

Reflexivity and legitimation of social problems: the case of the Network of Environmental Organizations of Zihuatanejo

José M. Aranda Sánchez

Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México / aranda@uaemex.mx

Abstract: The goal of this article is to analyze the particular features that present the reflexivity of the Network of Environmental Organizations of Zihuatanejo (*Red de Organizaciones Ambientalistas de Zihuatanejo*, ROGAZ) as a study case. In order to develop this topic two major concepts are articulated: that of reflexivity and that of social network, in an approach which allows analyzing the performance and features of the main ROGAZ, in the framework of the complexity that represents their capacity to take thoughtful awareness of the nature of their actions and the consequences of their actions on the organization itself, and also the definitions of the situations that function as frameworks of significance on which the collective actions are given meaning. As a research case the bases are established as a conception of the social reflexivity for the analysis of the ROGAZ, it also makes use of a diagram which searches the comprehension and to value its organization as a social network that participates in the protection of Zihuatanejo's harbour as a legitimated social problem, thus the human rights of many social fighters of the region.

Key words: social reflexivity, reflexivity of the social movements, social network, social problem, environmental organization.

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es analizar los rasgos particulares que presenta la reflexividad de la Red de Organizaciones Ambientalistas de Zihuatanejo (ROGAZ) como caso de estudio. Para desarrollar este punto se procede a la articulación de dos conceptos principales: el de reflexividad y el de red social, en un planteamiento que permita examinar el desempeño y principales rasgos de la ROGAZ, en el marco de la complejidad que representa su capacidad de tomar conciencia del carácter reflexivo de sus acciones, así como de las consecuencias de éstas, sobre la propia organización, y asimismo de las definiciones de la situación que funcionan como marcos de significación con base en las cuales se les otorga sentido a las acciones colectivas. Se plantea una concepción de la reflexividad social como fundamento para el análisis de la ROGAZ, y se aplica un esquema que busca su comprensión y valorar su estructuración como red social que interviene en la defensa de la Bahía de Zihuatanejo como un problema social legitimado por esa red social, así como de los derechos humanos de muchos luchadores sociales de la región.

Palabras clave: reflexividad social, reflexividad de los movimientos sociales, red social, problema social, organización ambientalista.

Introduction

The statement is that society is built as an aggregation of reflexive subjects/objects who interact between them generating an auto-constructive dynamics (reflexivity/subject-object). The social paradigm from reflexivity establishes we are subjects/objects facing other subjects/objects who reciprocally alter each other because of a reflective action, action that is knowledge, and knowledge that at the time implies an activity (Navarro, 1999).

In the case of networks and social movements a reflexivity that makes visible and symbolizes determinate social conflicts is proper to them; they enable a different look of the social reality where problems are socialized and acquire a special meaning, due to the way and impact the collective actions of the organizations which generate them, mainly because they have “new” knowledge and awareness they are bearers of, devoted to continue developing them and put them against the “accepted” versions that do not escape from lack of clarity and the hiding of truths that are revealed in practice (Saidon, 1995; Thiebaut, 1998).

In this article¹ a brief analysis of the Network of Environmental Organizations of Zihuatanejo (*Red de Organizaciones Ambientalistas de Zihuatanejo, ROGAZ*) is presented, which focus the attention on the network’s functioning as a social network and aims to underline its specific features from the vision of reflective sociology, interested in the its process of construction, in the framework of a periodization of its performance along a decade of collective actions.

As a complement, the conceptual statement on the analysis of social networks applied to the referred study case, in a theoretical-empirical approach consisting in the performance of five interviews held with the network’s leaders, and ten direct observations carried out in five ROGAZ

¹ Product of the last stage of the research project called Construction of the environmental movement in Mexico 1980-2005 (*Construcción del movimiento ambientalista en México 1980-2005*), financed by the National Council of Science and Technology (*Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología, CONACYT*).

ordinary meetings is exposed. The interviews were conducted by the author, and the observations by the author and an assistant unknown for the network's members, with the exception of the owner of the restaurant where the sessions were held and which is also part of the organization, and whose registrations granted reliability. Nonetheless, we have to point out possible empirical limitations as well as methodological ones of this sort of observation designs, to the extent that it was not feasible to contrast the corresponding opinions of the observed "subjects" to provide greater rigor and preciseness. Likewise, as the theoretical foundations, it is an approximation that only provides a study case, where even if theory orients the observations, it is insufficient to determine if the empirical data are inscribed in this bases or frames, from which to realize the interpretations that are presented.

The process of the Network of Environmental Organizations of Zihuatanejo (ROGAZ)

In this first section we approach the process undergone by ROGAZ, pinpointing the conflict that started and at the time provoked the emergence of the social organization, and briefly presenting the three stages that can be ever since identified, emphasizing the initial actions and articulation of "underground" links, as well as the moments of visibility and coordination of actions that caused the conformation of the social network and its collective actions.

The conflict appears

On April 14th, 1994 the General Direction of Environmental Regulation of the National Institute of Ecology (*Dirección General de Normatividad Ambiental del Instituto Nacional de Ecología*), with a numbered document, DGNA-2833, authorized the real estate enterprise Punta del Mar S.A. de C.V. the Manifestation of Environmental Impact to construct and operate a high-level real estate and nautical tourist development spanning a total area of 5.58 ha, located in El Almacén and Contramar Beaches, Bay of Zihuatanejo, in the municipality of José Azueta, Guerrero (*Costa Libre*, 1995a).

The enterprise, as owner of the tourist project called *Puerto Mío*, was granted the authorization by the federal government to construct a hub for cruisers and a dock in the bay. In order to do so, it started the construction of a stone breakwater disregarding the recommendation that the pier should be made with piles instead of being stoned.

The local fishermen were the first to show opposition to the project denouncing that said work affected the free flow of sea currents, situation that contributed to the disappearance of Almacén Beach and accelerated the sedimentation of said area of the bay with mud, thus damaging the banks of oysters, clams and fishing in general. When the first negative impacts became evident, not all those who later joined in the organization realized the imminent danger, but a period of verification, exploration and registrations of the changes in the ecosystem was needed to become aware and so achieve the organization to defend the bay.

Well now, at a first moment the conflict was between the company and the citizens who felt affected; however, ever since the project started the vary State also appeared as part of the problem, to the extent it has issued the permissions, apparently without proper studies, mainly those related to the environmental impact of the project, in addition that a civil consult had not been carried out in order to learn the population's opinion.

In this moment it is worth underscoring that local people discussed the need of a "high-level" quay, as there already was the traditional and efficient quay on the bay, modest indeed but sufficiently accessible for most of Zihuatanejo's population, not to mention the tourists who visit it constantly. In the best of cases, as already stated, the breakwater had to be wooden, so as not to alter the sea currents or make the beaches disappear, which will be affected by the work as the necessary sea currents would not reach the shore (*Costa Libre*, 1995a).

Deep inside the problem, the affected inhabitants argued that it was rather a privatization of the dock, as the orientation of the tourist project was toward mid- and high-income strata, the same as for large and luxurious vessels, leaving aside and marginalizing popular tourism, segmenting the local and national inhabitants in favor of the tourist of the large cruis-

ers, who would enjoy the bay through a private enterprise, which would take large part of the economic benefits in that part of the bay; nevertheless, not completely affecting to the whole of laborers who live up from the tourism which reaches the destination by land (*Costa Libre*, 1995b).

Because of this, as the constructing company did not respect the municipal regulation and its studies on environmental impact were regarded as insufficient, a large popular mobilization began in demand of the cancellation of the project, being the *Movement for the Rescue and Preservation of the Bay of Zihuatanejo* born (*Movimiento para el rescate y la preservación de la Bahía de Zihuatanejo*), integrated by 20 civil society organizations² where professional, fishermen, tourist services, merchant educational institutions, environmental, human rights and Christian associations, among other social groups took part.

After a year of confrontation the National Institute of Ecology, organism that authorized the construction of the stonewall known as “breakwater”, accepted the revaluation of the project, whose result was favorable for the population’s demand. And although in the federal authority’s resolution the company was ordered to dismantle the breakwater, the issue was still pending until a judge decided on a legal protection granted to Puerto Mío.

Stages in the construction of the Network of Environmental Organizations of Zihuatanejo

In an analysis of the process kept on the construction of the movement which derived in the conformation of ROGAZ, and considering the main

² Which are: Animal protecting society of Zihuatanejo (Sociedad protectora de animales de Zihuatanejo), Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, Friend of the Earth International, School of Lawyers, School of Medics, School of Tourism Graduates, Union of fishermen, Association of boatmen, Association of tourist services’ providers, Cáritas Zihuatanejo, Committee of Solitary Teachers, Association of Detail Merchants of Zihuatanejo, Organization of students in favor of Zihuatanejo Bay, Institute of Social Studies of Zihuatanejo, Nuevo Amanecer Ecologist Group, Group of ecologist youths in defense of the nature, Organization for the defense of human rights, Equality and gender equity, Ecologists of the Bay of Zihuatanejo. Most of the organizations have a legal registration, and the rest are social groups without that formal requisite.

occurrences, both in those related to the fight to reach the main objective and inside the organization, where there was a scission that was a landmark for the destination and peculiarities of the network, the three principal stages can be identified:

Formal constitution of the organization, identity and demand: 1999-2000

After several years of work, visible and undercover³, by means of which the fundamental informal bonds to profile the organization, identify and establish the “nodes” of the network and elaborate with a better perspective the demand, through which they will be in conditions to enter the conflict properly as an instance with force, understanding, identity and project, they finally decided to group as an environmental social movement⁴, with experience, commitment and a collective integrated, at the time, by diverse associations willing to fight to defend the bay (Interview 1).

Indeed, the movement in defense of the bay, also called *S.O.S. Bay* (*S.O.S. Bahía*), was formally constituted in November 1999, composed by 20 active organizations; at the early 2000 it achieved that the federal, state and municipal governments approved the Program for Sustainable Development of the Bay of Zihuatanejo (*Programa para el Desarrollo Sustentable de la Bahía de Zihuatanejo*), which included the projects of Diffusion, Education and Environmental Culture, headed to create ecological conscience and the population’s learning of the reach and content of the environmental laws and promoting their application (*S.O.S. Bahía*, 2005).

In this first stage, in addition to the demand of stopping the breakwater’s construction, despite it allowed constructing a collective identity⁵ based on

³ It is the quiet task of construction or strengthening of formal ties, generally from friendship or the deeper knowledge between people, and that is sustained without visible expression until mobilizations occur. See Kalndermans and Tarrow (1988).

⁴ Considered as one of the New social movements (*Nuevos movimientos sociales*), specifically devoted to the environmental defense and protection. See Aranda (2006).

⁵ Which is a psycho-social process of self-definition and self-representation of one before the rest; it is a “constitutive exterior”; it is an interactive and shared definition, produced by several individuals in interaction; it is located in: a) cognitive framework related to goals and action environments; b) through the activation of relations; and c) it is obtained by emotional means. See Melucci (1994) and Laraña (1999).

the bay's defense, could turn out to be an impediment for the movement to reach another dimension and projection, by means of a strategic and political vision of the problem it was stated to increase the demand and intensify the protest at the time the conjuncture was used and incorporated into its struggle the trend fostered by the Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources and Fishing (*Secretaría del Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca, SEMARNAP*) to settle sustainable development programs at local level, giving priority to those cases where the resources were under threat or in danger of damage or irrational exploitation.

It was thus how the movement changed from focused demonstration to an association, not only internally articulated and with representative and hard-working active organizations, but also juridically and politically well-advised, and with an action line that directed the efforts in order to achieve certain empowerment (*empoderamiento*⁶), which would give them way to advance in the original struggle and comprise a vaster field of problems, mainly environmental; however related to human rights and justice alike, not leaving aside the need to obtain resources to different prioritized productive and ecologic projects (Interview 1).

Likewise, one of the actions which would give them visibility, greater gathering capacity, union of efforts and penetration into the population was the publication of the fortnight magazine *Costa Libre*⁷, which worked as a forum for information, denounce and debate on a series of topics and problems of social interest, where attention was paid, obviously, to the defense of the bay; yet, by means of this medium spread other set of issues that also caused polemic and permitted keeping track of the movements achievement; it even included local literal expressions.

It is worthy underscoring in this first stage the important participation of women, which had been sustained until the moment the study ended,

⁶ Term adapted to the Spanish language to indicate a social process consisting in the generation of alternatives and, at the time, diverse forms of democratic powers pointing out the notion of the fact that power has to be created, constructed, addition that is shared. See Cazés (1999).

⁷ Fortnightly magazine that was the organ of diffusion and propaganda of the Movement for the Rescue and Preservation of the Bay, fundamental to foster the fight and protest.

since both representatives of several organizations (teachers, restaurant owners, environmental NGO's, veterinarians and other women) and activists who provide legal advice or hand out flyers alike and worked on the population's conscience awareness, also contributed to the construction of the movement and the initial impulse of the protest.

Advancement, fragmentation and recomposition of the organization: 2001-2002

In full development of the movement, and undoubtedly due to the projection it was acquiring, as well as the support from SEMARNAP,⁸ there was organization advancement that was reflected not only in the presence thus far achieved, but also because of the severity of its demands and the perspective its actions gave them.

In January 2001, sea currents, bathymetry and water quality were analyzed in the bay area next to Puerto Mío project by doctor Héctor Vélez Muñoz, titular researcher of Physical Oceanography of the Metropolitan Autonomous University, he found a series of technical inconsistencies and gaps in the Manifestation of Environmental Impact of said project (*Costa Libre*, 2001). Even the head of Inspection and Municipal Vigilance affirmed that: "the representatives of Puerto Mío have committed several environmental crimes such as beginning the construction of the breakwater without the proper authorization; deceitfully winning terrains to the sea without prior permission; the dragging and thus, the disappearance of the ecosystem of all the zone the breakwater affects with the Almacén beach disappearance due to the edification of a masonry wall" (*El Sur de Acapulco*, 2001: 1-2).

However, and due to conception differences on how to direct the organization, and even the sort of leadership and mistrusts toward one of the main leaders, there was a division into two groups: those who break with

⁸ It refers to the promotion at national level of States and municipalities to propose programs of development and environmental protection, framed in the Prior Programs of the very Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources.

the original association and those who kept the original name. There were even gender reasons, to the extent that seemingly activist women were not given the place they deserved and that the organization was managed with macho criteria, besides democratic participation was not fostered, but “line was given” and it had to be followed as it was told by the leader (Interview 2).

By the end of 2001 and the early 2002 the differences had an effect and a new leadership appeared, basically feminine in the part which came from the movement searching for a recomposition and continue the fight in defense of the bay. It was an internal blow which momentarily affected the strength of the movement; nonetheless, it would later show, due to the relentless commitment and the displayed work capacity mainly of women that it only was a refunctionalization of the organization, as a result of the necessary feedback to correct errors and not falling into a possible cooptation from the government (Interview 2).

It was thus that dissidents restarted the work to group again, now under a new conception of organization and the fight to be continued, reason why they thought, discussed and decided to conform a network, bearing three criteria in mind: that it would not be again a centralized organization, that allowed and was based on a functioning more flexible and adaptable to the conditions of struggle; without the need to have a legal registration, nor the visibility of the leaders (due to security reasons); and that enabled the facilitation of links between the participant organizations, strengthen the interchanges and secure and diversify the necessary social supports to perform the network’s activities (Interview 3).

ROGAZ consolidation, unity and continuity of the movement: 2002-2005

As a consequence of a constant work, with strategies which combined legal struggle with activism and the strengthening of the internal unity of the network, the maturity of the movement was in process, where the collective actions were oriented to continue not only because of the demand to stop the breakwater and revise the authorization of the whole “Puerto Mío” project, but also that in this stage the organization had reached a political level that gave it a multiplied force, and the accumulation of experience

and solidity of the principles foresaw its continuity as social movement.

Likewise, did not only ROGAZ achieve recomposing its integration, but also incorporating many of the original organizations, as well as broadening its objective base making room for other demands that mainly included the defense of human rights, and the defense of causes considered as just, not only in Zihuatanejo, but also in the state of Guerrero, such as the problem of La Parota⁹, and even partake supporting other movements, such as the struggle of the ejido-holders from San Salvador Atenco (State of Mexico), who were opposed to the construction of an international airport (interview 4).

Mainly because of the consequence in actions, trust among ROGAZ members, and the constant public presence in defense of the bay, a decisive step had been given in the affirmation of the fight since the organization achieved the legitimation of the problem, this is, making different organizations, sectors and people from the place recognize the genuineness and necessity of the network's demands, which did not only imply the acceptance of it, but also the disposition to support the cause and the incorporation into the demonstrations in function of the requirements and possibilities to devote time and efforts (Interview 5).

In this context, by October 2003, a group of federal deputies belonging to the Party of Democratic Revolution (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*) held a meeting with local authorities and non-governmental organizations in order to analyze the quay's situation, and were committed to appoint the general director of Environmental Risk and Impact of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources, so as to be precisely informed on the bases to grant permissions to Puerto Mío project (Chamber of Deputies, *Cámara de Diputados*, 2004).

Later on, in February 2004, environmental groups of Zihuatanejo presented a denounce before the Special Prosecution Office for Environmen-

⁹ Project of the Government of the State of Guerrero to construct a hydrologic dam that would supply the needs of the City of Acapulco, and that has been questioned by millions of ejido-holders of the affected zone, being created a new movement opposed to the dam that has achieved plenty of solidarity, both national and international.

tal Crimes (*Fiscalía Especial para Delitos Ambientales, FEDA*) of the General Courtroom of the Republic, where they ask to halt the beach's pollution as well as the expansion of real estate development in detriment of the zone's biodiversity.

Then, in June of the same year, the Commission of Environment and Natural Resources of the Honorable Chamber of Deputies (*Comisión de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales de la H. Cámara de Diputados*) visited Zihuatanejo's bay motivated by the World Environment Day, when they became aware that the environmental problem provoked by the aforementioned tourist development was more complex, being generated a greater deterioration mainly in water quality, for the residual waters from the treatment plants were drained onto the bay, and the breakwater had modified the natural sea currents. The damage is so extensive, that in its governmental actions the government of the State of Guerrero aims to instrument the Program of Integral Sanitation of the Bay of Zihuatanejo (*Programa de Saneamiento Integral de la Bahía de Zihuatanejo*), and the revision of the study of environmental impact of Puerto Mío project is proposed, which the National Institute of Ecology (*Instituto Nacional de Ecología*) had earlier determined to demolish; however, the responsible company has legal protection for said breakwater (Cámara de Diputados, 2004).

Based on the facts, and since the petition by ROGAZ in the sense that performing a revaluation of the project was not allowed, as such figure does not exist in the law nor in the regulation of the General Law of Ecologic Equilibrium and Protection to Environment (*Ley General del Equilibrio Ecológico y Protección al Ambiente, LEGEPA*) in relation to environmental impact, The Commission of the Chamber of Deputies reached an agreement point which: 1) SEMARNAT was exhorted to carry out the corresponding studies to formulate and exercise a Program of Ecologic Restoration based on LEGEPA; 2) another exhortation to the very SEMARNAT so as to review the procedures of authorization of the construction of the quay and the whole "Puerto Mío" Project in order to consider the juridical consequences and violations to LEGEPA regulations, reporting this to the Chamber of Deputies; and 3) an exhortation to the government of the State that in accordance with the 2004 Program of Integral Sanitation of

the Bay of Zihuatanejo reports to the chamber on the revision of the study of environmental impact of the reference project (Cámara de Diputados, 2004).

Finally, as a result of the management and activism of ROGAZ, on February 2nd 2005, the General Coordination of Ports and Merchant Marine of the Secretariat of Communications and Transport (*Coordinación General de Puertos y Marina Mercante de la Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transporte*) issued an agreement by means of which legal protection against the construction of the breakwater in the quay called “Puerto Mío” was granted, and the municipal authorities are demanded to carry out a revision on the fulfillment of obligations agreed between the government and the company (Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes, 2005: 1).

With this important achievement, ROGAZ movement finally managed to stop the construction, retake force to continue, strengthen the unity of collective actions and consolidate its intervention in favor of the beach. Likewise, internally, the organization reaffirmed its integration and the adequate performance, which at the same time implied the challenge of preserving the level of commitment not only with the initial responsibility, but also with other series of struggles and the calls of help which ROGAZ could assist to.

ROGAZ reflectivity

In order to develop this section, we articulate two main concepts; that of reflexivity and that of social network in a statement that allows analyzing the performance and ROGAZ’s principal features, in the framework of the complexity that represents its capacity to be aware of its actions’ reflexive character, as well as the consequences of its actions on the very organization, and of the definitions of the situation which work as signification frameworks¹⁰ upon which collective actions are given meaning.

¹⁰ They are conceptual approaches constructed by the members of the organization that express a set of interests, values, beliefs, and ideological goals wherein a specific meaning to said problems, and because of this the decided actions to legitimize it and solve it acquire meaning. See Chihu (2006).

In the first aspect, we consider that reflexivity implies self-awareness, self-reference and the construction of meanings; whereas in the second, we notice a schema with a model of social network that will be applied in the study case, and within and through which the network's manifold referred reflexivity is sought to be illustrated (Ferreira, 2005).

Analytic model of social network

We start from considering that data from experience are not given, but acquired by means of scientific activity, and bear the mark of its theoretical activity. They are, somehow, abstractions elaborated and constructed by the researcher. Likewise, it is of interest to develop a statement that does not only have as a purpose the construction of object-models that simply show the phenomenal factors of the processes, but also that considers the internal structure of the process; also known as realistic models, which seek to grasp the subjacent structures, transcending the purely phenomenal (Castorina, 1993).

A central principle of the construction of models is the epistemological supposition of that which is affirmed in the models has a correspondence in reality, independently from our knowledge; in the same manner, the theoretical model describes a type of object or system providing it with something that could be called a structure, composition or internal mechanism, with reference to which several properties of this object or system are tried to be explained (Bourdieu and Chamboredon, 2004).

Such structure or composition of the model, when we conceive the network as *a system of links between nodes oriented toward the interchange of social support* (Martínez, 2004) consists in the following:

There are five fundamental components in this definition:

- Nodes
- Link
- System of links
- Interchange
- Social support

a. *Nodes*. They are the components between which links are established. They can be people, social actors, groups or organizations (institutional or communal).

b. *Link*. It is the system of communication established between nodes.

c. *System of links*. Regarding the network's core is the set of links between nodes, this is to say, the network is not a set of nodes, but rather a system of links. In the case of our interest, then, if we want to describe a personal social network, we should not focus on the specific characteristics of each one of the individuals (nodes), but on the peculiarities of the relations established between them.

d. *Interchange*. In the relation between nodes there is an interchange. The reciprocal interchange can be established at the affective/emotional, material, financial, social or other sort of level.

e. *Social support*. As a result of this interchange process social support is produced for the nodes. The social network thus provides the indispensable framework for the social support to flow to the nodes. The dimension of the social support includes emotional or affective support, material and financial help, personal assistance, information and positive social contacts.

ROGAZ's peculiarities

The most important characteristics are presented below, based on the elements of the analytical model, pondering the capacity and particularities that were observed, and from the interviews with the members¹¹, as well as observations¹² of the functioning and performance of ROGAZ.

¹¹ Semi-structured interviews were held based on a general guide that explores, from the motivations to participate, considering the personal trajectory in the organization, objectives, strategies and successes in it, as well as the different collective actions unfolded and the perspectives they have. Later the answers were condensed and a discourse was elaborated with the content expressed by the interviewees.

¹² The ten observations reported, which sought their objectification, consisted in the accompaniment and testimony from the two observers of the development of five meetings with the representatives of the 20 organizations that integrate ROGAZ. Reporting the behaviors, interactions, interventions, communications, declarations, debates, argumentations and agreements in a registration sheet, and later were presented synthesizing these elements within the components of the network considered for the analysis of the case.

NODES: the components between which the links are established correspond to both the twenty organizations that make up ROGAZ and a series of people, who do not want to be the representatives of them but take active part as reference and linkage points with the rest of nodes, spreading messages, agreements and information generated in the network's meetings, as well as that which appears on the go and is considered relevant to spread it at any time. This peculiarity represents a very interesting advantage in comparison to networks we could call rigid, to the extent that for these links are only established between different nodes; but in the case we analyze here there is not centrality of the nodes, but any person involved in the network formally or not, who decides to intervene in the communal communicative chain, either with information of the actions of the network itself or some social agent with a position in the conflict (government, company, other organizations or social actors) is able to generate communicative flows that feed ROGAZ process. This modality is feasible and very operative, mainly because people and organizations have knowledge of each other as they are Zihuatanejo locals, as they have friendship, partnership or at least neighborhood bonds, and having in mind that the defense of the Bay is the common cause that unites their demands and collective actions. Because of this, the informal links are the most solid support of the social fabric they construct, since the cause that moves them is a fundamental part of their lives, their quotidian occurrences, and the real possibilities of work and rational use of natural resources of the environment they develop in. This favors cohesion among the group, better understanding between its members and an adequate coordination of efforts in the consecution of specific objectives, either to boost collective actions or punctual tasks. The network's structuring from the nodes and people eliminates hierarchies and centralism, which strengthens a horizontal organization based upon the principle of equality. At the time, this condition of equality is the base to establish behavior norms (written or not) and the acceptance of agreements and decisions, aside from the direct participation in the convoked meetings. However, the equality in participation does not prevent a group, commission or people in determinate situations or for particular ends from acquiring a starring role, but it is rather interchangeable, as it is convenient for the network as a whole, in such manner

that those with the best of speech abilities will fulfill certain tasks which require this, without the rest being left aside from participating with their abilities and responsibilities. As a complement, the possibility for other people and social actors who do not normally act as nodes in the system of links to partake has allowed the movement to continue broadening its supporting base, at the same time it incorporates other non-directly related demands to the bay defense in to the fight, such as human rights, endangered species' protection, or the conditions of women who have suffered intra-familial violence, thus strengthening the platform of struggle and raising the organization's level hence constructed. (Observation 1; Observation 2).

LINK: As a system of communication that is established between the nodes, and to a good extent also because of the characteristic already stated of belonging to all the inhabitants from Zihuatanejo, who at the time play different social roles, such as being heads of family, independent professionals, citizens with obligations and rights, members of diverse associations and many more, a series of interactions develop between them, which even go beyond their belonging to the network, and that correspond to the communal matrix of the integration processes which all the people are inscribed in, the main communication means is direct oral dialogue, i.e., communication thought speech. Which presents a set of relevant features for ROGAZ's functioning (Observation 3; Observation 4).

- 1) Being an interpersonal communication, not only does it transmit messages, but it also generates and transports attitudes, which implies the interchange of knowledge, emotions, and affections, as well as predispositions to assume a certain behavior.

- 2) It produces the confluence of purposes.

- 3) It reinforces and updates the creation of meaning frameworks, i.e., the dialogues on the objective and object of the organization, and the struggle to protect the bay as well as other subjects and topics added to the network's agenda, contribute to elaborate a discourse arguing on the real situation of the quay and the questioned works and rejected by the active community; in such manner that this version of the facts that is being constructed and re-signified works as the reference and meaning framework wherein collec-

tive actions and individuals of the network are justified and acquire meaning, by means of which the alternative discourse consolidates and the discourse increase its richness and spreads as the truth of the social movement and of the organization that protests and proposes.

4) Interpersonal communication, besides, strengthens bonds between members consolidating the dynamics of the group in a constant interactive process irradiated in the territory and gaining presence and legitimacy. It is a second-level interaction, to the extent that direct communication supposes the mediation of each interlocutor with the actions' main objective (first level), and the interaction between peers who have the same responsibility in the agreed program of struggle.

5) In a similar manner, direct oral communication contributed to the elimination of noises that could be generated when a communicational process is started, as there is a positive communication based on trust and the conviction that the task is everyone's and each one has to contribute to it.

SYSTEM OF LINKS: it is interesting here to consider the peculiarities of the relations establish between the Nodes. There are three main types of relations with the stated characteristics: relations of solidarity, relations of reflexivity and relation of identification.

a. Relations of solidarity

1) Solidarity by identity; it is the solidarity of interest and identities in common. Nevertheless, the social movement of our interest has become broad and general among diverse collectivities, organizations and people, working as a common principle to all the forms of collective action that have been fostered.

2) Solidarity by complementariness; it is one of the successful and "naturally" fomented consolidated ways in the construction of ROGAZ. It appears from the interchange of experiences, ideas. They are relations where the important are the mutual supportive actions and bilateral exchanges that work as activities of cooperation and contribute to strengthen the bonds between the different collectives and at the time they are the opportunity

to offer the other what each of the members is able to manage as a good or service the network provides as a whole.

3) Solidarity as reciprocity; it is a typical form of communal solidarity, to the extent that it implies mutual support between activists from different movements, such as it is the case of those who defend women's rights but in different trends, for instance those who are in favor of equality or those who work in favor of their human rights.

4) Solidarity from affinity; part of a series of values, feelings, ideas and even identities that are shared without boundaries. The most significant case is the affinity between pacifist, ecologist and civil right movements to the extent they are opposed the neoliberal policy of the federal government; nonetheless, they also share a set of values such as the interdependence of society and nature, respect for all forms of life, the fight for gender equity and against poverty and peace in the world inside the countries, which generate solid bonds of solidarity, open to include other ideas and feelings related to the great objective of advancing in the processes of social change.

5) Solidarity by restitution; reposition is another support for global solidarity that ROGAZ is now incorporating in its agenda, as it means to fight for a set of reparations and compensations derived from the acceptance of the responsibility for errors or abuses. Hence, we can talk about responsibility for environmental damage.

b. Relations of reflexivity

The basic supposition is that this sort of concordances is constructed between reflexive partakers in interaction. Here the notion of reflexivity is referred to the communicative action on "knowledge in action", this is to say, "know from", which is accessed only when we are in the context of putting it into practice, for the conditions to achieve it are given.

Likewise, reflexivity expresses the need and possibility to "self-observe-us", through a "mutual observation" interaction. It is about sharing the look of the other, who also requires that "other look", since that perception is the one which we can use for, to a certain extent, not going blind to see how much of what we perceive and interpret of the situation are the ef-

fects of our own inventions, and to which extent we intervene taken by judgments, information and attitudes that have not been contrasted to the opinion of other partakers (Pakman, 1999).

As a complement, relations of reflexivity indeed permit to interact as “mirrors” of the community’s occurrences and in the quotidian facts, in such a way that all that which appears as evident at first sight is updated and becomes clear, so precision is gained as well as the adequate framing of the happenings and interventions of all the agents and social actors implied in the conflict and fabric of visions, opinions and stances around it.

c. Relations of identification

They are interpersonal connections that generate a collective field of imaginary certainties, based on which the subject builds their identity; in other words, the certainty of themselves individual in their role as a member of the network. Apart from this encounter in conversation, which includes agreements and disagreements, identification is built as a totality of meaning elaborated among equals, where each speaker agrees his manner of speaking with the rest. This is to say, they privilege in the speech what this has in common, to be articulated with the other’s speech. That is why, it can be said that in the interactions inside the group, this tends to “normalize” interactions, as it forces the individual speeches to leave the adherences of the singular, and even of each individual’s “own” visions. Similarly, in the identificatory interactions the different situations, such as diverse experiences, biographies and social circumstances, as a matter of fact lose their singularity to be risen to the word status, at level where they are communicable. (Canales and Peinado, 1999: 294).

The relations of identification, to the extent they help to construct collective identity, contribute to self-definition and self-recognition as parts of the network, assimilating the experiences of the context-environment that communicates the individual with the cultural universe —shared values and symbols— and which provides meaning to the actions, allowing at the time perform certain elections and make the very biography coherent (Makowsky, 1996). It implies thus, a location in the social space however from the subjective point of view; this location defines the representations

the actors have of themselves and of others, hence that identity is always distinctive or differential in respect to the rest of positions and social actors. And the interactions favor the articulation of the individual's sphere with that of the collectivity and the group (Observation 5: 12/17/2004; Observation 6: 12/17/2004).

Interchange

The main forms of interchange observed in ROGAZ process are the following:

Affective-emotional interchange; this sort of reciprocity is very important in the construction of the network, as not only does it reinforce and update interpersonal relations and group cohesion, but also generates and multiplies constant flows of solidarity, which work as the organization's "cement". Being comfortably expressed the emotions and affections of the different people in the group in a context of partnership and comprehension consistent links of empathy are produced, to the extent that everyone has the capacity to "take the other's place", of living symbolically the moment which everyone undergoes, thus strengthening the collective attitudes and bonds.

Informative-documental interchange; in the constant and complex process of making a social network, information interchanges and documentation are a supply for group and individual work, as it is from this material that activities become dynamic, or tasks are programmed and reprogrammed, the division of labor is adjusted, appointments are prioritized and, in general, the lines along which personal and collective performance are to be controlled. What is interesting in the experience lays in the fact that these interchanges flow with two clearly differenced criteria: that information and documentation on which it is necessary to be approached by the participants, and other which due to their characteristics is convenient to be managed by one person or several people; nevertheless, all the network would be informed on their management and consequences.

Argumentative-opinion interchange; another form of interchange, with great relevance as well is referred to the socialization of a series of reasoning related to the avatars of the struggle, to the extent that they are the

base of the frameworks of signification which, as it was already indicated, provide meaning to the collective and individual actions, in addition they enable and contribute to reach a determinate level of command and management of the problem, once all the members of the network are in conditions of applying the clearest and most solid argumentations at any time and circumstance. Likewise, the interchange of arguments influences the configuration of an opinion on the conflict, the actors and actions, being thus produced a positive communication flow where the main components are not only the immediate points of view or appearance, but the ways of looking at things, with a conviction that it is the way they are, this is to say, with a rational-reflexive support, which favors and multiplies proposing and coordinating associations in order to carry out an endless number of tasks (micro-mobilizations) of quotidian character; however, as a whole and in perspective support and create a “shield” against opposed versions or which come from other social agents with whom there is no coincidence (Observation 7: 01/07/2005; Observation 8: 01/07/2005).

Social support

In this first approach to the description and understanding of ROGAZ construction process the following types are observed:

Affective-emotional support; it is a series of help, solidarity, support and motivation behaviors that are spontaneously, uninterestedly and sincerely shared, and whose function is to restore the emotional balance of the group, from the channeling of sensible forces that comfort the spirit, provide companion to those who in a certain moment suffer a misadventure or a difficult situation, at the same time they provide safety, reliability and a relative optimism in respect to the ongoing situation. Here the important presence and participation of women is fundamental, to the extent that for them it is irreplaceable and necessary the expression of affection and emotions, which encourages the group to express these feelings. Complementarily, this “collective affection”, as well as strengthening will, re-signifying collective memory and overcoming possible isolations, operates as the articulation of the exposures of collective sensations that can be directed accompanied by words, i.e., symbolically.

Tactic-strategic support; it is a very important help, since it is mainly offered at the times when decisions related to immediate actions are needed; nonetheless, the ways to reach the set goals. In this entry, the network establishes the framing where the most suitable selection of procedures and people allows the organization to carry on with those central activities for the movement's advancement. Similarly, strategic support has to do with the use of strengths and the recognition of weaknesses, which even favors certain actions' planning and the necessary discipline to channel the efforts along the right path.

Informative-propagandistic support; a fundamental back-up on the network's functioning and development has to do with the supply of information, virtually of any kind, related to the conflict and the process in progress. Here, it is interesting to underscore not only the interchange of it, but also the search for that which is missing, which allows following a trace that complements the information at hand, or that which due to its newness represents a significant point of attention. Then, when demands, occurrences, supports and in general the relevant messages are diffused, irradiated and spread in order to update the group, an important encouragement is shared, as well as a support to the actions of each one of the network's members. This sort of support additionally offers the opportunity to include people and organizations into the network, as well as supporters who want contribute with information and defend the causes the network has taken, moreover as it gains visibility with a support value at all times and circumstances (Observation 9; Observation 10).

Final reflections

Social reflexivity appears as one of the most developed mechanisms of ROGAZ social movement's dynamics and it is expressed in the forms of self-awareness, self-reference and social construction of reality, supporting to a good extent the identities and the set of collective actions of its process thus far.

As a ROGAZ's special feature, in the construction of the civil movement, we witnessed the stage of resistance, the autonomy and new activism, orienting the actions toward the solution of the legitimized social prob-

lems.

Reflexivity, however far from eliminating uncertainties, includes them into a scheme where rationality is permeated by the paradoxical character of the social actions; notwithstanding wherein each association produces their own vision of the facts and situations, displaying several options as for the argumentations that justify actions.

The organization hereby analyzed presents a fundant reflexivity, from which signifying frameworks have been built and all the fabric of symbolic interactions the collective discourses support. Likewise, it gives an account of the complex relations that cross and give way to the different schemas wherefrom social reality is constructed, focusing the attention on the inner cores of reflexive action, as well as the whole process of reflexivity thus elaborated.

As a source and antecedent to the legitimation of social problems, the reflexivity of the social movement operates as a first-level device of knowledge, as it grasps and processes a set of information that determines the behavior to follow. Therefore, the movement's reflexivity, in addition to incorporate the contingent social reflexivity, responds as a central core in the elaboration of the meanings that orient the meaning of the actions, as the vision and position change that reflexivity generates in its function of generator of symbolic controversies with the prevailing discourse help the collective actions of the movement and its organizations follow a process of construction of conflicts and other forms of solving the social problems that cause the most preoccupation.

A conclusion that closes the statement hereby developed is that the structuring and dynamics of the network's functioning constitutes an eminently reflexive mechanism, which turns out to be basic to achieve self-awareness, self-reference and capacity to construct a social alternative of reality.

Bibliography

- Aranda, José (2006), *Construcción del movimiento ambientalista en México, 1980-2005*, México: Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Claude Chamboredon (2004), *El oficio de sociólogo*, Mexico: Siglo XXI.
- Cámara de Diputados (2004), "Dictamen de exhorto a la Semarnat", Gobierno de la República, Mexico.
- Canales, Miguel and Rodolfo Peinado (1999), "Grupos de discusión", in J. Delgado and J. Gutiérrez, *Métodos y Técnicas cualitativas de investigación en Ciencias Sociales*, Madrid: Síntesis.
- Castorina, José *et al.* (1993), *Explicación y modelos en Psicología*, Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.
- azés, José (1999), *Creación de alternativas en México*, México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades.
- Chihu, Aquiles [coord.] (2006), El "análisis de los marcos" en la sociología de los movimientos sociales, Mexico: CONACYT-UAM, Iztapalapa, Porrúa.
- Ferreira, Manuel (2005), "La reflexividad social transductiva. La construcción práctico-cognitiva de lo social y de la Sociología", in *Revista Nómadas*, num. 11.
- Klandermans, Bert and Sidney Tarrow (1988), "Mobilization into social movements: synthesing European and American approaches", in *International Social Movements Research*, num. 1.
- Laraña, Enrique (1999), *La construcción de los movimientos sociales*, Madrid: Alianza.
- Martínez, V. (2004), "El modelo de Redes Sociales", in http://ps_comunitaria.tripod.cl/trabajos_catedra/redes.htm
- Makowsky, Susana (1996), "Identidad y subjetividad en cárceles de mujeres", in *Estudios Sociológicos*, vol. XIV, num. 40, Mexico: El Colegio de México.
- Melucci, Antonio (1994), "Qué hay de nuevo en los nuevos movimientos sociales?", in Laraña and Gusfield [eds.], *Los nuevos movimientos sociales: de la ideología a la identidad*, Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas.
- Navarro, Carlos (1999), "Las dos formas de la reflexividad social humana: reflexividad reflective y reflexividad disipativa", in *Psicología social II*,

Document 9, Course 2004.

Pakman, Mauricio (1999), “Investigación e intervención en grupos familiares. Una perspectiva constructivista”, in Delgado, J. and J. Gutiérrez, *Métodos y Técnicas cualitativas de investigación en Ciencias Sociales*, Madrid: Síntesis.

Saidon, O. (1995), “Redes, pensar de otro modo”, in Dabas and Najmanovic [comp.], *Redes, el lenguaje de los vínculos*, Buenos Aires: Paidós.

Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes (2005), *Lista de Acuerdos*, published on February 2nd, 2005, Mexico: Gobierno de México.

SEMARNAP (1997), *Ley General de Equilibrio Ecológico y la Protección al Ambiente*, Mexico.

Thiebaut, C. (1998), *Vindicación del ciudadano. Un sujeto reflexivo en una sociedad compleja*, Barcelona: Paidós.

Electronic references

S.O.S. BAHÍA (2005), “Nuestra lucha”, at <<http://www.sosbahia.org/historia.html>>

Newspaper sources

Costa Libre (2001), “Inconsistencias en el proyecto ‘Puerto Mío’”, num. 5, Zihuatanejo, Guerrero.

Costa Libre (1995b), “¿Qué le dejan los cruceros a la bahía?”, num. 3, Zihuatanejo, Guerrero.

Costa Libre (1995a), “La obra que nunca debió aprobarse”, num. 1, Zihuatanejo, Guerrero.

Costa Libre (1995), “¿Se necesita un muelle de “alto nivel” para Zihuatanejo?”, Zihuatanejo, Guerrero.

El Sur de Acapulco (2001), “Delito ambiental en la Bahía de Zihuatanejo”, Acapulco, Guerrero.

Oral Sources

Interview 1: Leader of *Comité de Maestros Solidarios*, 12/06/2004.

Interview 2: Leader of *Sociedad para la protección de animales de Zihuatanejo*, 12/06/2004.

Interview 3: Leader of *Colegio de Abogados*, 12/07/2004.

Interview 4: Leader of *Grupo Ecologista Nuevo Amanecer*, 12/07/2004.

Interview 5: Dirigente de *Organización por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos*, 12/08/2004.

Observations' registration

Observation 1: 10/12/2004, observation 2: 10/12/2004, observation 3: 14/12/2004, observation 4: 14/12/2004, observation 5: 17/12/2004, observation 6: 17/12/2004, observation 7: 07/01/2005, observation 8: 07/01/2005, observation 9: 14/01/2005, observation 10: 14/01/2005

José María Aranda Sánchez. Doctor in Urbanism from the National Autonomous University of Mexico. His research lines are: social movements in Mexico and Latin America. His most recent publications are: "Social networks and reflexivity: their importance in the construction of civil society in Mexico" (*Redes sociales y reflexividad: su importancia en la construcción de la sociedad civil en México*) in *Ciencia Ergo Sum* (2007); "Gender perspective for the analysis of feminine participation in environmental organizations: the case of the Organization of Ecologist Women from the Sierra de Petatlán, Guerrero" (*Perspectiva de género para el análisis de la participación femenina en organizaciones ambientalistas: El caso de la Organización de Mujeres Ecologistas de la Sierra de Petatlán, Guerrero*) in *Territorios* (Virtual journal) (2007); Construction of the environmental movement in Mexico 1980-2005 (*Construcción del Movimiento Ambientalista en México 1980-2005*) (2006).

Sent to dictum: June 7th, 2007

Resent: August 29th, 2007

Approval: October 3rd, 2007