialist forms of religious nationalism. For the latter, a progressive anti-patriarchal transnationalism verges on embracing popularly inaccessible intellectualisms and imperial liberalisms. Each therefore possess as many contradictions and dilemmas as does the political culture of neoliberalism on the border, requiring new movement articulations. Indeed, only through increased dialogue among feministas and mujeristas can a radically empowering form of feminism emerge – a form that escapes oppressive cultures of gendered nationalism while recognizing the need for greater Mexican cultural and political autonomy, a form that offers more accessible and popular critiques of patriarchy while embracing the radical possibilities of motherhood and Catholicism, and a form that makes an indictment of class difference that is compatible with (trans)national coalition building across differences of privilege. Cross-border coalitional efforts have begun this dialogue, but the work of negotiating difference in unity is far from complete among border movements. Thus, more comprehensive and broadly-based strategies of women's empowerment throughout the Tijuana/San Diego area require further development.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

One intersecting formation of identity that is linked to these gendered and race-based orientations, and has been a source of conflict in cross-border coalitions is that of nationalism. As was discussed in Chapter Four, nationalism has been regarded by most border activists as antithetical to their work of transnational mobilization against continental or global economic problems. Indeed, their activist coalition building has inhibited the most reactionary forms of nationalist conflict since most realize that transnational organizing and the identity formations that are required for its successes, are necessary in a world of globalizing processes. Nationalism also has been in direct contradiction with the bi-national life histories, culture, and environmental conditions most border activists recognize as the realities of everyday life. Thus, when nationalism is visible, it most often arises through subtle innuendo, indirect commentary, and displaced anxieties. Its expressions therefore often find articulation alongside the above dynamics of race, gender, class, and imperialism. Nonetheless, there are more overt forms of nationalism found in cross-border labor and environmental activism.

On the Mexican side of the border, nationalist traditions do surface as a reaction, however problematic, to the imperialist intrusions of U.S. economic policy and corporate investment on Mexican autonomy. Tong (SCMW) has described how some sectarian organizations, including the Partido Revolucionario de Trotsky (PRT), have organized its membership against U.S. involvement in Mexican unionization or community movements, since they argue that U.S. activists should not be allowed to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interfere in Mexican affairs.[838] Although subtler and less absolute forms of nationalist identity are more common to border culture and politics, the current waves of maquiladora investments and the consequent transformation of the region have sensitized many activists and other movement participants to the intrusiveness of U.S. interests. And unfortunately, there have been far too many examples of interventionist forms of U.S. activism in Mexico, especially along the border and particularly after the passage of NAFTA. Indeed, whether it is an extreme retreat into an insulated vision of Mexican society or more strategic articulations of Mexican autonomous political and economic control, Mexican forms of nationalism among cross-border coalitions have been shaped intimately by U.S. corporate imperialism and its reproductions on the left – themselves the product of distinctly U.S. nationalisms.

When U.S. nationalism rears its head among cross-border coalitions, it appears to have a Janus face, with one side representing a protectionist isolationism which rushes to the defense of the U.S. working class position within a global labor aristocracy, and the other being a typically U.S. chauvinism and sense of imperial right. Both, as will be argued, have origins in U.S. imperial culture and effects which support the growing hegemony of neoliberalism. The first form of protectionism has been a common disruptive force in coalition building along the border, and it has provoked more or less severe reactions from Mexican organizations. In what many

[838] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

along the border have witnessed as a common occurrence, Robert Lehman reports that, in his work with the Coalition for Free Trade and Social Justice (CFTSJ) in the Bay Area, he saw the opportunities for reciprocal and mutual coalitions with Mexican movements flounder among some unions who became narrowly fixated on U.S. job loss. Here, threatened with job loss during a restructuring of the U.S. economy, many unionists fell into the belief that Mexicans were taking jobs from decent U.S. families and that Perot's "great sucking sound" was bound to bring Mexican prosperity at the expense of the U.S. working class. Even though many were able to translate their fears of capital flight into mutually supportive ties with Mexican unions and environmental groups, nationalist reactions continued, especially among industrial, transport, and manufacturing unions.[839] Indeed, Bravo (SNEEJ) claims that countless worker-to-worker exchanges and border tours which took place during the NAFTA debates left comparatively few lasting union-to-union ties of solidarity, since some U.S. unionists were interested merely in their own nation's economic future, not Mexico's.[840] Tong (SCMW) suggests that many union locals within San Diego, despite the convenient proximity to the border and a passing familiarity with cross-border efforts, retain a protectionist disinterest in – if not resentment for – union ties with Mexican workers to whom they have lost contracts.[841]

---

[839] Interview, June 1996.
[840] Interview, July 1996.
[841] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Likewise, José Bravo (SNEEJ) reports that, whether it is the protection of jobs or environmental conditions, protectionist forms of nationalism are common and display an insensitivity to the needs and potential allies of Mexican citizens. As an example in the environmental movement, he cites recent conflicts between, on the one hand, San Diego conservationists wanting to protect ocean cleanliness for recreation or tourism from the toxic cross-border flow of the Tijuana River, and on the other, environmental justice groups from Tijuana who were struggling for a non-toxic community.[842] San Diegans ultimately pursued a wastewater treatment plant that would merely treat the Tijuana River as it crossed the border into San Diego, but not help regulate corporate polluters or provide better sewage infrastructure for Tijuana.[843] And to make matters worse, the plant has been criticized as having an inadequate capacity during rainy seasons, sacrificing much secondary treatment, and all for the very costly price of 328 million dollars.[844] Here, U.S. activists wanted to protect only the U.S. side of the border instead of forging coalitions with Tijuana activists or understanding environmental health concerns mere miles away. This ultimately created weak solutions around secondary treatment of waste rather than source reductions and regulations, the latter of which would be more beneficial to the entire border ecosystem, including U.S. flora and fauna. Thus, in this case nationalisms intersected with class- and race-based conflicts common to

---

[842] Interview, July 1996.
[843] Interview of SNEEJ affiliate José Bravo, July 1996.
[844] Salazar 1998: 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

environmental politics (between predominantly white middle class conservationism and environmental justice movements of working class people of color) to promote inadequate solutions to common problems.

In another case cited by Mary Tong (SCMW), UNITE, through organizers with indirect ties to AIFLD, attempted to organize Guatemalan garment workers as part of a campaign against the manufacturer Leslie Faye and its threats to export jobs to Guatemala. UNITE claimed to be interested not only in protecting U.S. jobs but also in helping Guatemalan workers gain better wages and conditions. However, once Guatemalan workers went on strike in support of UNITE's request for sympathetic actions, UNITE withdrew funding and physical protection of local activists. This came without explanation, but Tong (SCMW) believes it was because, through this strike, UNITE had succeeded in prompting contract negotiations with the manufacturer in the U.S., and because its organizers never fully grasped the severity of repression that may face striking workers. Indeed, organizers suffered from extreme repression, including firings, intimidation, physical assaults, and rapes. Further, this prevented any unionization of Guatemalan maquilas and thoroughly damaged future U.S.-Guatemalan solidarity efforts.[845] Thus, at least some UNITE organizers pursued an instrumental protectionism at the disservice to long term transnational solidarity and the empowerment of garment workers throughout the Americas, bolstering both a left imperialism and an anti-U.S. nationalism. In each of

[845] Interview of SCMW organizer Mary Tong, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these cases there exists a tendency of U.S. movement organizations to give credence to, if not mirror, the tactics of the Mexican government and transnational corporations which have been to persuade citizens that environmentalists and independent unionists are being manipulated by invasive outside agitators. This was the rhetoric used by the Mexican government in the incidents surrounding the Han Young workers, when the JNCA claimed the workplace election did not represent Mexican workers' interests due to interference by U.S. activists.[846] Also, in the example of workers at the Plasticos Bajacal maquila referred to in Chapter Three, Mary Tong (SCMW) reports that the campaign was lost in part because the company and some sectarian groups persuaded many workers to believe that U.S. agitators were a corrupt influence, leaving only the CROM ghost union.[847] Similarly, she argues that companies in the U.S. frequently use the threat of job exportation alongside indictments of job-stealing Mexicans to quiet solidarity campaigns, since a shortsighted nationalist unionism cannot protect workers from capital flight or the downward harmonization of working conditions.[848] In her words, "it's [nationalism] definitely been a hindrance and unfortunately it feeds right into the hands of the companies. Every single individual struggle we've been involved in, the first move by the company will be to try and divide U.S. workers and Mexican workers."[849] Thus, one Janus face of U.S. nationalism that appears in border coalitions is a

[846] Tong 1998.
[847] Interview, July 1996.
[848] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

protectionism focused on securing a narrowly-conceived environmental and economic health, the effects of which are to inhibit more thoroughgoing and successful strategies of opposition to neoliberal hegemony in the region.

However the other side of the Janus face of U.S. nationalism, imperial chauvinism, has been equally disruptive of coalitional ties of solidarity. Ed Feigen (AFL-CIO) has described the past "silly" attempts of AFL-CIO organizers to impose strategies and methods of mobilizing independent Mexican unions along the border,[850] in which they neglected the different political traditions of the Mexican left, campaign strategies under repressive conditions, and of course, the need for Mexican autonomy. Some have argued that this interventionist form of transnationalism continued throughout the recent years of the CJM (during which the AFL-CIO was a primary advisor), at least until the Fall 1996 restructuring of the CJM when they elected to have more equal proportions of Mexican and U.S./Canadian representatives on the governing board. Indeed, through their recent experience with coalitional campaigns Valadez[851] (CDM/GFX) and Badillo[852] (CAFOR) have reported that U.S. organizers frequently express an almost imperial sense of entitlement when they propose models of organizing for Mexican movements without consultation of local activists. As stated in Chapter Four, Bravo (SNEEJ) and Luna (EHC) have commented extensively on the ways in which Mexican community activists and

[849] Interview, July 1996.
[850] Interview, March 1997.
[851] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

members often are not consulted by researchers and U.S. organizers when strategies of resistance are planned. This has resulted in more than mere alienation between Mexican and U.S. activists since organizing tactics imposed by U.S. unionists sometimes have been inappropriate, including open protest and strike strategies without measures to combat state repression.[853] Further, Tong (SCMW) cites how transnational solidarity ties sought by organizations with admittedly successful campaigns – such as the National Labor Committee (NLC) – have not adequately prepared for the job loss that may occur throughout Latin America when democratic unionization pushes transnationals to export jobs elsewhere. She claims that in the Guatemalan garment sector, "where the workers fought for eight years to get unions, and finally got close to bargaining agreements, the maquiladoras lost all of their contracts, and they shut down.... the company response has had a tremendous negative effect. And it's a difficult thing to deal with."[854] Beyond these significant problems presented by an imperial chauvinism, there also exists an almost civilizing mission among many U.S. activists along the border.

César Luna (EHC), in arguing for an alternative radically democratic principle of U.S.-Mexican solidarity which respects Mexican sovereignty and community-based strategies of opposition, described a paternalist nationalism as an "interventionist environmental colonialism" in which U.S. citizens regard themselves

---

[852] Interview, February 1997.
[853] Interview of CDM/GFX organizer Carmen Valadez, July 1996.
[854] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as the "saviors" of local communities. More theatrically, Luna parodied this conceit: "Well I know what's right and I know what's right for you, and we're going to tell you what's right for you, and this is how you're going to do it."[855] Kaare Kjos (ECSDTJ) finds this to be a common sentiment among Mexican fronterizos: "many Mexicans will view Americans as patronizing, as know-it-all, as controlling."[856] In one example of this left colonialism, members of a UAW delegation at a Fall 1996 meeting of the CJM openly questioned whether Mexican workers are interested in democracy, and one delegate suggested that it was the responsibility of U.S. unionists to teach their Mexican counterparts about democratic unionism. Similarly, members of the St. Paul, Minnesota local of the USWA mentioned in the previous chapter made comments that assumed Mexican poverty was an indication of backwardness and a need for foreign assistance. Here, U.S. efforts to participate in transnational coalitions reveal affinities to the general imperial identity of Anglo-centrism and U.S. superiority present within much development policy, including modernization theory and its current rearticulation in the form of neoliberalism. Paternalistically, many organizers and rank-and-filers approach cross-border coalitions with an air of conceit, envisioning Mexican citizens as rightful objects of projects or agendas defined by U.S. movements. By implication, U.S. activists here are defined as the appropriate and just leaders of a democratic pan-Americanism, a position not sufficiently distant from late twentieth-century U.S. policies in the hemisphere to set Mexican activists at

[855] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ease. Indeed, any assumption, however implicit, that would posit the U.S. as a natural standard of democracy and prosperity negates the internal contradictions of U.S. society and the super-exploitation peoples of Third World nations have suffered for the wealth of labor's aristocracy. Thus, this paternalism not only is frustrating in the ways it excludes equal and mutual participation of Mexican activists from movement coalitions, but it is a hegemonic reproduction of the very imperial dilemmas that are infused within neoliberal border development. Whether it is paternalism or protectionism, it is clear that U.S. nationalisms have been extremely disruptive to transnational coalitions, undermining united resistance to common social problems through hegemonic rearticulations of imperial discourse. These conflicts of race, gender, and nationalism pose significant dilemmas to border environmental and labor organizations as they endeavor to broaden and deepen transnational coalitions against neoliberal development. They thus compound the profound problems of repression and incorporation that confront borderland organizations as they struggle to bring greater democratic participation, regulations, and redistributive mechanisms to state and corporate institutions.

Resource Poverty

Despite the great strides these organizations have taken in creating a coalitional, diverse, radically democratic, educational, and transnational form of movement politics – undeniable contributions to the history of movements in North

---

[856] Interview, July 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

America – significant hegemonic constraints have halted the achievement of extensive structural political change. But despite the major obstacles erected by transnational corporations, states, or incorporated movement organizations, possibly the most devastating and pervasive problem has been a generalized poverty of both movement groups and their constituents. In the discussions above, it could be said that the dilemma of limited resources exacerbates every other problem. Throughout labor and environmental organizations, many rely on volunteer labor almost exclusively, but there is a clear understanding that money is required for equipment, office space, extensive communications, opposition research, legal aid, community centers, travel, and well-trained staff organizers to facilitate campaigns. In addition, environmental organizations incur great costs for the environmental testing and technical assistance required for infrastructure projects. Community labor organizations also need additional resources to help workers survive strikes or the effects of repression, such as firings, blacklistings, or injuries. However, despite the survivalist frugality of organizations such as the SCMW, CDM/GFX, CAFOR, and CJM, the resources acquired through donations and small grants are woefully inadequate to the tasks of instituting new labor relations, environmental health, or even development. And although many organizations spend resources cooperatively and generously, each struggles to implement its own strategies and ideals. Thus, from time to time borderland organizations find themselves in competition for donations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and grants from the same sources, promoting at best some levels of distrust, and at the worst open hostilities.

This has been clear in the San Diego/Tijuana area as movement organizations have articulated fears and suspicions of others and their corrupt motives.[857] Here, accusations of corruption, patronage, "turf" mongering, co-optation, selfishness, and careerism have been common. Probably the most common accusations have been, on the one hand, that particular movement leaders have been bought by government or corporate interests since they have taken money that has not been spent on community endeavors, and on the other, that many individuals participate in local movement groups with the ulterior motive of building a political career – both causing generalized suspicions and much frustration. There even have been a few cases of petty internal maneuvers within borderland coalitions against fellow representatives believed to be compromised, which strike many organizers as jealous and short-sighted in light of the hegemonic factionalization it could cause. Indeed, in an impoverished and exploitative context backed by repression, many financially desperate or politically cynical community representatives may sacrifice democratic process, coalitional unity, or long-term public good to pursue the hegemonic modernist ideals of individual gain. It is important to make the qualification that corrupt relations of patronage among government or corporate representatives and

[857] Interviews with Tong (SCMW), September 1997; Valadez (CDM/GFX), February 1997; Badillo (CAFOR), February 1997; Bravo (SNEEJ), February 1997; and Feigen (AFL-CIO), March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

community movements are not merely a Mexican affair. López[858] (MEBAC) and Badillo[859] (CAFOR) comment that the only practical difference between corruption in Mexico and the U.S. is that it costs more in the U.S. But on both sides of the border. the regional atmosphere of distrust generates extremely high degrees of resentment and suspicion, causing any coalitional tensions among movements to degenerate easily into accusatory diatribes. As these differences become interpreted as essential ideological or identity conflicts, the possibilities for disunity escalate. Once nation-, class-, gender-, or race-based discourses are inserted into this potentially tension-filled setting, the possibilities for total disunity become apparent. Clearly, this confirms certain resource mobilization analyses of borderland organizations insofar as resources are central to the formation of broad based movements and their possibilities for structural political or economic changes. But, beyond any reductionist economism, identity and resource considerations seem to intermingle in an overdetermined and sometimes contradictory web of relationships, making solidarity efforts as complex to execute as they are simple to envision.

Aside from facilitating greater coalitional ties and a bulwark against repression, greater financial resources would also enable the expansion of strategic considerations. First, Feigen (AFL-CIO) has argued that one strategic weakness of local borderland movement groups has been the almost exclusive emphasis on

[858] Interview, February 1997.
[859] Interview, February 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

educational campaigns and discussion fora, rather than action strategies.[860] Despite the fact that the critical pedagogy of these movements has been laudable and successful in raising consciousness of transnational social problems, the focus on education has reduced an emphasis on direct political strategies of transformation, such as lobbying, legal reform, protest actions, strikes, and party building. Although there are strategic reasons not to pursue these political actions – such as the compromises and futility of engaging state institutions, as well as the need for popular education at this rudimentary stage of coalition building – one significant reason has been the limited financial resources. Certainly, to organize at that level would require large staffs, extensive legal and lobbying assistance, media control, and massive networking for popular international support. Second, a related criticism might be that local border movements are focused more on corporate and state accountability to broad labor and environmental standards, rather than more programmatic or ideological challenges to capitalist political economy in North America. Of course, at such a nascent stage of coalition building ideological programs risk excluding needed supporters, and there is no clear sense of unity against capitalism per se. But if border organizations were to participate in anti-capitalist parties and popular movements, it certainly would require extensive resources to build popular coalitions around new transnational alternatives and resist extensive repressive tactics by existing power structures. A third strategic limitation of border movements may be that their

[860] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

endeavors to promote corporate accountability, even if successful, may raise the costs of maquila operations beyond tolerable levels for investors, leaving fronterizos without needed jobs. To this, border movements have responded it is necessary to organize in every place investors might choose to relocate so as to promote universal standards and reduce the exploitation caused by uneven spatial development. However, extensive financial resources are required to make this transnational coalition building possible. The last criticism of border movements has been issued by unionists like Feigen[861] who have argued that their activism to date has been reactive rather than proactive, responding to various crises but failing to organize workers in such a way that may prevent crises from emerging. As in the case of the other criticisms above, many local community based movements on the border are not unaware of the problem, but nonetheless are inhibited from long-term solutions by limited resources. Therefore, on a variety of strategic fronts, border environmental and labor movements could be strengthened with greater monetary assistance. But ultimately, it must not be forgotten that this resource poverty and its many consequences are the hegemonic effects of general regional and Mexican dependencies on external capital.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, limitations in resources, repressive corporate and government tactics, strategies of incorporation, and various conflicts or exclusions of identity

---

[861] Interview, March 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

politics have constituted the major disruptions of the transformations for which border movement organizations have struggled. Despite the fascinating articulations of new and old social movements, radically democratic visions of development, and wide ranging visions of popular coalition building, these severe difficulties have prevented greater successes. Indeed, these problems reveal the entrenched and powerful hegemonic character of neoliberal development models in North America, and the extent to which vested interests are willing to defend a new regional political economy. They also reveal the strong alliances on which neoliberalism depends, between dependent and authoritarian states, imperial corporations, and incorporated movement organizations. Thus, although this imposing alliance constrains resistance in the borderlands, it also issues a much needed warning to social movement interests throughout the continent that old paradigms of opposition are no longer possible, much less effective. And if we are to resist a resurgent imperialistic assault on working people and natural conditions of life in the Americas, we all will have to cross the borders that define current notions of politics and identity.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter 6:
Conclusions – Towards a Radical Transnational Democracy

Overview

Now that there has been a more extensive discussion of the subaltern worldviews, strategic considerations, and hegemonic dynamics of borderland labor and environmental justice movements, a critical overview may be possible by returning to the research questions that motivated this study. In the midst of this overview, it may be helpful to discuss some of the practical and theoretical lessons that may be drawn from each of the preceding chapters. At the end of this review, it will be necessary to address those unresolved questions and lingering inquiries that may enhance future research on these topics. In fact, it is essential to make the qualification that this study is by no means total, complete, or concluded, since the research questions may be investigated in greater detail and since the context of the borderlands is in constant transformation. Yet, despite ongoing investigation into these matters, it is possible to draw some conclusive lessons from the research. Clearly, this project has provided insight into the possibilities and limitations of borderland movement organizations, indicating, among other things, the emergence of a radically democratic and coalitional left politics in North America. Indeed, despite the many external and internal prohibitions on movement successes, border organizations represent a powerful articulation of old and new movement forms and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

an expanding, potentially revolutionary basis for transnational opposition to the colonizing regime of neoliberalism. Thus, after there has been a general overview and a discussion of issues requiring further inquiry, it will be helpful to offer some concluding remarks regarding the many border crossings of these movements.

By way of overview, it may be best to address each original research question in turn. Chapter Three provides a response to the first question – what analyses and platforms do borderland movement organizations and their representatives have regarding regional development? Beginning with the archetypal case of Maclovio Rojas, the borderland zone of export processing was revealed to be a place that is destructive to the land and labor of Mexican working communities, both along the border and throughout Mexico. The U.S./Mexican border is indeed a zone of experimentation – a "laboratory" – for neoliberal development, and a prized arena for Mexico's modernizing aspirations. However, as testimonies, cases, and interview responses reveal, the border is also a place on the margins where transgressions of just labor and environmental standards are commonplace. Indeed, as the border facilitates North American insertion into a more competitive and deregulated economy, the possibilities for the externalization of capital costs become a primary attraction for maquiladora investments, causing the region to suffer extensive economic and environmental devastation. Despite high employment and Mexico's largest middle class, the people of the region cite the common workplace experiences of intensive exploitation, exhaustion, alienation, and physically deforming work. In the faces and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

words of many fronterizos, everyday life on the border possesses an existentially absurd character, with a profound hopelessness and an anguished desperation deriving from the stark contradictions between modernizing fantasies of prosperity and the lived realities of immiseration. The near utopian neoliberal rhetoric of workers' rights, enforced labor standards, and sustainable wages in a newly imported Fordism has been jettisoned in favor of deregulated profiteering, state sponsored violence, and an environmental meltdown. Further, much of this super-exploitation of labor has been predicated upon the control of women's bodies in the labor process and a gendered division of labor more generally that threatens to extend transnational inequities and dependencies. Thus, the degrading, humiliating, and sexually terrorizing workplace women face in the maquilas is linked to the systematic devaluation of women's work and the (super)exploitation of Mexican people. And clearly, one of the more injurious and lasting impacts of neoliberal development in the region has been the environmental consequences of toxic colonialism and unchecked industrialization, causing urban toxification, workplace health and safety hazards, birth defects, deaths, and the irreparable destruction of the region's wilderness. Although regional boosters of industrialization regard such narratives of destruction as similar to the paranoid myths of the Chupacabra, border activists seem to agree that the primary vampirish threat to life on the border has been a neoliberal model of development.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For many in the borderlands, including the most active and coalitional of movement activists, these dilemmas and the repressive violation of human rights standards by state-corporate alliances amount to a rearticulation of imperialism. This was evident most poignantly in Pelayo's (CAFOR) commentary regarding Mexico's new Porfiriato, the repressive hegemony of Mexican political parties, and the uninhibited expropriation of local residents' land and labor. Except now, rather than being fully organized by a foreign nation-state and agricultural production in the colony, a "mafia" of transnational corporations and clientelistic state institutions converge to create new industrial enclave colonies. Indeed, even the redistributive and nationalist goals of the Mexican revolution have been twisted and betrayed by a government that has become a junior partner in the continental rule of foreign capital. Like prior colonies, the current regional examples are enclave economies through which only continued dependencies – regional and national – have resulted. and in the brutal competitive logic of a more mobile global capital, they threaten to expand throughout the continent. Those interviewed agreed with the general conclusions of Arturo Escobar who has indicted modernization and its contemporary resurgence as a reinvocation of imperialist discourse, yielding vicious cycles of impoverishment, labor exploitation, and environmental destruction in the pursuit of unfettered capitalist control of the global economy. Thus, whether it is the basic articulation of local day-to-day experiences of communities facing neoliberal industrialization or the more global analytical critiques of a new imperialism, regional movement organizations are

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

developing an expansive subaltern critique of neoliberal models. But accompanying this critique are growing expectations for an alternative, more radically democratic globalization.

These ends may be understood more clearly by first discussing the means by which these movements organize. Indeed, the answers found to the second research question – what are the basic organizational characteristics of borderland movement groups? – revealed a common structure. Here, there are on average two to three paid staff and several volunteer organizers who work to define strategic agendas in coalition with affiliated neighborhood communities and with other border movement organizations. Throughout Chapter Four organizers expressed radically democratic ethics of strategizing and mobilization in which the participation of Mexican fronterizo communities is regarded as a primary condition for movement successes. Much like the Zapatistas, their model is one of grassroots democracy in which communities in need use the organizations for their own ends, rather than instrumental models in which organizers use communities to serve outside interests. Indeed, the strategic goal of a democratic public space is identical to the means of popular participation. Here, there is a common critique of more bureaucratic, professionalized, and hierarchical social movement models not only as an unprincipled evasion of democratic process, but also as strategically contradictory and ineffective since they generate discord and do not attend to local knowledge. These "new social movement" tendencies suggest a partial answer to the third research

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

question regarding whether borderland organizations emulate "new" or "old" social movement forms, but this will be answered at greater length below. But as a beginning to this discussion, it is necessary to discuss more fully how this small and participatory organizational form has engaged in proactive political strategies for social change in the borderlands.

Research question four – what are the strategies for alternative development and social justice that border organizations regard as most important, effective, or relevant? – is answered in Chapter Four. First, because academic research can be problematic and because there are few official sources of documentation of borderland dilemmas, border organizations find that independent research and educational campaigns are primary. This is predicated upon a populist respect for local knowledge and a desire to represent marginalized voices, as well as a measured suspicion of the scientific and technical advice of experts. But the empowerment provided by these research efforts, including testimonial volumes, documentary videos, and survey research, may be disseminated only through a democratic pedagogy in which communities and organizers collaborate to develop neighborhood centers, transnational ties of solidarity, and common discourses of critique and entitlement. For borderland organizations, it is clear that these strategies of research and education are not only most appropriate for this early stage of cross-border organizing against neoliberalism but also most effective, since a participatory and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

broad-based mobilization is required to contend with the concerted political and economic apparatuses of neoliberal development.

As a second strategy, and in response to the fifth research question regarding the character of transnational and trans-issue coalition building, Chapter Four discusses the ways in which border movements have thought locally but acted globally by forming widely popular coalitions for change. Border environmental justice and labor support movements have seen transnational networking to be strategically necessary to pressure for government regulatory enforcement and fair corporate standards throughout the continent, if not the world. Here, regional support organizations act as intermediaries between national unions, environmental organizations, and local communities so as to bring greater resources and assistance to bear on borderland problems. However, equally important for long-term resistance to neoliberalism is the facilitation of grassroots worker-to-worker ties of solidarity in which the legacies of nationalisms, imperial consciousness, and the politics of resentment and cynicism can be overcome. As this is facilitated by the common interests of Mexican immigrant communities on both sides of the border, and distinctly mestiza ideals of community-based dialogue across differences, the binational character of the border seems to be expanding, however slowly, throughout North American social movements. Indeed, it is possible to see the emergence of a transnational citizenship in which working people begin to see their counterparts across the border as fellow citizens of North America, with common histories and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

responsibilities of mutual support. Further, this coalitional ethos has shown an ability, however limited at present, to bring together members of different movement interests – such as feminists, environmentalists, and unionists – and thereby expand the critical analyses and resistive power of each. Through extensive efforts at coalition building, trans-national or trans-issue conflicts are transformed into strategic ties of solidarity and a more intersectional consciousness of the social problems of the continent.

As a third strategy, and as an answer to the sixth research question, Chapter Four explored border organizations' more direct methods of opposition to state and corporate institutions. One essential qualification is that environmental organizations have found state institutions more amenable to their interests than have labor organizations, simply because their frequently more technical and professionalized constituents have had affinities with government aid programs, because they have not been incorporated into repressive state endeavors to the degree that labor organizations have, and because environmental health has been a target of reform that free traders may tout as a justification of neoliberal restructuring. Nonetheless, both community-based environmental and labor organizations have recognized that the state is an invaluable basis for development reforms, despite decreasing sovereignty in the face of transnational capital or international political agreements, and despite repressive opposition to left movements in North America. More specifically, strategies for extending state capacities have included pressuring for enforcement of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

current law through litigation, expanding regulatory codes as in the case of right-to-know legislation, and establishing normative frameworks within border political culture that could become the basis for new transnational labor and environmental standards. The latter, derived from fair trade proposals and the models of the ILO and the UN Declaration of Human Rights, would entail specific mandates restricting foreign ownership of industry, securing labor's right to organize, and granting workers greater abilities to move across borders as easily as capital, as well as regulating toxic releases, workplace health and safety standards, urban growth rates, and wage levels. Further, the institutions formed through NAFTA such as the BECC and the NADBank have been utilized for the development of borderland infrastructure, although their capacities for greater mitigation of toxic colonialism or compensation to communities harmed by free trade have been decidedly limited. Ultimately, through these nascent but expanding strategies, border movement organizations have endeavored to establish precedents for transnational governance structures. The normative goal of these strategies appears to be state institutions that are beholden to all citizens of North America and that work to promote cross-border equality through international agreements for redistributing wealth, labor and environmental standards, and democratic political participation. However, border movement organizations have been reticent to engage in electoral politics or the extensive promotion of state-based ideologies for change. In part this is because there is great cynicism in Mexico and the U.S. given the hegemonic capacities of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

electoral process to incorporate movements with little positive change. Also, these organizations possess little tolerance for historically exclusionary state ideologies, particularly modernizationist or revolutionary nationalisms and sectarian communisms. Therefore, since the opportunities for open spaces of democratic and grassroots dialogue about alternatives are limited without greater organizing, many activists are hesitant to posit programmatic agendas. Yet, borderland strategies for corporate and state responsibility to working people, as well as the many fair trade reforms presented as speculative alternatives to neoliberalism, suggest that border organizations have strong affinities to a social democratic and populist vision of change. Indeed, with very few resources these organizations are struggling for what may be termed a radically democratic and anti-imperial transnational order, a vision discussed at greater length below.

Although there are hopes that the facilitation of transnational democratic governance will be successful, most interviewed state that litigation and standards of conduct will not yield much change without simultaneous action strategies which directly pressure transnational capital. Even though protests, stock divestment initiatives, and media campaigns are important, the primary direct strategy has been for labor support groups along the border to mediate transnational unionization, by making tripartite ties between 1) worker communities struggling for independent representation in the maquiladoras, 2) un-official Mexican unions such as the FAT, and 3) U.S. union groups in the same industry, especially those having contracts with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the corporations in question. Without this valuable mediation – performed through grassroots education and worker-to-worker solidarity efforts – the more direct and broad-based strategies of transnational unionization would not be possible. Only a culture of trust, cross-cultural dialogue, and mutual identification fostered over time can overcome the legacies of suspicion and cynicism caused by corrupt and repressive imperial regimes in the borderlands. Another benefit of this local/global facilitation has been that cross-border labor support organizations like the SCMW and the CFO have enabled rank-and-file unionists to be involved in transnational assistance efforts, thus promoting more democratic forms of unionism in both Mexico and the U.S. Further, by integrating community-based experiences of neoliberal development with unions, environmental organizations, and feminists throughout North America, these support groups have allowed for a social movement form of unionism – not a corporate or state unionism – that broadens the base and deepens the effectiveness of transnational efforts. Likewise, for the environmental movements of the border, there has been a growing concern for urban environments and community-based struggles for sustainability. In sum, most agree that both state institutions and transnational corporations must be targets of transformation, especially in a neoliberal model where capital-state relations are extensive and powerful.

Indeed, in response to research question seven – what hegemonic constraints have border movements faced? – Chapter Five provides an answer. Beginning with the illustrative case of Han Young workers struggling for independent unionization, it

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

is clear that the many successes and contributions of local labor and environmental justice organizations are tempered by political-economic repression and coalitional challenges. Indeed, cross-border dialogue and educational campaigns have been the primary successes of borderland movements, since their more direct attempts at political transformation through litigation and unionization often have been thwarted by repressive counter-mobilizations. Transnationals have organized into maquila associations and foundations that have been notorious for promoting ideological narratives of border development that have passed through the looking glass. Here, everything appears as a camera obscura, where imperialist discourses of modernization, with all of their contradictions, are in full effect. Corporate interests appear benevolent and sustainable, the invisible hand of neoliberal deregulation seems to be essential for generalized prosperity, and local citizens along with Mexican mismanagement are presented as the reasons for social and environmental crises in the borderlands. National sovereignty is cited as a reason for limited U.S. political intervention in neoliberal abuses, while transnationals have worked to thoroughly downsize the resources and independence of Mexican government. Profitability, high wages, and sustainability are regarded as fully compatible, while corporate entities fight in the courts, in electoral arenas, and in policy circles to freeze wages, bust unions, externalize environmental costs, and expatriate Mexican labor value. In addition to the proliferation of these ideologies, transnationals on the border

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

often hire union busting consultants and employ tactics of firing, harassment, sexual abuse, and intimidation against workers.

These corporate endeavors have been supported thoroughly by Mexican state institutions under the leadership of both the PAN and the PRI, which have zealously defended neoliberal projects of modernization and unmitigated exploitation by foreign corporations. In this state-corporate alliance, the official unions have been the primary repressive instrument, often succeeding in all but totally demobilizing union movements in the prized maquiladora sector. But the highest levels of economic governance are complicitous with efforts to delegitimate and decertify independent union efforts, as was evident in the case of Han Young. However, if it is not outright repression, the Mexican and U.S. governments have collaborated to promote incorporation of threatening movements, particularly environmental organizations, via the sometimes compromising discourses of a market-based sustainable development. But both environmental and labor movements throughout the U.S. and Mexico have succumbed all too frequently to the twin incorporating tactics of bureaucratization and professionalization. This not only promotes tendencies towards non-democratic and incorporated organizational forms, but it has indirectly created centralized movements with propensities for factionalization and few community-based avenues for collaboration across political sectors.

An equally problematic set of issues, which are not unrelated to these repressive and incorporating counter-mobilizations, includes the identity-based

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

tensions that have short-circuited coalitional endeavors. Certainly, as discussed in Chapter Four, strategic innovations, inter-movement dialogue, and expansive social critique often emerge from conflict. Thus, no movement organization studied here seeks a closed or homogeneous form of coalition absent of conflict. Yet, the effectiveness of strategic collaboration and social solidarity is necessary when left movements face a context with few resources and intransigent opposition. Just as important is the critical realization that many socially constructed differences are hegemonic articulations which perpetuate cycles of alienation, resentment, cynicism, and ultimately greater disunity in the resistance to common oppressions. Chapter Five discusses the profound debates surrounding the politics of race, nation, and gender that, however subtly, pulse throughout borderland movement organizations. Insofar as these differences derive from long legacies of hegemonic divisiveness, these debates are in need of greater discussion and mediation if border movements are to find the necessary difference-in-unity for resisting neoliberalism. One important example of such a division is the hegemony of reactionary nationalisms – both populist and imperialist – that have emerged in a period of globalizing political and economic systems, dividing a continental working class against itself. Although nationalisms often have been a resource against imperialist intervention, and class reductionism can place other identities under erasure, the current context of border development necessitates new transnational solidarity in opposition to multiple economic imperialisms, requiring solidarity and dialogue across the borders of many

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

political differences. Surely, the broad strategies and the micropolitics of borderland organizations have been successful in cross-border solidarity campaigns, but much work is to be done to make their resistance a more popular counter-hegemonic movement.

Topics for Further Research

The previous chapters thus have provided some answers to the research questions that have driven this study. Clearly, however, not each question is answered exhaustively and all could be the subject of further investigation. Yet, there are a few especially important dimensions of this project that beg for further elaboration if there is to be a more complete understanding of borderland movement organizations. First, although this research addresses many of the dynamics between activists and community members, and many rank-and-file participants were interviewed to help understand these issues, most of those interviewed were movement organizers. This was imperative for the initial stages of research into the histories and strategic considerations of regional organizations. However, for greater community-based understandings of the popularity and effectiveness of these organizations, subsequent iterations of this project will seek a greater balance between activists and members. Indeed, this may yield both confirmations of organizational intentions and critical points of expansion that activists can consider in future strategy.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Second, one major issue that requires more exploration is that of racial identity and difference among these movement groups. As stated in Chapter Five, race and ethnicity does not receive explicit theorization by many of those interviewed, regardless of their origin or interest, but instead only indirect and subtle references through discussions of imperial consciousness, mestizo identity, and communal interests. Although the project entailed some inquiry into these issues, future interviews could engage more extensive strategies of eliciting detailed commentary on racial or ethnic dynamics, especially across borders. This is important for several reasons. First, border movements have shared important members and common histories with U.S. Latino movements over the last twenty years, particularly the UFW. Second, since many fronterizos have some indigenous ancestry and have migrated from southern Mexico, one would suspect that mestizo, indigenous, and European constituents have unique and often conflicting relations that impact border organizing. This issue would seem to have a special relevance given the recent popularity and attention the EZLN has brought to the plight of Mexico's indigenous peoples. Third, there is increasing participation of African-American unionists and environmentalists from the U.S. in cross-border coalitions, presenting interesting inter-ethnic relations that beg for greater clarification. Indeed, despite respondents commonly dismissing these inter-ethnic relations as having any special effects on border organizing, a hypothesis for future inquiry is that they indeed have an impact which is independent of class, gender, and nation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Third, many of the interviews of this research focused on gendered issues and the organizational ideals of different women organizers, including the differences discussed in Chapter Five between feminista and mujerista perspectives. However, although it is clear that different class-based, national, and religious identities are overdetermined with gender, these relationships require further investigation in context. That is, although many interviewed recognized these differences and cited specific tensions that have thwarted coalition building, it is necessary to inquire further into the personal histories of these conflicts to understand their complexities and their overall effects on border organizing. Further, although more egalitarian gender relations among border movements have empowered many women to demand equality with men in their communities and homes, there is little more than anecdotal evidence that this has occurred. Consequently, the everyday effects on gender equality are unclear and require more extensive study.

Fourth, despite the increasing Western secularization of border culture that accompanies U.S./Mexico colonial history, and although many interviewed suggest that religion plays a minimal role in organizing, it is clearly a relevant factor that has received minimal attention here. Indeed, possibly because organizers represent the primary subjects of the interviews and the coalitional goals they advocate have prohibited strong religious affiliations, the role of religion in border movements may have been downplayed. In a nation where Catholic churches are often community centers and a source of political discourse, and given the public resurgence of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

liberation theologies in southern Mexico, one would expect religion to have played a vital role in organizing. Also, because some U.S.-based border organizations like the AFSC and the CJM have limited religious affiliations – with the Quaker and Catholic churches respectively – questions of political theology and religious identity are relevant to U.S. organizers as well. Moreover, regional churches also have affiliations with official government bodies, raising obvious questions regarding the role of religion in the hegemony of neoliberalism on the border. Thus, in future versions of this research, these questions need exploration.

Lastly, there have been extremely limited affiliations between border organizations and other movement groups, the reasons for which require some exploration if the future possibilities of cross-border organizing is to be understood. For instance, local organizers from throughout the region have had more or less close ties to the PRD. These contacts are extremely few given that activists have had limited resources with which to pursue extensive relations with the PRD and because many believe the electoral realm of organizing to be corrupt and beyond reform. Also, even those who generally appreciate the PRD are skeptical because the PRD has been notoriously disinterested in community-based organizing. But clearly, if there is to be a greater understanding of the strategies community organizations may have available for the achievement of greater power, the personal histories and political possibilities of these connections need exploration.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Another limited but potentially fruitful moment of solidarity exists between some border organizers and the Mexican small business and agricultural movements. This could be fruitful because it holds the possibility of expanding maquiladora organizing to other sectors suffering under neoliberalism, forging broader coalitions and more critical analyses of North American transformation. One interesting new tie that could be developed is between border organizations and El Barzón, a growing debtors movement with connections to the highest levels of the PRD. El Barzón, in the attempt to protect small businesses and workers, has been interested in more redistributive social change, but has been wary of the almost certain withdrawals of capital from Mexico if they are successful. Because this is a significant problem for all left movements in a neoliberal order, and especially independent maquila labor organizations, the potentials for greater economic power through strategic collaboration are very interesting. Further, beyond the SIOAC affiliations at Maclovio Rojas and short consultations between borderland maquila and farm labor groups, there seem to be few connections between the agricultural and maquila industrial movements which, if unified, constitute a significant force in opposing neoliberal restructuring throughout Mexico and the continent.

Also, there are a growing number of more centrist and charitable organizations throughout the borderlands, including movements struggling for greater social services for youth, the unemployed, and the homeless. These have had limited relationships with borderland labor and environmental organizations, but the few

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

connections that do exist require further exploration if all coalitional possibilities are to be understood. Likewise, women in the informal sector, especially in the border's growing tourist industry, constitute a sizable and disenfranchised group of laborers that could represent a powerful threat to the region's economy if organized. Because many of these women live among communities which have worked with labor and environmental justice groups, their potentials for coalitional organizing need further clarification. Nevertheless, despite the many issues this project has yet to explore about borderland labor and environmental organizations and their resistance to neoliberal development, many lessons have been clear.

Crossing the Borders of a New America

One overarching theme that has been present throughout the previous chapters has been that borderland movements for labor and environmental justice have rested on more than mere geographic borders. They have existed at a point of intersection between imperium and periphery, between new and old social movements, and between Fordism and post-Fordism. They also rest at the boundaries between sustainability and destruction, between repressive homogenization and heterogeneous coalitional solidarity, and between neoliberal and radically democratic globalization. If the U.S./Mexico border and these contradictions constitute a "laboratory" for a distinctly new form of politics in the Americas, the power struggle between neoliberal development regimes and borderland movements for radical democracy may be the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

test case for more generalized hemispheric conflicts in the next century. Thus, the movements of this region present us with many lessons.

Along the border, there are many contributions to a subaltern critique of neoliberalism that expand upon the traditional schools of development thought. The primary critique of neoliberal development policy is that it grants transnational corporations greater freedom to invest in export manufacturing and externalize the social costs of regional poverty, poor housing, inadequate infrastructure, limited government programs, and environmental destruction. Further, most are quick to cite the collaboration between Mexico's dependent government institutions, U.S. foreign policy makers, and corporate representatives, not only in creating free trade regimes, but also in maintaining them through the repression or assimilation of opposition. Within the discussions of the everyday experiences of immiseration and repression, many make anti-imperialist arguments against super-exploitation and forced underdevelopment similar to those in the Marxist tradition, while evading class reductionism or purely nationalist visions of revolutionary change. Similarly, borderland critiques often touch upon dependency theory by suggesting that economic dependencies are the common result of free trade models, whether in the form of desperate workers dependent upon transnational corporations, or the more general and vicious cycle of impoverishment fueled by Mexican national dependencies on expropriating foreign capital. It is also clear to all interviewed that the region is a site of dependent development since the stark contradictions of maquiladora

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

overdevelopment and colonia underdevelopment are ubiquitous, along with class polarization and urban growth. Indeed, in the confirmation of the relevance of dependent development critiques, borderland organizations demonstrate an understanding of the hegemonic mechanisms of state-corporate alliances and the everyday means by which export enclaves under neoliberalism fail to generate wealth for a majority of the dependent population. Likewise, many border activists seem to confirm different aspects of contemporary world-systems analyses, since they recognize a growing international division of labor in which workers of export processing zones occupy a very underprivileged position in global commodity chains, with little immediate hope for improvements. Border economic conditions also signify to most fronterizo activists a new stage of the global economy in which North American capital is establishing a free trade bloc to compete in a more thoroughly globalized post-Cold War capitalism.

Beyond traditional world-systems critique in which gender is not a point of consideration, border organizers also recognize the international gendered inequalities that both subjugate women to more intensive exploitation than their male counterparts, including an all too common sexual terrorism, and polarize transnational and class discrepancies in North America. Thus, they confirm the means by which underdevelopment and gender exploitation are produced by synergistic patriarchal and capitalist institutions. Also, similar to the more poststructural development theories of Escobar, most borderland activists are quick to discuss the ways in which the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

discourses of transnational agreements, official policy statements, corporate managerial rhetoric, legal codes, and media representations of free trade constitute the social basis, if not the effects, of neoliberal regimes. Indeed, much of the reason for the attention to transnational codes of conduct, educational dialogue, and legal precedents is to transform the discursive frameworks that construct neoliberal development. And, in ways akin to Escobar, local activists link this discourse to critiques of the neo-imperialist modernization embodied in the logic of neoliberalism. Among environmental organizations there is also the recognition that this modernization has resurfaced in a form of sustainable development that is commensurate with the most recent waves of global capital expansion, to the exclusion of more social just forms of environmental advocacy. Additionally, there is a profound understanding among borderland environmental justice movements that the destruction of ecological conditions of life is a fundamental contradiction of neoliberal capital, and one overdetermined by national, racial, class, and gender differences. But above all, the greatest contribution to development thought border activists have made is to illustrate how the structures of global capital and the legacies of imperialism are not instantiated without concerted and often effective resistance. Border movements confirm in profound endeavors the agency posited by *dependistas*, regulationists, and post-development thinkers alike; and they consequently provide clear localized counter-examples to those determinist structural-historical readings of global economy present in world-systems theory. They thus demonstrate that, without

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

appreciating the dialectical ways by which popular movements impact development practice, one merely negates the constructive roles of subaltern voices, repeating the imperialist gaze of the passive and determined Third World subject. Indeed, if the current neo-modernizationist or even world-systems perspective of development are to become accountable to, or inclusive of, subaltern critique, the contributions of social movements in the opposition to neoliberalism are crucial to study.

As discussed in the Chapter One, it is no accident that various "new" social movements have emerged during the latest neoliberal phase of political and economic restructuring in the Americas. New/old distinctions in the discussion of social movement history have been riddled with problems of ahistorical analysis and the many complexities of both old and new forms; however the social history of neoliberalism has not been without transforming consequences for the left. Late twentieth-century social change in the U.S. has included shifts towards a post-Fordist economy, information technologies, postmodern culture, and a foreign policy of aggressive capitalist expansionism. Meanwhile in Latin America there has been a simultaneous and non-coincidental collapse of the socialized state, a delegitimation of modernist nationalisms, and the growth of economic liberalization via transnational capital. These changes have, of course, been facilitated by the emergence of a post-Cold War context in which state socialist politics have waned in the face of a hegemonic neoliberal regime of accumulation and its repressive New World Order, debuted in dramatic fashion in the Gulf War. Thus, in its varied forms, there has been

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

a general American tendency towards the appearance of "new" movements that are less focused on state ideology, macro-political strategy, centralized mass organizations, or essentialist analyses of social crisis. Instead, they have been organized more around the inclusion of marginalized groups, identity or micro-political claims, radically democratic civil societies, decentralized organizational forms, populist coalitional praxis, and a distinct if varied anti-imperialism.

Certainly, this general movement form has been in evidence among borderland organizations. Regional social movement groups have resisted state-based ideologies, since they recognize the limited power or interest state institutions have in challenging neoliberal development. On the margins of both nations where state oversight is restricted and transgressions against the public are commonplace, there is a general consensus among organizers that the ends of sustainable and just forms of development must be achieved via the means of popular democratic pressure. Therefore, in the construction of a movement that is relevant and empowering for local communities, it is necessary to address the wide range of problems and complexities of everyday life in the borderlands. This means there must be an ever-expanding and anti-essentialist critique of the power and consequences of neoliberal development for local communities, including analyses of the imperialist methods by which neoliberalism actively marginalizes working classes, immigrants, women, youth, and Mexicans from full political participation in North America. Further, there are developing critiques of the ways in which social and environmental crises of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

region – and indeed the hemisphere – are intertwined, giving voice to the vital conditions of existence on which all depend. Not unlike the many urban popular movements throughout Latin America and the revolutionary ideals of the Zapatistas, borderland organizations have focused on the development of new public spaces or civil societies in which local communities empower themselves to define political alternatives that protect land and labor.

Activists facilitate this through practical appeals to various identity claims and everyday experiences – such as those of women struggling for equality in the home and the workplace. These appeals to the common needs and interests of different marginalized strata demonstrate "new" means by which the micro-political ethics of inclusion and self-reflexive critique are engineering trust and effective bases of resistance across constituencies. This micro-politics of inclusion is manifest in the ongoing critical dialogue among all movement participants regarding coalitional strategy, personal commitments to ties of solidarity, and populist educational programs designed to empower and mobilize. It is also evident in the polycentric organizational structures of collaborative action networks insofar as they have developed the ability to flexibly accommodate conflict while focusing diverse interests into a strategic solidarity.

Probably most instructive about these "new" movements is that their inclusive and democratic tendencies have been intimately bound to an avoidance of reactionary movement discourses, particularly imperialist nationalisms of protectionism and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

paternalism, sectarian communism or anarchism, religious/ethnic essentialism, or paramilitary extremism. Instead, the unique border context and cross-border educational endeavors have resulted in a powerful anti-ideological critique of the imperialist practices of transnational corporations and their functionaries within state apparatuses. For border movements and their expanding coalitions there appears to be little comfort with totalizing discourses or any pure refusal of neoliberalism. Indeed, elements of traditional liberalism – primarily democratic participation and regulatory states – find rearticulation within the strategic goals of many regional organizations. Yet, the modernist contradictions of liberal democracy, namely its affinities with Western imperialism, the rise of authoritarian states, and class polarization, are summarily rejected by border activists in favor of a more egalitarian political economy. Likewise, there is a rejection of any liberal authoritarianism or representative leftist elitism in which patronizing leaders rule in the interests of the public, rather than as facilitators of a participatory democracy. The normative morality expressed in border organizations is one that advocates several changes: sustainable wages and environmental conditions, regulatory oversight and enforcement of transnationals, an egalitarian and global redistribution of wealth, fair trade standards, and popular participation at all levels of public culture. Further, a central tenet of radical democratic political reform has been the deployment of a universal human rights discourse to combat the multiple levels of authoritarian patronage that exist between U.S. and Mexican capital. This is a political model that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

has similarities to an internationalist democratic socialism, but is best defined as a radical transnational democracy given its focus on a global and dialogic civil society. That is, borderland movement visions at this stage of organizing primarily emphasize an inclusive pluralist epistemology and a populist ethic of empowerment, while only secondarily advocating specific visions of social democratic change. Although strategically border movements are not in a position to challenge the structure of capitalism in North America, many border activists may agree with the words of Laclau and Mouffe: "every project for radical democracy implies a socialist dimension, as it is necessary to put an end to capitalist relations of production, which are at the root of numerous relations of subordination; but socialism is *one* of the components of a project for radical democracy, not vice versa."[862] This is because the more inclusive and participatory principles of radical democracy form a broader and more popular basis for social change. In sum, borderland organizations reveal both "new" tendencies towards radically democratic, transnational, and multicultural forms of development, while remaining committed to "old" class- and state-based visions for the empowerment of working people – resulting in a uniquely fertile politics of opposition to the overdetermined oppressions of neoliberalism.

This is most evident in the trans-issue dialogues and strategic coalitions that, however constrained and nascent, are struggling to overcome class reductionism, single-issue essentialisms, and compromised liberal reformism. Clearly, this

---

[862] 1985: 178.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

coalitional praxis of articulating multiple social movements has been obvious in the work of the two most prominent forms of border organizing – labor and environmental – and when taken together these represent an exponential growth in the inclusiveness and power of left movements. First, new social movement and community-based forms of union organizing on the border are integrating popular visions of gendered and ethnic equality into labor movements. Further, they are facilitating the development of a critique of imperialism alongside ideals of transnational justice, enabling U.S. unionists to become more self-reflexive and critical of protectionist labor aristocracies, paternalistic left interventionism, and a spurious anti-communism. Meanwhile Mexican unionists may begin to overcome those nationalisms that can reinforce, through divisiveness, the hegemony of transnational capital. In combination, these transformations are constructing a new more democratic labor internationalism. Second, environmental justice organizations are working at the intersection of race, gender, class, and nation to define a broad socialized critique of environmental health problems. Because of this multidimensional analysis and a commitment to radically participatory forms of mobilization, regional environmental justice groups have assisted in the unique formation of a local, grassroots, yet transnational opposition to bureaucratic and professionalized environmental advocacy. Border environmental organizations thus have been in an opportune position to merge community-based concerns for social justice with the traditionally internationalist tendencies of ecological movements.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

When these already coalitional movement efforts of labor and environment come together to discuss common dilemmas and strategic possibilities for collaboration, they represent an even greater potential for broad-based and effective transformation of regional development. Indeed, borderland community-based organizing has been the primary forum for continuing the powerful coalition of left movements – women, immigrant, labor, human rights, religious – that were drawn together in opposition to NAFTA. These broader bases of economic and environmental criticism have greater potential to offer more proactive and complete alternative models for development, addressing new realms of economic policy such as sectoral balance and the sustainability of industrialization. Also, coalitional organizing enables new integrative forms of left populism that can articulate – in more critical and empowering ways than their right-wing counterparts – the cynicism, desperation, and resentment from which many working people suffer in a lean and mean North American economy. Thus, beyond totalizing left essentialisms and fragmented pluralisms, fronterizo organizations are translating the dynamic border context into a potentially transformative left articulation of difference-in-unity.

However, although this radically democratic character allows for coalition-building across various social movements while maintaining a strong antagonism against neoliberalism, there are three crucial cautions to be issued about this model. First, for coalitions to grow and remain effective, it is important not to conflate integrative critiques of power with essentialist analyses that work to exclude, since

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

these broad frameworks help movements to avoid the very dis-articulation that left fronterizos have found problematic. Moreover, despite the prudence of borderland organizations in avoiding programmatic long-term strategies and closed ideologies at such an early stage of organizing, a lack of consensus-building around thoroughly articulated visions for transnational change may make it difficult for many fronterizos to risk their jobs and lives by participating. Second, it is imperative to remain vigilant in the struggle for radically democratic visions of transnational redistributive justice, ecological sustainability, and decentralized public participation, since it is easy for state and corporate entities to appropriate the discourse of democracy without its more radical components. The rhetorics of flexible decentralization, environmental sustainability, local participation, and even revolutionary change have been incorporated into modernization agendas by national governments and capital. Thus, retaining a focus on social justice in the ever changing and limiting hegemonies of neo-liberalism is difficult, but it is crucial for long-term success. Third, a more inclusive and slow approach to radically democratic solidarity building has the potential to devolve into mere fora for discussion and debate, rather than action-oriented agendas for social change. Together, these qualifications are important to consider, along with the hegemonies of repression, incorporation, and coalitional disunity discussed in Chapter Five, as demonstrations that borderland movements have a long way to go before the currently contingent and strategic alliances achieve greater political force. Nonetheless, border movements have succeeded in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

establishing and enforcing regulatory law, organizing and gaining certification for independent unions, and creating a broad culture of opposition to neoliberal oppression. They therefore have demonstrated a potential to change the face of social movements in North America.

This is so, not merely because there exists a radically democratic articulation of new and old movement forms, or coalitional openness, but also because these organizations recognize the ever more extensive interpenetration of the local and the global, working towards a more participatory vision of global citizenship. As argued in Chapter One, the current period is one with increasing clientelistic roles for national governments and no concurrent growth of transnational apparatuses for democratically regulating global capital. Therefore, the efforts of transnational coalitions among local communities, particularly in those hot zones of globalization and neoliberalism like the border, represent unique and guiding influences for all peoples suffering from economic and environmental injustice. Indeed, border movements have been both immanently local and increasingly global in their coalition building, enabling the formation of flexibly strategic endeavors to pressure capital and states towards a rollback of neoliberal development and a redistributive transnationalism. Here, the term "community" is of particular importance for borderland movement organizations, as it signifies local neighborhoods and the valuable cultural traditions fronterizos hold dear, yet also denotes an expanding circle

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of working people throughout the continent and globe who experience similar dilemmas under an imperial neoliberal order.

By helping to create an emergent global civil society in which working people discuss differences and commonalties in the search for collaborative solutions, they are slowly but surely defining a radical global citizenship. If citizenship may be understood not as an identification with a particular nation-state, but as the collective responsibilities and public accountability one experiences with fellow members of a society; and if national social conditions under neoliberalism are undergoing some globalization, then we can expect that citizenship is becoming more global as well. Indeed, global media, communications technologies, inter-state political fora, transnational NGOs, and of course transnational corporations are constructing the possibility for normative, economic, and political systems in which we all are common subjects (objects?). However, social movement organizations along the U.S./Mexico border are helping to define a global citizenship that possesses subaltern and resistive norms of radical democracy, economic justice, and environmental health. Through increased cross-border dialogue and strategic campaigns of solidarity, these movement groups are contributing to a growing oppositional consciousness against new geographic and corporate versions of imperial dependency, authoritarian governance, and forced underdevelopment. Thus, in a context of limited structural opportunities for transformation, they not only struggle to make the global local by pressuring for the regional accountability of transnationals, but they also

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

work to make the local global by promoting trans-local coalitions in the name of a globalization from below. As this discourse of opposition is articulated in more developed and critical ways, the possibilities increase for realizing a radical transnational democracy that can cross all borders.

Environmental and labor organizations on the U.S./Mexico border represent an emergent and potentially transformative consciousness of resistance to the latest phase of imperialism in the Americas. In a region that has become the front line of a new neoliberal order for the western hemisphere, if not the world, the border – to borrow a phrase from the Chicano movement – may indeed cross us all. As the American Dream of capitalist modernization colonizes and transforms all of North America, the nightmares of betrayed revolutions, moribund democracy, and an absurd underdevelopment threaten to destroy the basis and substance of life. The open wound of the border reveals in a dramatic fashion the thoroughly transnational character of these nightmares, in which local and national government officials in both countries, mobile manufacturers, and financial capital represent a chain of power that shackles working people and nature to a common exploitative machine. It is from this weary nightmare that border movements seek to waken us. They constitute a radically transnational counter-hegemony that aims to empower the many desperate and silenced workers who have become mere objects of a neoliberal experiment. Through an expansive mestiza border identity, dialogic education, and coalitional strategy, these movements have become a beacon to Americans, from North to South,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in the construction of a populist globalization in which citizens rather than neoliberal capital are transnational subjects. It is this radical transnational praxis, with its tactics of inclusion and coalition, and its vision of environmental sustainability, gender equality, and political-economic democracy that has the ability to redefine revolutionary politics for the next century.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix One: List of Acronyms

ACN	Action Canada Network
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations
AFSCBP	American Friends Service Committee, Border Project
AIFLD	American Institute for Free Labor Development
AMM	Asociación de las Maquiladoras Mexicanas
AMRC	Asian Monitor Resource Center
ANAD	Asociación Nacional de Abogados Democráticos
ART	Alliance for Responsible Trade (formerly MODTLE)
ATI	Arizona Toxics Information
BECC	Border Environmental Cooperation Commission
BEP	Border Ecology Project
CAFOR	Comité de Apoyo Fronterizo Obrera Regional, AC
CAW	Canadian Auto Workers
CDM/GFX	Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X
CEC	Commission for Environmental Cooperation
CEMAC	Comité Ecológico de Matamoros, AC
CETAF	Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos
CETLAC	Centro Taller del Labor, AC
CFO	Comité Fronterizo de Obreras
CFTSJ	Coalition for Fair Trade and Social Justice
CGT	Confederation Generale de Travail
CIPM	Comité Inter-unión del Primero de Mayo
CISPES	Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador
CITTAC	Centro de Información para Trabajadores y Trabajadóras
CJM	Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras
CNIME	Concilio Nacional de la Industria Maquiladora Exportación
COLEF	El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana
COPLADEM	Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal, Tijuana
CROC	Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreras y Campesinos
CROM	Confederación Regional de Obreras Mexicanas
CT	Congreso del Trabajo
CTC	Citizens Trade Campaign
CTM	Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos
EAIT	Equipo de Apoyo Internacional para Textileras
EcoSol	Educación y Cultura Ecológica

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ECSDTJ	Environmental Committee of the San Diego/Tijuana Region
EHC	Environmental Health Coalition, Border Health Project
EMOSA	Exportadora de Mano de Obra, SA
EOI	Export Oriented Industrialization
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista Liberación Nacional
FAT	Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
FLOC	Farm Labor Organizing Committee
FTC	Free Trade Coalition
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
IATP	Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
IBEP	Integrated Border Environmental Plan
IBWC	International Boundary and Water Commission
ICCR	Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility
IHRC	Inter-hemispheric Resource Center
ILO	International Labor Organization
ILRF	International Labor Rights Fund
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialization
JNCA	Junta Nacional de Conciliación y Arbitración
LAMAP	Los Angeles Manufacturing Areas Project
MEBAC	Movimiento Ecologista de Baja California, AC
MEXUSCAN	Mexican-U.S.-Canadian Solidarity Task Force of the UAW
NAAEC	North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation
NADBank	North American Development Bank
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAID	North American Integration and Development Center, UCLA
NAO	U.S. National Administrative Office, established under
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NILD	New International Division of Labor
NLRB	U.S. National Labor Relations Board
OCAW	Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union
OSHA	U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PAN	Partido de Acción Nacional
PFEA	Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental
PNEA	Programa Nacional de Educación Ambiental
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática
PRI	Partido de la Revolución Institucional
PRONASOL	Programa Nacional de Solidaridad
PRT	Partido Revolucionario de Trotsky

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

RMALC	Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comércio
SCMW	Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers
SEDESOL	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social
SEMARNAP	Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales, y Pesca
SEIU	Service Employees International Union
SIOAC	Sindicato Independiente de Obreras Agrícolas y de la Ciudad
SJOI	Sindicato de Jornaleros y Obreros Industriales
SNEEJ	Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice
SNOHM	Support Network for Occupational Health in the Maquiladoras
SNTE	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Educación
SNTOAC	Mexico's National Union of Farm Workers
STIMAHCS	Sindicato de Trabjadores Independiéntes de Metal, Acero y Hierro
STRM	Sindicato de Telefonistas Revolutionario Mexicano
STUNAM	Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
TDU	Teamsters for a Democratic Union
TIE	Transnationals Information Exchange
TIRN	Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network
TNC	Transnational Corporation
UAW	United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles
UDLC	Unión de Defensa Laboral Comunitária
UE	United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America
UFCW	United Food and Commercial Workers
UFW	United Farm Workers
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNITE	Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees
UNT	Unión Nacional de Trabajadores
USWA	United Steel Workers of America
USGLEP	U.S.-Guatemala Labor Education Project
USMBPF	U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation
WTO	World Trade Organization

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix Two:
Table of Interviews and Conferences

Organization	Representative	No. of Interviews
AFL-CIO	Ed Feigen	2
American Friends Service Committee, Border Project	Roberto Martínez	2
Asociación Mexicana de las Maquiladoras	Alejandro Bustamante	1
Border Ecology Project	Richard Kamp	1
	Marc Coles-Ritchie	1
Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X	Carmen Valadez	3
	Reyna Montoya	3
Casa Migrante, Tijuana	Gianni Fansaleto	1
Centro de Informacion para Trabajadores y Trabajadoras	Jaime Cota	1
Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos	Carlos Marentes	1
Coalition for Fair Trade and Social Justice	Robert Lehman	1
Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras	Susan Mika	2
	Martha Ojeda	1
Colonia de las Playas de Tijuana	Marta Rocha de Díaz	1
Comité Ciudadano Pro-Restauración del Cañon del Padre y Servicios Comunitarios, AC	Maurilio Sanchez	1
Comité de Apoyo Fronterizo Obrera Regional, AC	Aurora Pelayo	1
	Eduardo Badillo	1
Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal, Tijuana	Martín de la Rosa	1
Environmental Committee of the San Diego/Tijuana Region	Kaare Kjos	3
Environmental Health Coalition, Border Health Project	César Luna	2
Fair Trade Campaign, San Francisco	Judith Barish	1
Grupo Beta, Programa Nacional de Protección a Migrantes/ Secretaria de Govemación y Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores	Alejandro Olea	1
	Juan Quintero Pulido	1
	David Aviles Ortiz	1

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

	Gerardo Romero Pollan	1
Inter-hemispheric Resource Center	Harry Browne	1
Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility	David Schilling	1
La Mujer Obrera	Angie Reynosa	1
Light Up the Border Campaign	Murial Watson	1
MEXHON, Honeywell Maquila, Tijuana	Angelica Muller	1
Movimiento Ecologista de Baja California, AC	Naachiely López	1
North American Development Bank, and the North American Integration and Development Center	Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda	1
Procuadoria de los Derechos Humanos y Protección Ciudadana de Baja California	Antonio Garcia Sanchez	1
	Minerva Najera Najera	1
Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental	Laura Durazo	1
Service Employees International Union	Frank Martín del Campo	1
	Eliseo Medina	1
Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice	José Bravo	3
Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers	Mary Tong	3
Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees	Edna Bonacich	1
U.S. Information Agency	A. Mendiolea-Rodriguez	1
U.S. Immigration Naturalization Service/Border Patrol	Marco Ramírez	1
U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation	Elsa Saxod	1

Conferences and Participants

Conference

San Diego/Tijuana Community Meetings on the U.S./Mexico Border XXI Program Draft Framework Document. July 9, 11, 15, and 19, 1996. San Diego, California, USA and Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico.

Participants

Arizona Toxics Information
Border Environmental Cooperation Commission
Comité de Planeación para el Desarrollo Municipal, Tijuana

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Educación y Cultura Ecológica
Environmental Committee of the San Diego/Tijuana Region
Environmental Health Coalition, Border Health Project
Inter-hemispheric Resource Center
International Boundary and Water Commission
Movimiento Ecologista de Baja California, AC
Proyecto Fronterizo de Educación Ambiental
SEMARNAP
Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation

Conference

Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras Semi-Annual Meeting, October 1996, Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico.

Participants

Action Canada Network
American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations
Alliance for Responsible Trade (formerly MODTLE)
Asociación Nacional de los Abogados Democráticos
Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X
Centro de Informacion para Trabajadores y Trabajadoras
Centro de Información para Trabajadores y Trabajadóras
Centro Taller del Labor, AC
Comité de Apoyo Fronterizo Obrera Regional, AC
Comité Ecológico de Matamoros, AC
Comité Fronterizo de Obreras
Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador
Educación y Cultura Ecológica
FEMAP
Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
Frente Zapatista Liberación Nacional
Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility
International Labor Rights and Education Research Fund
Los Angeles Manufacturing Areas Project
Partido de la Revolución Democrática
Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comércio
Sindicato de Telefonistas Revolutionario Mexicano
Sindicato de Trabjadores Independiéntes de Metal, Acero y Hierro
Sindicato Independiente de Obreras Agrícolas y de la Ciudad

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers
Support Network for Occupational Health in the Maquiladoras
Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network
U.S.-Guatemala Labor Education Project
Unión de Defensa Laboral Comunitária
Unión Nacional de Trabajadores
United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America

Conference

"Labor in the Global Economy: Working in the Americas." AFL-CIO and UC Berkeley Institute on Industrial Relations. November 1996. Berkeley, California, USA.

Participants

American Federation of Labor—Congress of Industrial Organizations
California Nurses Association
Canadian Auto Workers
Comité de Apoyo Fronterizo Obrera Regional, AC
Confederation Generale du Travail
Frente Auténtico del Trabajo
International Labor Organization
International Labor Rights and Education Research Fund
National Labor Committee
Service Employees International Union
Sindicato Independiente de Obreras Agrícolas y de la Ciudad
Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers
Support Network for Occupational Health in the Maquiladoras
Teamsters for a Democratic Union
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Unión Nacional de Trabajadores
Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees
United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers
United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America
United Food and Commercial Workers
United Steel Workers of America

Conference

"Sustainable Development in San Diego-Tijuana: Environmental and Social Consequences of Economic Integration." Center for U.S. Mexican Studies, UC San Diego, Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, SDSU; UC

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Consortium on Mexico and the United States. May 9, 1997, San Diego, California, USA.

Participants

Border Environmental Commerce Alliance
Border Environmental Cooperation Commission
California Coastal Conservancy
California Trade and Commerce Agency
Center for Inter-American and Border Studies, University of Texas, El Paso
City of San Diego Economic Development Services
Departamento de Obras Públicas y Servicios Públicos Municipales
Departamento de Planeación del Desarrollo Urbano y Ecología, Tijuana
Department of Geography and Latin American Studies, San Diego State Univ.
Dirección General de Ecología de Baja California
El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana
Environmental Committee of the Tijuana/San Diego Region
Graduate Shool of International Relations and Pacific Studies, UC San Diego
Grupo Galicot
Instituto Tecnológico de Tijuana
North American Integration and Development Center, UCLA
U.S. Forest Service
U.S.-Mexico Border Progress Foundation
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bibliography

Adams, W.M. 1990. *Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the Third World.* New York: Routledge.

Ahmad, Aijaz. 1992. *In Theory. Classes, Nations, Literatures.* New York: Verso.

Aitken, Rob. 1996. "Neoliberalism and Identity: Redefining State and Society in Mexico." in Aitken et al. eds. *Dismantling the Mexican State?* New York. St Martin's Press.

Alarcón, Norma. 1994. "Conjugating Subjects: The Heteroglossia of Essence and Resistance." Pp 125-38. In *An Other Tongue. Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands.* A. Arteaga ed. Durham: Duke University Press.

-----. 1996. "Conjugating Subjects in the Age of Multiculturalism." Pp 127-48. In *Mapping Multiculturalism.* A. Gordon and C. Newfield eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Alexander, Robin. 1994. "The Emergence of Cross-Border Labor Solidarity." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 28: 42-9.

American Labor Education Center. 1995. "$4 a Day, No Way! Joining Hands Across the Border." San Francisco: American Labor Education Center.

Amin, Ash.ed. 1994. *Post-Fordism: A Reader.* Cambridge: Blackwell.

Amin, Samir, Giovanni Arrighi, Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein. 1990. *Transforming the Revolution. Social Movements and the World-System.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Amin, Samir. 1976. *Unequal Development. An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism.* Translated by Brian Pearce. Sussex: Harvester Press.

-----. 1993. "Social Movements at the Periphery." Pp. 76-100. In *New Social Movements in the South. Empowering the People.* P. Wignaraja ed. New Jersey: Zed Books.

-----. 1997. *Capitalism in the Age of Globalization. Management of Contemporary Society.* Atlantic Highlands: Zed Books.

Anand, Bharat Bhushan. 1992. *Politics, Ecology, and Development: A Third World Perspective.* India: Vinod Publishers and Distributors.

Anderson, Benedict. 1994. "Imagined Communities." Pp. 89-95. In *Nationalism.* J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith eds. New York: Oxford University Press.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza.* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

-----. 1990. "La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness." Pp. 377-89. In *Making Face, Making Soul. Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color.* G. Anzaldúa ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Apter, David E. 1987. *Rethinking Development. Modernization, Dependency, and Postmodern Politics*. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.
Archibugi, F. and P. Nijkamp. eds. 1989. *Economy and Ecology: Towards Sustainable Development*. Norwell, MA: Klumer Academic Publishers.
Armbruster, Ralph. 1995. "Cross-National Labor Organizing Strategies." *Critical Sociology* 21(2):75-89.
Aronowitz, Stanley and Henry A. Giroux. 1985. *Education Under Siege. The Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Debate Over Schooling*. New York: Bergin and Garvey.
Aronowitz, Stanley. 1992. *False Promises. The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness*. Durham: Duke University Press.
-----. 1993. "The Situation of the Left in the United States." *Socialist Review* 3: 5-80.
Arrighi, Giovanni. 1994. *The Long Twentieth Century*. New York: Verso.
Arteaga, Alfred. 1994. "Introduction: The Here, the Now." Pp 1-8. In *An Other Tongue. Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*. A. Arteaga ed. Durham: Duke University Press.
Bacon, David. 1995a. "After NAFTA." *Environmental Action Magazine*. 27 (3): 33.
-----. 1995b. "Cogs and Effect: The Betrayal of Mexican Workers and How It's Fueling Immigration to the U.S." *LA Village View*. 9 (May 26-June 1)
-----. 1996. "Laboring to Cross the NAFTA Divide." *Nation*. 261 (16): 572-4.
Badillo, Eduardo. 1996. CAFOR presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Bandy, Joe. 1996. "Managing the Other of Nature: Sustainability, Spectacle, and Global Regimes of Capital in Ecotourism." *Public Culture*. 8 (3): 539-66.
-----. 1997. "Reterritorializing Borders Transnational Environmental Justice Movements on the U.S.-Mexico Border." *Race, Gender, and Class*. 5 (1): 80-103.
Banks, Andy. 1995. "Privatization Bites." *Labor Research Review*. 23 (Spring/Summer): 77-88.
Barrera, Eduardo. 1996. "The U.S.—Mexico Border as Post-NAFTA Mexico." Pp. 187-220. In *Mass Media and Free Trade. NAFTA and the Cultural Industries*. E.G. McAnany and K.T. Wilkinson eds. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Barry, Tom and Deb Preusch. 1990. *AIFLD in Central America. Agents as Organizers*. Albuquerque: The Interhemispheric Resource Center.
Barry, Tom and Beth Sims. 1994. *The Challenge of Cross-Border Environmentalism. The U.S.-Mexico Case*. Albuquerque: Resource Center Press.
Barry, Tom, Harry Browne and Beth Sims. 1994. *The Great Divide. The Challenge of U.S.-Mexico Relations in the 1990s*. New York: Grove Press.
Becerra, Laura and Constantino Casasbuenas. 1997. "Break-in at Equipo Pueblo's Offices." Posting to MEXPAZ listserv. solidarity@mixcoac.uia.mx. June.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bendiner, Burton. 1987. *International Labour Affairs. The World Trade Unions and the Multinational Companies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Benería, Lourdes. 1989. "Gender and the Global Economy." Pp. 241-258. In *Instability and Change in the World Economy*. A. MacEwan and W. K. Tabb eds. New York: Monthly Review.

Benjamin, Medea. 1995. "Interview: Subcomandante Marcos." Pp. 57-70. In *First World Ha Ha Ha! The Zapatista Challenge*. E. Katzenberger ed. San Francisco: City Lights.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1990. *Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge.

Blomström, Magnus and Björn Hettne. 1984. *Development Theory in Transition. The Dependency Debate and Beyond: Third World Responses*. London: Zed Books.

Blumberg, Rae Lesser, Cathy A. Rakowski, Irene Tinker, and Michael Monteón. eds. 1995. *EnGENDERing Wealth and Well-Being. Empowerment for Global Change*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Bognanno, Mario F. and Morris M. Kleiner. 1992. "Introduction: Labor Market Institutions and the Future Role of Unions." Pp. 1-12. In *Labor Market Institutions and the Future Role of Unions*. M.F. Bognanno and M.M. Kleiner. eds. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Border Campaign. 1993. "The Texas Department of Health Study of Anencephaly (Or, How To Take a Long Time and NOT Find the Problem)" Article #2, in *The Issue is Health. Toxic Samplings, Environmental Conditions and Health Concerns along the U.S./Mexico Border*. Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras ed. San Antonio: CJM.

Bose, Christine E. and Edna Acosta-Belén. 1995. "Introduction." Pp. 1-10. In *Women in the Latin American Development Process*. C.E. Bose and E. Acosta-Belén eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Boserup, Ester. 1970. *Women's Role in Economic Development*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Boulding, Elise. 1991. "The Old and New Transnationalism: An Evolutionary Perspective." *Human Relations* 44 (8): 789-805.

Bowdish, Jean. 1995. "Sexual Harassment at Maquiladora." *Migration News*.

Brecher, Jeremy and Tim Costello. 1994. *Global Village or Global Pillage: Economic Reconstruction from the Bottom Up*. Boston: South End Press.

Brokenshaw, David W., D.M. Warren, and Oswald Werner. 1980. *Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Development*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Brown, Garreth. 1996. SNOHM presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Browne, Harry. 1996. "BECC Backs Factory Outlet, Dodges Key Questions." *BorderLines*. 4 (11). December.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

-----. 1997. "BECC Certification of Juárez Treatment Plants Sparks Mixed Reaction." *BorderLines* 5 (10). November.

Bruhn, Kathleen. 1996. "Social Spending and Political Support. The "Lessons" of the National Solidarity Program in Mexico." *Comparative Politics* 28 (2): 151-78.

-----. 1997. "The Seven Month Itch: Neoliberal Politics, Popular Movements and the Left in Mexico." Pp. 144-69. In *The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America: Rethinking Participation and Representation*. D. Chalmers et al eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryant, Bunyan and Paul Mohai. Eds. 1992. *Race and the Injustice of Environmental Hazards*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Bullard, Robert. 1993. "Anatomy of Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement." Pp. 15-36. In *Confronting Environmental Racism. Voices from the Grassroots*. R. Bullard ed. Boston: South End Press.

Bunch, Charlotte and Roxanna Carrillo 1990. "Feminist Perspectives on Women in Development." Pp. 70-82. In *Persistent Inequalities. Women and World Development*. I. Tinker ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bunin, Lisa. 1996. "Greenpeace: Identity Construction and Strategy Development." Presentation. *Globalization and Collective Action: Strategies and Prospects for Oppositional Politics*. International Sociological Association. University of California, Santa Cruz. May 18, 1996

Burgoon, Brian. 1995. "NAFTA Thoughts. Evaluating Labor's Fair Trade Strategy." *Dollars and Sense*. September/October: 10-13.

Byrne, Carol. 1993. "What is killing these babies?" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. March 2.

Calderón, Fernando, Alejandro Piscitelli, and José Luis Reyna. 1992. "Social Movements: Actors, Theories, Expetations." Pp. 19-36. In *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. A. Escobar and S. E. Alvarez eds. Boulder: Westview Press.

Calderón, Fernando. 1993. "Latin American Identity and Mixed Temporalities; or, How to Be Postmodern and Indian at the Same Time." *Boundary 2. The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*. 20: 55-64.

Calvo, Dana. 1997. "Tijuana Workers Win Labor Battle." Associated Press. December 17, 1997.

Canclini, Néstor García. 1995. *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Translated by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. López. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Cantor, Daniel and Juliet Schor. 1987. *Tunnel Vision: Labor, the World Economy, and Central America*. Boston: South End Press.

Cárdenas, Cuauhtémoc. 1992. "Continental Development and Trade Initiative." Pp. 95-9. In *Trading Freedom. How Free Trade Affects Our Lives, Work and*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Environment. J. Cavanagh et al. eds. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
Cardoso, Fernando H. and Enzo Faletto. 1979. *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Carley, Michael and Ian Christie. 1993. *Managing Sustainable Development*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Casa de la Mujer/Grupo Factor X. 1996. CDM/GFX Pamphlet. Tijuana: CDM/GFX.
Castañeda, Jorge G. 1995. *The Mexican Shock. Its Meaning for the United States*. New York: New Press.
Castells, Manuel and Emma Kiselyova. 1996. "Insurgents Against the New Global Order: A Comparative Analysis of Chiapas, American Militias, and Aum Shinrikio." Presentation. *Globalization and Collective Action*. International Sociological Association. University of California, Santa Cruz. May 19, 1996.
Castells, Manuel. 1983. *The City and the Grassroots. A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Cavanagh, John, John Gershman, Karen Baker and Gretchen Helmke. Eds. 1992. *Trading Freedom. How Free Trade Affects Our Lives, Work and Environment*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
Centeno, Miguel Ángel. 1994. *Democracy Within Reason. Technocratic Revolution in Mexico*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
Chalmers, Douglas A., Carlos M. Vilas, Katherine Hite, Scott B. Martin, Kerianne Piester, and Monique Segarra. Eds. 1997. *The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America. Rethinking Participation and Representation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Charlton, Sue Ellen M. 1984. *Women in Third World Development*. Boulder: Westview Press.
Chase-Dunn, C. 1989. *Global Formation: Structures of the World Economy*. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell.
Chase-Dunn, Christopher and Thomas D. Hall. 1997. *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems*. Boulder: Westview.
Chilcote, Ronald H. 1990. "Post-Marxism. The Retreat from Class in Latin America." *Latin American Perspectives* 17 (2): 3-24.
Chinchilla, Norma Stoltz. 1992. "Marxism, Feminism, and the Struggle for Democracy in Latin America." Pp. 37-51. In *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. A. Escobar and S. E. Alvarez eds. Boulder: Westview Press.
Chomsky, Noam. 1996. *Class Warfare. Interviews with David Barsamian*. Monroe: Common Courage Press.
Clifford, Frank and Mary Beth Sheridan. 1997. "Borderline Efforts on Pollution Three Years after the Passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement." *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles. P. A1

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Clinton, Bill. 1994. "Remarks by the President on the Eve of the G-7 Summit." Washington, DC: U.S. White House.

Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras. 1993a. *The Human Face of Work. Human Rights, Democracy and Working Conditions in Mexico.* San Antonio: CJM.

-----. 1993b. *The Issue is Health. Toxic Samplings, Environmental Conditions and Health Concerns along the U.S./Mexico Border.* San Antonio: CJM

-----. 1994. *Annual Report.* San Antonio: CJM.

-----. 1996. *Purchasing Power Fact Sheet.* San Antonio: CJM.

Cockroft, James D. 1982. "Mexican Migration, Crisis, and the Internationalization of Labor Struggle." Pp. 48-61. In *The New Nomads: From Immigrant Labor to Transnational Working Class.* M. Dixon and S. Jonas. eds. Synthesis Publications.

Comacho, Daniel. 1993. "Latin America: A Society in Motion." Pp. 36-58. In *New Social Movements in the South. Empowering the People.* P. Wignaraja ed. New Jersey: Zed Books.

Comelo, Anibel. 1997. Electronic mail memorandum to border activists, "Background of Hyundai struggle." December 16.

Comité Ecológico de Matamoros, AC. 1996. CEMAC presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Compa, Lance. 1995. "...And the Twain Shall Meet? A North-South controversy over Labor Rights and Trade." *Labor Research Review.* 23 (Spring/Summer): 51-68.

Contréras, Ramon. 1996. EMOSA workers presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Cook, Maria Lorena, Kevin J. Middlebrook, Juan Molinar Horcasitas. Eds. 1994. *The Politics of Economic Restructuring. State-Society Relations and Regime Change in Mexico.* San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego.

Cook, Maria Lorena. 1995. "Mexican State-Labor Relations and the Political Implications of Free Trade." *Latin American Perspectives* 22 (1): 77-94.

-----. 1997. "Cross-Border Labor Solidarity." *Dissent* 44 (1): 49.

Cornelius, Wayne A., Ann L. Craig, and Jonathan Fox. Eds. 1994. *Transforming State-Society Relations in Mexico. A National Solidarity Strategy.* San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexico Studies, University of California.

Coronado, Irasema. 1997. "Whither NADBank?" *Perspectivas.* Tucson: Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona.

Cota, Jaime. 1996. CITTAC presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cowen, M.P. and R.W. Shenton. 1996. *Doctrines of Development*. New York: Routledge.
Crush, Jonathan. ed. 1995. *Power of Development*. New York: Routledge.
Dávila, Julio. 1996. "Enlightened Cities: The Urban Environment in Latin America." Pp. 196-209. In *Green Guerrillas. Environmental Conflicts and Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean*. H. Collinson ed. London: Latin American Bureau.
Davis, Terry. 1995. "Cross-Border Organizing Comes Home: UE and FAT in Mexico and Milwaukee." *Labor Research Review*. 23 (Spring/Summer): 23-29.
de la Court, Thijs. 1990. *Beyond Brundtland. Green Development in the 1990's*. Translated by E. Bayens and N. Harle. New York: Zed Books.
Denman, Catalina and Rosi Caudillo. 1996. "NGO's, Public Particpation, and Cross-Border Relations." *BorderLines* 4.
Dicken, Peter. 1992. *Global Shift: the Internationalization of Economic Activity*. New York: Guilford Press.
Dirlik, Arif. 1994. "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20: 328-56.
Dore, Elizabeth. 1996. "Capitalism and Ecological Crisis: Legacy of the 1980s." Pp. 8-19. In *Green Guerrillas. Environmental Conflicts and Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean*. H. Collinson ed. London: Latin America Bureau.
Dunn, Timothy J. 1996. *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home*. Austin: CMAS Books, University of Texas.
Dwyer, Augusta. 1995. *On the Line. Life on the U.S.-Mexican Border*. London: Latin American Bureau.
Eder, Klaus. 1993. *The New Politics of Class. Social Movements and Cultural Dynamics in Advanced Societies*. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.
Ekins, Paul. 1992. *A New World Order. Grassroots Movements for Global Change*. New York: Routledge.
Environmental Health, Coalition. 1994. "American Company's Pollution Threatens Mexican Residents." *Toxinformer: A Quarterly Publication of Environmental Health Coalition*. 12: 1-2.
Escobar, Arturo and Sonia E. Alvarez. 1992. "Introduction: Theory and Protest in Latin America Today." Pp. 1-18. In *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America. Identity, Strategy, and Democracy*. A. Escobar and S. E. Alvarez eds. Boulder: Westview Press.
Escobar, Arturo. 1993. "Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements." *Social Text* 31/32: 20-56.
-----. 1995. *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
-----. 1995. personal communication. Monday, December 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Evans, Peter and Miguel Korzeniewicz. 1994. "Point/Counterpoint: The Political Economy of Globalization: Do States Still Matter?" *PEWS News* Spring.

Evers, T. 1985. "Identity: the Hidden Side of New Social Movements in Latin America." Pp. 43-72. In *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America*. D. Slater ed. Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos.

Faber, Daniel and James O'Connor. 1993. "Capitalism and the Crisis of Environmentalism." Pp. 12-24. In *Toxic Struggles. The Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice*. R. Hofrichter ed. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Faber, Daniel. 1993. *Environment Under Fire. Imperialism and the Ecological Crisis in Central America*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Falk, Richard. 1992. *Explorations at the Edge of Time. The Prospects for World Order*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Fals-Borda, Orlando and Mohammad Anisur Rahman. 1991. *Action and Knowledge. Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action-Research*. New York: Apex Press.

Fals-Borda, Orlando. 1985. *Knowledge and People's Power. Lessons with Peasants in Nicaragua, Mexico and Columbia*. Translated by Brian Mallet. New York: New Horizons Press.

Fanon, Frantz. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press.

-----. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.

Farm Labor Organizing Committee. 1998. FLOC web page. www.iupui.edu/it/floc/home.html.

Farquhar, Doug. 1995. "Bordering on Disaster: the U.S.-Mexico border is an environmental mess, and NAFTA is creating even more challenges for America's Southwestern states." *State Legislatures* 21: 30.

Faulkner, Tina. 1997. "Tijuana Maquiladora Workers Go Independent." in *BorderLines* 5 (10).

-----. 1998. Management Dragging its Feet as Safety Problems Go Unaddressed. *BorderLines Updater*. Electronic February 17.

Feigen, Ed. 1996. AFL-CIO Strategic Projects commentary at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

FEMAP. 1996. FEMAP presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Fernández-Kelly, María Patricia and Saskia Sassen. 1995. "Recasting Women in the Global Economy: Internationalization and Changing Definitions of Gender"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pp. 99-120. In *Women in the Latin American Development Process.* C.E. Bose and E. Acosta-Belén eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Fernández-Kelly, María Patricia. 1983. *For We Are Sold, I and My People. Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Figueroa, Hector. 1996. "The Growing Force of Latino Labor." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 30 (3): 19-24.
Fisher, Robert and Joseph Kling. 1993. "Introduction: The Continued Vitality of Community Mobilization." Pp. xi-xxiii. In *Mobilizing the Community. Local Politics in the Era of the Global City.* R. Fisher and J. Kling eds. Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.
Foster, John Bellamy. 1994. *The Vulnerable Planet. A Short Economic History of the Environment.* New York: Monthly Review Press.
Foucault, Michel. 1970. *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences.* New York: Vintage.
-----. 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language.* Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon.
-----. 1979. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison.* Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage.
-----. 1990. *History of Sexuality: An Introduction.* Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage.
-----. 1990. *History of Sexuality: The Use of Pleasure.* Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage.
Foweraker, Joe. 1995. *Theorizing Social Movements.* Boulder: Pluto Press.
Fox, Annette Baker. 1995. "Environment and Trade: The NAFTA Case." *Political Science Quarterly* 110: 49-68.
Fox, Jonathan. 1988. "Time to Cross the Border: Paying Attention to Mexico." *Radical America* 22 (4): 53-62.
Fraser, Nancy. 1997. "The Public Sphere and Transnationalism." Presentation. *The Cultural Turn: Cultural Sociology and Cultural Studies.* University of California, Santa Barbara. February 14, 1997.
French, John D., Jefferson Cowie, and Scott Littlehale. 1994. *Labor and NAFTA: A Briefing Book.* Durham: North-South Center of the University of Miami and the Duke-UNC Program in Latin American Studies.
Fröbel, F., J. Heinrichs and O. Kreve. 1980. *The New International Division of Labour. Structural Unemployment in Industrialised Countries and Industrialisation in Developing Countries.* Translated by Pete Burgess. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Fuerza Unida. 1997. "Press Release: As Levi's Announces Layoffs of Over 6000, Fuerza Unida Demands Justice for San Antonio Workers." San Antonio: Fuerza Unida. November 7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gabriel, Christina and Laura MacDonald. 1994. "NAFTA, Women and Organising in Canada and Mexico: Forging a 'Feminist Internationality'." *Millennium. Journal of International Studies* 23 (3): 535-62.

Ganster, Paul. 1997. "Environmental Implications of Population Growth in San Diego-Tijuana." Presented at conference: "Sustainable Development in San Diego-Tijuana: Environmental and Social Consequences of Economic Integration." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UC San Diego. UCSD.

Garner, Roberta. 1994. "Transnational Social Movements." *Peace Review. A Transnational Quarterly* 6: 427-34.

Gaventa, John. 1990. "From the Mountains to the Maquiladoras: A Case Study of Capital Flight and Its Impact on Workers." Pp. 85-95. In *Communities in Economic Crisis: Appalachia and the South*. J. Gaventa, B.E. Smith, and A. Willingham eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Gedicks, Al. 1993. *The New Resource Wars. Native and Environmental Struggles Against Multinational Corporations*. Boston: South End Press.

Gentleman, Judith. 1987. *Mexican Politics in Transition*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Gereffi, Gary. 1994. "Global Commodity Chains, States, and Regional Division of Labor." *Colloquium*. Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Barbara. December 2.

Ghai, Dharam and Jessica M. Vivian. Eds. 1992. *Grassroots Environmental Action. people's participation in sustainable development* New York: Routledge.

Ghai, Dharam. 1994. *Development and Environment: Sustaining People and Nature*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Giannecchini, Joan. 1993. "Ecotourism: New Partners, New Relationships." *Conservation Biology* 7 (2): 429-32.

Gilbert, Helen. 1995. "Exposing the Myths: Organizing Women Around the World." *Labor Research Review*. 23 (Spring/Summer): 69-76.

Gill, Stephen. 1995. "The Global Panopticon? The Neoliberal State, Economic Life, and Democratic Surveillance." *Alternatives*: 1-49.

Gilly, Adolfo. 1990. "The Mexican Regime in Its Dilemma." *Journal of International Affairs* 43 (2): 273-90.

Giroux, Henry A. 1994. "Living Dangerously: Identity Politics and the New Cultural Racism." Pp. 29-55. In *Between Borders. Pedagogy and the Politics of Cultural Studies*. H. Giroux and P. McLaren eds. New York: Routledge.

Gómez, Arturo Santamaria. 1993. "The Porous U.S.-Mexico Border." *Nation* 257: 458-61.

Gómez, Norma. 1996. SIOAC presentation at Maclovio Rojas community meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. 1993. *Warrior for Gringostroika. Essays, Performance Texts, and Poetry*. St. Paul: Graywolf Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Goodman, David and Michael Redclift. 1991. "Introduction." Pp. 1-21. In *Environment and Development in Latin America: The Politics of Sustainability*. D. Goodman and M. Redclift eds. New York: Manchester University Press.

Gordon, April A. 1996. *Transforming Capitalism and Patriarchy. Gender and Development in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Gore, Al. 1992. *Earth in the Balance. Ecology and the Human Spirit*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers.

Gregory, Michael. 1996. "Environmental Information Needs on the U.S.-Mexico Border: Comments Presented to the Border XXI Binational Public Meeting, Nogales, Arizona." Nogales, Arizona: Arizona Toxics Information.

-----. 1997. "Summary: Building for the Future." a presentation to the Unison Institute/US EPA Toxics Release Inventory and Right-to-Know Conference. Washington, DC: ATI. September.

Grewal, Inderpal and Caren Kaplan. 1994. "Introduction: Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity." Pp. 1-35. In *Scattered Hegemonies. Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. I. Grewal and C. Kaplan eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Grundmann, Reiner. 1991. *Marxism and Ecology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Guimarães, Roberto Pereira. 1991. *The Ecopolitics of Development in the Third World: Politics and Environment in Brazil*. Boulder, CO: L. Rienner Publishers.

Gupta, Avijit. 1988. *Ecology and Development in the Third World*. New York: Routledge.

Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Halebsky, Sandor and Richard L. Harris. 1995. "Introduction: Capital, Power, and Inequality in Latin America." Pp. 1-20. In *Capital, Power and Inequality in Latin America*. S. Halebsky and R. L. Harris eds. Boulder: Westview Press.

Hamilton, Cynthia. 1993. "LA's IMF Riot." *Earth Island Journal* 8 (4): 36-8.

Harris, Richard L. 1992. *Marxism, Socialism, and Democracy in Latin America*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Harvey, Pharis. 1995. "Buying Time or Building a Future: Labor Strategies for a Global Economy." *Labor Research Review*. 23 (Spring/Summer): 89-101.

Hawkes, David. 1996. *Ideology*. New York: Routledge.

Hawkins, Beth. 1991. "Botched Rescue: With Free Trade Negotiations Focusing Attention On Their Environmental Problems, Arizona Border Residents

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Thought Help Was on the Way. But the Cavalry Never Showed." *Tucson Weekly*, November 6 and 12.
Hellman, Judith Adler. 1995. "The Riddle of New Social Movements: Who They Are and What They Do." Pp. 165-84. In *Capital, Power and Inequality in Latin America*. S. Halebsky and R. L. Harris eds. Boulder: Westview Press.
Henwood, Doug. 1995. "Clinton's Trade Policy." Pp. 27-38. In *Free Trade and Economic Restructuring in Latin America. A NACLA Reader*. F. Rosen and McFadyen, eds. New York: Monthly Review Press.
Hernández, Alfonso. 1996. PRD presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Hernández, Hortensia. 1996. SIOAC presentation at Maclovio Rojas community meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Herod, Andrew. 1995. "The Practice of International Labor Solidarity and the Geography of the Global Economy." *Economic Geography* 71: 333-41.
Hinojosa-Ojeda, Raúl. 1997. Paper presented at conference: "Sustainable Development in San Diego-Tijuana: Environmental and Social Consequences of Economic Integration." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UC San Diego. UCSD.
Holm, Hans-Henrik and Georg Sørensen. 1995. *Whose World Order? Uneven Globalization and the End of the Cold War*. Boulder: Westview Press.
Hopenhayn, Martín. 1993. "Postmodernism and Neoliberalism in Latin America." in "The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America." *Boundary 2. The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*. 20: 55-64.
Hotch, Janet. 1995. "Introduction." *Labor Research Review*. 23 (Spring/Summer): 1-9.
Human Rights Watch, Women's Rights Project. 1996. *Mexico. No Guarantees: Sex Discrimination in Mexico's Maquiladora Sector*. New York: Human Rights Watch.
Jacobs, Michael. 1990. *Sustainable development: greening the economy*. London: The Fabian Society.
Jameson, Fredric. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Jaquette, Jane S. ed. 1994. *The Women's Movement in Latin America. Participation and Democracy*. Boulder: Westview Press.
Jelin, Elizabeth and Eric Hershberg. 1996. "Introduction: Human Rights and the Construction of Democracy." Pp. 1-12. In *Constructing Democracy. Human Rights, Citizenship, and Society in Latin America*. E. Jelin and E. Hershberg eds. Boulder: Westview Press.
Jelin, Elizabeth. ed. 1990. *Women and Social Change in Latin America*. New Jersey: Zed Books.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Jenkins, J. Craig and Bert Klandermans. 1995. "The Politics of Social Protest." Pp. 3-13. In *The Politics of Social Protest. Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*. J.C. Jenkins and B. Klandermans eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Johnston, Hank, Enrique Laraña, and Joseph R. Gusfield. 1994. "Identities, Grievances, and New Social Movements." Pp. 3-35. In *New Social Movements. From Ideology to Identity*. E. Laraña, H. Johnston, and J. R. Gusfield. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Jordan, Tim. 1994. *Reinventing Revolution. Value and Difference in New Social Movements and the Left*. Aldershot: Avebury.

José. 1996. Presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Juergensmeyer, Mark. 1993. *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kabeer, Naila. 1992. "Feminist Perspectives in Development: A Critical Review." in *Working Out: New Directions for Women's Studies*. H. Hinds, A. Phoenix, and J. Stacey eds. Washington, DC: The Falmer Press.

Kadetsky, Elizabeth. 1994. "The Human Cost of Free Trade. On the Mexican Border, NAFTA Offers Little Hope." *Ms. Magazine*. January/February: 10-15.

Kamel, Rachel. 1988. *'This is How it Starts.' Women Maquila Workers in Mexico*. Chicago: Midwest Center for Labor Research.

Kamp, Richard. 1996. "NAFTA's Environmental Dimensions: Introduction." In *NAFTA Environmental Effects*. North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation ed. Montreal: NACEC.

Karl, Terry Lynn. 1996. "Dilemmas of Democratization in Latin America." Pp. 21-45. In *Democracy in Latin America. Patterns and Cycles*. R.A. Camp ed. Wilmington: SR Books.

Kathryn B. Ward and Jean Larson Pyle 1995. "Gender, Industrialization, Transnational Corporations, and Development: An Overview of Trends and Patterns." Pp. 37-55. In *Women in the Latin American Development Process*. C.E. Bose and E. Acosta-Belén eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Kay, Cristóbal. 1989. *Latin American Theories of Development and Underdevelopment*. New York: Routledge.

Kelly, Mary. 1995. "NAFTA's Downward Harmony." *BorderLines* 3.

Kidder, Thalia and Mary McGinn. 1995. "In the Wake of NAFTA: Transnational Workers Networks." *Social Policy* 25: 14-21.

Kincaid, Jess David. 1998a. "Echlin-ITAPSA Workers Beaten at American Brakeblock Plant." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis*. 3 (2): January 16.

-----. 1998b. "NAO Hears Han Young Complaint, First Workers' Health and Safety Case." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis*. 3 (5): March 2.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Klandermans, P. Bert. 1990. "Linking the 'Old' and 'New': Movement Networks in the Netherlands." Pp. 122-36. In *Challenging the Political Order. New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies.* R.J. Dalton and M. Kuechler eds. New York: Oxford University Press.

Klor de Alva, J. Jorge. 1995. "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of 'Colonialism,' 'Postcolonialism,' and 'Mestizaje.'" Pp. 241-278. in *After Colonialism. Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements.* Ed. G. Prakash. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Knight, Alan. 1995. "Capitalists, Caciques and Revolution: The Native Elite and Foreign Enterprise in Chihuahua, Mexico, 1854-1910." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 27(1):241-2.

Krueger, Ed. 1996. CFO presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Küppers, Gaby ed. 1994. *Compañeras. Voices from the Latin American Women's Movement.* London: Latin American Bureau.

La Botz, Dan. 1995. *Democracy in Mexico: Peasant Rebellion and Political Reform.* Boston: South End Press.

-----. 1997a. "FAT Calls for an End to Protection Contracts." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 2 (7): April 2.

-----. 1997b. "FAT Holds 11th Convention: A Model of Democracy, Feminism." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 2 (22): December 5.

-----. 1998a. "Mexico's Labor Year in Review" *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (1): January 1.

-----. 1998b. "CTM Union Strikes Ten Maquiladoras: 13,000 Workers Paralyze Production. *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (3):February 2.

-----. 1998c. "First Workers' Health and Safety Complaint to be Heard Under NAFTA Labor Side Agreement." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (4):February 16.

-----. 1998d. "Victory at Han Young/Hyundai: Workers Win Collective Bargaining Rights." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (2):January 16.

-----. 1998e. "Han young Management Violates Agreements: Government Unions and Scabs Back in Plant." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (5): March 2.

-----. 1998f. Presentation. "Social Movements Across Borders" Los Angeles: Social and Political Responses to Globalization in Latin America Project (LAREGLO) and Latin American Studies Program, California State University, Los Angeles. April 15.

Labor Notes. 1998. "No End to Han Young's Union Busting." June/#231: 9.

Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy.* London: Verso.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Laclau, Ernesto. 1990. *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. New York: Verso.
-----. 1996. *Emancipation(s)*. New York: Verso.
Latin American Subaltern Studies Group. 1993. "Founding Statement." *Boundary 2. The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America*. 20: 55-64.
Lechner, Norbert. 1981. *State and Politics in Latin America*. Toronto: Latin American Research Unit.
Lembcke, Jerry. 1988. "Class Capacities and Labor Internationalism: The Case of the CIO-CCL Unions." *Critical Sociology* 15 (3): 71-93.
Lewis, Sanford J., Marco Kaltofen, and Gregory Ormsby. 1992. "Border Rivers in Peril." Pp. 68-9. In *Trading Freedom. How Free Trade Affects Our Lives. Work and Environment*. J. Cavanagh et al. eds. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy.
Lim, Linda Y.C. 1990. "Women's Work in Export Factories: The Politics of a Cause." Pp. 101-22. In *Persistent Inequalities. Women and World Development*. I. Tinker ed. New York: Oxford University Press.
Lipietz, Alain. 1992. *Towards a New Economic Order. Postfordism, Ecology and Democracy*. Translated by Malcolm Slater. New York: Oxford University Press.
Lorentzen, Lois Ann. 1995. "Bread and Soil of Our Dreams: Women, the Environment, and Sustainable Development – Case Studies from Central America." In *Ecological Resistance Movements. The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*. B. Taylor ed. Albany: State University of New York Press.
Luhan, Bertha. 1996. Presentation at conference. "Labor in the Global Economy: Working in the Americas." AFL-CIO and UC Berkeley Institute on Industrial Relations. Berkeley, California, USA: November.
Lummis, C. Douglas. 1996. *Radical Democracy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
Lynch, Barbara Deutsch. 1993. "The Garden and the Sea: U.S. Latino Environmental Discourses and Mainstream Environmentalism." *Social Problems* 40: 108-24.
Lynd, Staughton. 1990. "From Protest to Economic Democracy: Labor-Community Ownership and Management of the Economy." Pp. 259-73. In *Building Bridges. The Emerging Grassroots Coalition of Labor and Community*. J. Brecher and T. Costello eds. New York: Monthly Review Press.
Magraw, Daniel and Charnovitz, Steve. 1994. "NAFTA's Repercussions: Is Green Trade Possible?" *Environment* 36 (2): 14-45.
Martínez, Oscar J. 1994. *Border People: Life and Society in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. Tucson: University of Arizona.
-----. 1996. *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Martinez-Alier, Juan with Klaus Schlupmann. 1987. *Ecological Economics. Energy, Environment and Society*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
Matilda. 1996. Zenith workers presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Mattiace, Shannan and Roderic Ai Camp. 1996. "Democracy and Development: An Overview." Pp. 3-20. In *Democracy in Latin America. Patterns and Cycles*. R.A. Camp ed. Wilmington: SR Books.
Mayer, Margit and Roland Roth. 1995. "New Social Movements and the Transformation to Post-Fordist Society." Pp. 299-319. In *Cultural Politics and Social Movements*. M. Darnovsky, B. Epstein, and R. Flacks eds. Philadelphia:Temple University Press.
McCaughan, Edward J. 1993. "Mexico's Long Crisis. Toward New Regimes of Accumulation and Domination." *Latin American Perspectives* 20 (3): 6-31.
McClintock, Anne. 1992. "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism'." *Social Text* 31/32: 84-97.
McCormick, John. 1989. *Reclaiming Paradise. The Global Environmental Movement*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.
McGinn, Chris. 1997. NAFTA, the Environment and the Sierra Club. Memorandum posted to BECCnet@listserv.arizona.edu. May.
McGinn, Mary. 1994. "After NAFTA: Worker Rights." *Multinational Monitor*. 15 (1-2): 9-10.
Melucci, Alberto. 1989. *Nomads of the Present. Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Merchant, Carolyn. 1980. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers.
Meyer, Lorenzo et al. 1990. "Mexico: Tradition and Transition." *Journal of International Affairs* 43 (2).
Meyers, Eric. 1996. CJM staff comments at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Mies, Maria. 1986. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*. London: Zed Books.
Miller, Francesca. 1991. *Latin American Women and the Search for Social Justice*. Hanover: University Press of New England.
Miyoshi, Masao. 1993. "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State." *Critical Inquiry* 19 (4): 726-51.
Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1997. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." Pp. 255-77. In *Dangerous Liaisons. Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Momsen, Janet Henshall and Vivian Kinnaird. eds. 1993. *Different Places, Different Voices: Gender and Development in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. New York: Routledge.

Momsen, Janet Henshall. 1991. *Women and Development in the Third World.* New York: Routledge.

Mondragon, Manuel. 1996. CFO presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Montes, Eduardo. 1991. "Border residents plagued by fears of toxic contamination." *San Antonio Express-News*. November 24.

Moody, Kim. 1988. *An Injury to All. The Decline of American Unionism*. New York: Verso.

Moody, Kim and Mary McGinn. 1992. *Unions and Free Trade: Solidarity vs. Competition*. Detroit: Labor Notes

Morales, José Luis. 1996. EcoSol Coordinator's comments at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Morris, Stephen D. 1995. *Political Reformism in Mexico. An Overview of Contemporary Mexican Politics*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Morss, Elliott R. 1991. "The New Global Players: How They Compete and Collaborate." *World Development* 19 (1): 55-64.

Mouffe, Chantal. 1993. *The Return of the Political*. New York: Verso.

-----. 1995. "Post-Marxism: Democracy and Identity." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13: 259-65.

Mudimbe, V. Y. and Kwame Anthony Appiah. 1993. "The Impact of African Studies on Philosophy." In *Africa and the Disciplines. Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, R. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, and J. O'Barr eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nash, June. 1995. "Latin American Women in the World Capitalist Crisis" Pp. 153-63. In *Women in the Latin American Development Process*. C.E. Bose and E. Acosta-Belén eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Nathan, Debbie. 1991. *Women and Other Aliens. Essays from the U.S.-Mexico Border*. El Paso: Cinco Puntos Press.

Niranjana, Tejaswini. 1994. "Colonialism and the Politics of Translation." Pp. 35-52. In *An Other Tongue. Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*. A. Arteaga ed. Durham: Duke University Press.

O'Connor, Martín. 1994. *Is Capitalism Sustainable? Political Economy and the Politics of Ecology*. New York: Guilford Press.

Ojeda, Martha. 1996. CJM Executive Director welcoming address at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Olalquiaga, Celeste. 1992. *Megalopolis: Contemporary Cultural Sensibilities*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Ong, Aihwa. 1987. *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline. Factory Women in Malaysia*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Oppenheimer, Andres. 1996. *Bordering on Chaos. Guerrillas, Stockbrokers, Politicians, and Mexico's Road to Prosperity*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Orme, William A. Jr. et al. 1991. "The New Gospel: North American Free Trade." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 24 (6): 9-36.

Orozco, Benedicto. 1996. FAT presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Osuna, Artemio. 1996. SIOAC presentation at Maclovio Rojas community meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Otero, Gerardo. 1996. "Neoliberal Reform and Politics in Mexico: An Overview." Pp. 1-26. In *Neo-liberalism Revisited. Economic Restructuring and Mexico's Political Future*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Otero, Germán Sánchez. 1995. "Neoliberalism and Its Discontents." Pp. 120-8. In *Free Trade and Economic Restructuring in Latin America. A NACLA Reader*. F. Rosen and D. McFadyen. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Panayotou, Todor. 1993. *Green Markets: the Economics of Sustainable Development*. San Francisco: ICS Press.

Panitch, Leo and Donald Swartz. 1993. *The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms: From Wage Controls to Social Contract*. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Parsons, Howard L. 1977. *Marx and Engels on Ecology*. Westport: Greenwood Press.

Pelayo, Aurora. 1996. CAFOR presentation at Maclovio Rojas community meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Peña, Devon G. 1997. *The Terror of the Machine. Technology, Work, Gender, and Ecology on the U.S.-Mexico Border*. Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas, Austin.

Pepper, David. 1993. *Eco-Socialism. From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*. New York: Routledge.

Porter, Michael E. 1990. "The Competitive Advantage of Nations." *Harvard Business Review*. March-April.

Press, Mike and Don Thomson. 1989. *Solidarity for Survival. The Don Thomson Reader on Trade Union Internationalism*. Nottingham: Russel Press Ltd. and Don Thomson Memorial Fund.

Public Citizen. 1996. "NAFTA's Broken Promises: The Border Betrayed. U.S.-Mexico Border Environment and Health Decline in NAFTA's First Two Years." Washington, DC: Public Citizen and Red Mexicana de Accion Frente al Libre Comercio.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Pulido, Laura. 1996. *Environmentalism and Economic Justice. Two Chicano Struggles in the Southwest.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Rabasa, José. 1993. *Inventing A-M-E-R-I-C-A. Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Rabinow, Paul. 1986. "Representations Are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology." Pp. 234-61. In *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* J. Clifford and G.E. Marcus eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ramírez, Cirila Quintero. 1990. *La Sindicalización en las Maquiladoras Tijuanenses, 1970-1988.* Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.

Rathke, Wade and Joel Rogers. 1996. "A Strategy for Labor." *Dissent* 43 (3): 78-84.

Redclift, M.R. 1984. *Development and the Environmenal Crisis. red or green alternatives?* New York: Methuen.

Reed, Cyrus. 1997. "NGOs Meet with BECC and Each Other." *Perspectivas.* Tucson: Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona.

Reich, Robert. 1990. *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism.* New York: Vintage Books.

Rex, John. "Introduction. New Nations and Ethnic Minorities, Comparative and Theoretical Questions." Pp. 11-51. In *Race and class in post-colonial society. A study of ethnic group relations in the English-speaking Caribbean, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico.* UNESCO ed. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Richard, Nelly. 1993. "Cultural Peripheries: Latin America and Postmodernist De-centering." in "The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America," *Boundary 2. The Postmodernism Debate in Latin America.* 20: 55-64.

Riddell, Robert. 1981. *Ecodevelopment. Economics, Ecology and Development: An Alternative to Growth Imperative Models.* New York: St Martin's Press.

Roett, Riordan. 1993. "The Dynamics of Change in Mexico." Pp. 169-74. In *Political and Economic Liberalization in Mexico. At a Critical Juncture?* R. Roett ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Rosen, Fred and Sam Smucker. 1998. "The Struggle Continues at Echlin-ITAPSA." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (2):January 16.

Rosen, Fred. 1996. "Teamsters Prompt Cautious Solidarity." *NACLA Report on the Americas* 29 (6): 2-3.

Rothschild, Michael. 1990. *Bionomics. The Inevitability of Capitalism.* New York: Henry Holt and Company.

Ruiz, Vicki L. and Susan Tiano. 1987. *Women on the U.S.-Mexico Border. Responses to Change.* Boston: Allen and Unwin.

Safa, Helen I. 1995. "Economic Restructuring and Gender Subordination." *Latin American Perspectives* 22 (2): 32-50.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage Books.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

-----. 1981. *Covering Islam. How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World.* New York: Pantheon.

-----. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism.* New York: Vintage.

Salazar, Joanna. 1998. "The International Wastewater Treatment Plant." *Enfoque.* Newsletter of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego. Spring: 4.

Salinas de Gotari, Carlos et al. 1991. "Post-National Mexico and the Latinization of America." *New Perspectives Quarterly* 8 (1).

Sandoval, Chela. 1991. "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World." *Genders* 10.

Saxod, Elsa. 1996. Commentary. San Diego/Tijuana Community Meeting on the U.S./Mexico Border XXI Program Draft Framework Document. San Diego. July 11.

Schuurman, Frans J. 1993. "Modernity, Post-modernity and the New Social Movements." Pp. 187-206. In *Beyond the Impasse. New Directions in Development Theory.* F.J. Schuurman ed. New Jersey: Zed Books.

Scott, Alan. 1990. *Ideology and the new social movements.* Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Sherman, Don. 1998. "AFL-CIO's Sweeney Makes Historic Visit to Mexico." *Mexican Labor News and Analysis.* 3 (3):February 2.

Shields, James. 1995. "Border Health Hazards." *Multinational Monitor* 16: 22.

Shiva, Vandana. 1988. *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development.* New Jersey: Zed Books.

-----. 1994. *Close to Home. Women Reconnect Ecology, Health and Development Worldwide.* Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Silva, Marcos. 1997a. Memorandum posted to BECCnet@listserv.arizona.edu. February.

Silva, Marcos. 1997b. "Trinational Group Reviews NAFTA Environmental Side Accord." Posted to BECCnet@listserv.arizona.edu. April. 29.

Sims, Beth. 1992. *Workers of the World Undermined. American Labor's Role in U.S. Foreign Policy.* Boston: South End Press.

Sivanandan, A. 1980. "Imperialism in the Silicon Age." *Monthly Review* 32: 24-42.

Sklair, Leslie. 1989. *Assembling for Development. The Maquila Industry in Mexico and the United States.* Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Slater, David. 1985. "Social Movements and a Recasting of the Political." Pp. 1-26. In *New Social Movements and the State in Latin America.* D. Slater ed. Amsterdam: Centro de Estudios y Documentación Latinoamericanos.

Smith, Neil. 1984. *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space.* New York: Basil Blackwell.

So, Alvin Y. 1990. *Social Change and Development. Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories.* Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Soja, Edward W. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Verso.

Solis, Guermina. 1996. CETLAC presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Sontheimer, Sally. 1991. "Introduction." Pp. i-vi. In *Women and the Environment: A Reader. Crisis and Development in the Third World.* S. Sontheimer ed. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Spalding, Mark. 1997a. "Governance Issues under the Environmental Side Agreement to the NAFTA." Paper presented at conference: "Sustainable Development in San Diego-Tijuana: Environmental and Social Consequences of Economic Integration." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UC San Diego. UCSD.

-----. 1997b. "Legal Opinion regarding inclusion of Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Waste Recycling in the mandate of the BECC." Memorandum posted to BECCnet@listserv.arizona.edu. February.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1988a. "Introduction: Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography." Pp. 3-34. In *Selected Subaltern Studies*. R. Guha and G.C. Spivak eds. New York: Oxford University Press.

-----. 1998b. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Pp. 271-315. In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. C. Nelson and L. Grossberg eds. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Steinmetz, George. 1994. "Regulation Theory, Post-Marxism, and the New Social Movements." *Comparative Study of Society and History* 36 (1): 176-212.

Stoddard, Ellwyn R. 1987. *Maquila: Assembly Plants in Northern Mexico.* El Paso: University of Texas, El Paso.

Support Committee for Maquiladora Workers. 1996. "Fact Sheet." San Diego: SCMW.

-----. 1998a. "Urgent Alert!: Han Young Workers Strike for Independent Union Contract." San Diego: SCMW.

-----. 1998b. "Urgent Alert!: Han Young Strike Is Forcibly Set Aside Despite Fed Court Order." San Diego: SCMW.

Szasz, Andrew. 1994. *EcoPopulism. Toxic Waste and the Movement for Environmental Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Tarrow, Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement. Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Teichman, Judith. 1997. "Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Mexican Authoritarianism." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 13 (1): 121-47.

Thorup, Cathryn L. 1993. "Redefining Governance in North America: Citizen Diplomacy and Cross-Border Coalitions." *Enfoque*: 1,12.

Tiano, Susan. 1984. *Maquiladoras, Women's Work, and Unemployment in Northern Mexico*. Michigan State University.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Tilly, Charles et al. 1995. "Scholarly Controversy: Global Flows of Labor and Capital." *International Labor and Working Class History*: 1-55.

Tisdell, Clem. 1993. *Environmental Economics: Policies for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development*. Brookfield: Edward Elgar.

Tong, Mary. 1996. presentation at the conference, "Labor in the Global Economy: Working in the Americas." Berkeley: AFL-CIO, University of California, Berkeley Institute on Industrial Relations. November.

-----. 1998. "Two Cases of Cross-Border Organizing." Presentation. "Social Movements Across Borders" conference. Los Angeles: Social and Political Responses to Globalization in Latin America Project (LAREGLO) and Latin American Studies Program, California State University, Los Angeles. April 15.

Torres, Esteban. 1996. Testimony presented at BECC Board of Directors meeting. April 29, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. published in *Perspectivas*. Tucson: Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona.

Touraine, Alain. 1985. "An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements." *Social Research* 52 (4): 749-87.

-----. 1997. *What Is Democracy?* Translated by David Macey. Boulder: Westview.

Trend, David. ed. 1996. *Radical Democracy. Identity, Citizenship, and the State*. New York: Routledge.

Treviño, Melanie and Adolfo Fernandez. 1992. "The Maquiladora Industry, Adverse Environmental Impact, and Proposed Solutions." *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 7 (2): 53-72.

Truax, Hawley et al. 1992. "Coming to Terms with Trade." *Environmental Action* 24 (2): 31-6.

Turner, R.K. ed. 1988. *Sustainable Environmental Management: Principles and Practice*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

United Auto Workers/UAW. 1992. "Comparison of Mexican and United States Occupational Safety and Health Legislation, Regulation and Enforcement Structure." in *The Issue is Health. Toxic Samplings, Environmental Conditions and Health Concerns along the U.S./Mexico Border*. Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras ed. San Antonio: CJM.

United Nations. 1992. *The Global Parternship for Environment and Development. A Guide to Agenda 21*. New York: United Nations.

United States Department of the Treasury. 1996. "Rubin Announces First NADBank Financings in United States." *Treasury News*. Washington, DC: Office of Public Affairs. December 2.

United States-Mexico Border Progress Foundation. 1996. USMPBF web page.

Valadez, Carmen. 1996. CDM/GFX presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Vargas, Claudia. 1996. Presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Velasquez, Baldemar. 1996. "Don't Waste Time with Politicians—Organize!" Pp. 171-6. In *Corporations Are Gonna Get Your Mama. Globalization and the Downsizing of the American Dream*. K. Danaher ed. Monroe: Common Courage Press.
Velazquez, Carlos A. 1995. "The Effects of Opening the Mexican Market and Import Substitution on the Maquiladoras." posting to profmexis.sar.net.
Vellinga, Menno. 1993. "The Internationalization of Politics and Local Response: Social Democracy in Latin America." Pp. 3-22. In *Social Democracy in Latin America. Prospects for Change*. M. Vellinga ed. Boulder: Westview Press.
Verduzco, Basílio. 1997. "Commentary: Framing Border Environmentalism and Environmental Policies." *Perspectivas*. Tucson: Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona.
Veronica. 1996. EMOSA workers presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.
Wall Street Journal. 1997. "NAFTA's Do-Gooder Side Deals Disappoint." October 15. A19.
Wallace, Michael and J. Craig Jenkins 1995. "The New Class, postindustrialism, and Neocorporatism: Three Images of Social Protest in the Western Democracies." Pp. 96-137. In *The Politics of Social Protest. Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*. J.C. Jenkins and B. Klandermans eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Warnock, John. 1995. *The Other Mexico: The North American Triangle Completed*. New York: Black Rose Books.
Waterman, Peter. 1993. *Globalisation, Civil Society, Solidarity. The Politics and Ethics of a World both Real and Universal*. Hague: Institute of Social Studies.
Weeks, John. 1997. Presentation. "Sustainable Development in San Diego-Tijuana: Environmental and Social Consequences of Economic Integration." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, UC San Diego. UCSD.
Weinrub, Al and William Bollinger. 1987. *The AFL-CIO in Central America. A Look at the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD)*. Oakland: Labor Network on Central America.
West, Cornel. 1995. "The Radical Democratic Tradition." Radio Broadcast. Portland: David Barsamian/Alternative Radio.
Wignaraja, Ponna. 1993. "Rethinking Development and Democracy." Pp. 4-35. In *New Social Movements in the South. Empowering the People*. P. Wignaraja ed. New Jersey: Zed Books.
Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman. 1994. "Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: An Introduction." Pp. 1-20. In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Theory. A Reader, P. Williams and L. Chrisman eds. New York: Columbia University Press.

Williams, Susan. 1998. Tennessee Industrial Renewal Network update letter. Knoxville: TIRN. May 28.

Williams, Tracy. 1997. Border Environmental Cooperation Commission, News Release. Posted to BECCnet@listserv.arizona.edu. May 28.

Wirth, Justus. 1996. Comments at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

World Commission on Environment and, Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. New York.: Oxford University Press.

Yolanda. 1996. CETLAC presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

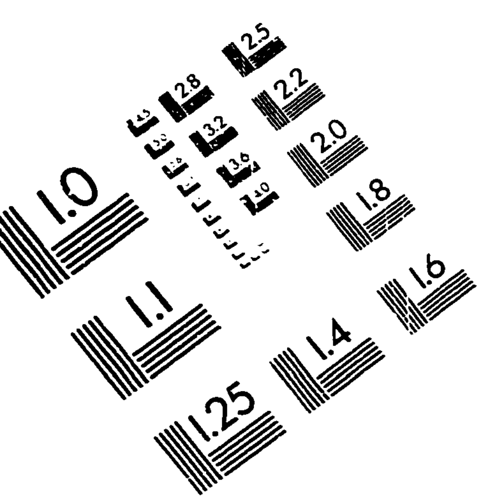
Young, Kate. Ed. 1989. *Serving Two Masters: Third World Women in Development*. Ahmedabad: Allied Publishers.

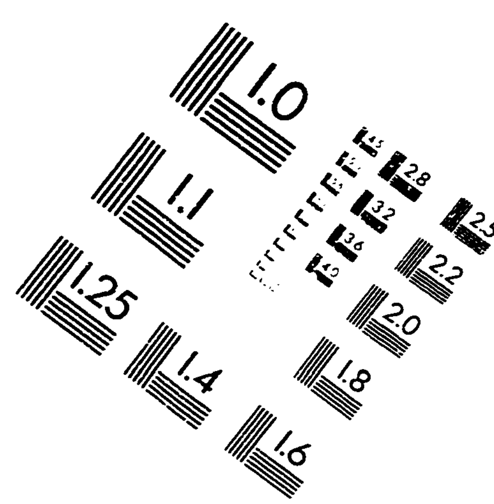
Zeuner, Nicola. 1996. Personal communication from Arizona Toxics Information representative. August.

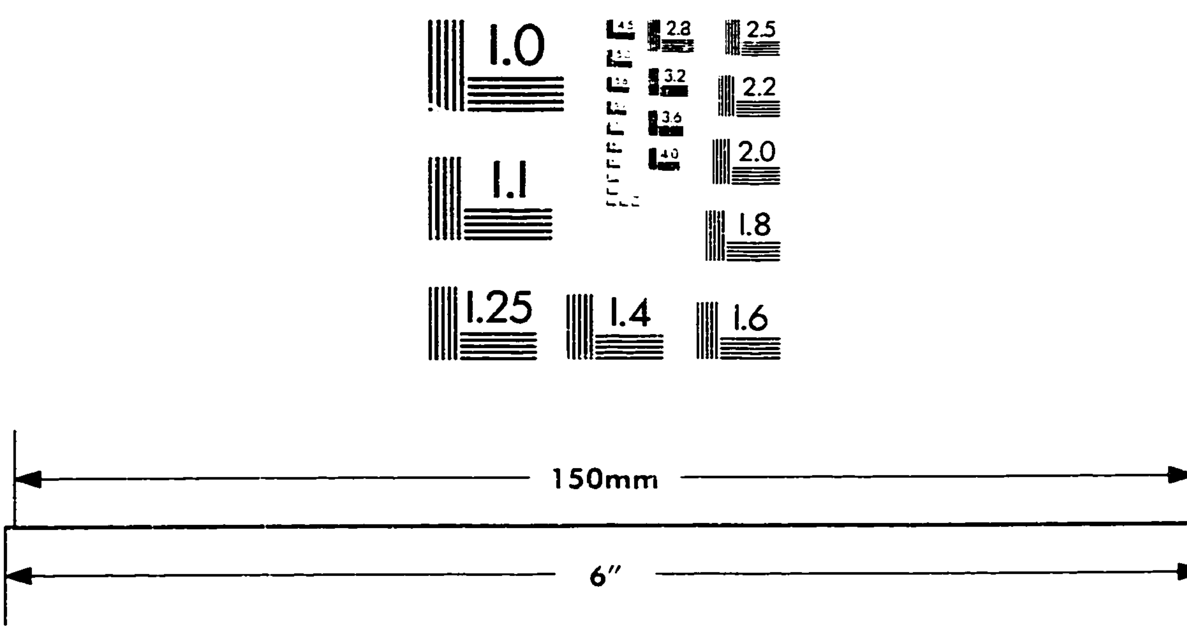
Zuñigo, Silvano. 1996. CustomTrim worker presentation at Coalition for Justice in the Maquiladoras semi-annual meeting. Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico. October.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)







APPLIED IMAGE . Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.