

**Stony Brook University
The Graduate School**

Doctoral Defense Announcement

Abstract

Leadership Repertoires: Conflict Management in Mexican Social Movement Coalitions

By

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

Coalitions can serve as a remedy for problems with financial, material, or labor needs. However, the same coalitions can generate other problems such as conflicts over resources, organization, identity, and strategy. Such problems may occur on a group or individual level and, sometimes, on both simultaneously. Examples include the possibility that coalitions can draw together populations that have had little previous contact which may lead to some form of cultural or social tension with the group. Representatives to coalitions primarily belong to and give their allegiance to groups that have their own interests independent of the coalition's. These multiple interests can be sources of conflict within a coalition. Therefore, the mechanisms that are in place to manage tensions or conflicts are significant factors in the maintenance of coalition cohesion. The mechanism examined here is that of leadership repertoires for conflict management. The principle argument is that coalition leaders have a range of repertoires for managing conflict, and this range differs from those repertoires that are used by social movement organizations more generally. This research indicates that a range of choices available to leaders include their knowledge of organizational repertoires that could preempt and adapt to conflict. These choices also involved immediate interpretation of situations and the patience to address problems that required more deliberation.

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