

Verduzco-Chavez, B. 1997. Transnational activism and environmental conflicts in the United States-Mexico border region. Ph.D. Dissertation. Rutgers. 258pp.

Using quantitative and qualitative methods the dissertation focuses on the analysis of environmental conflicts as a way of understanding relationships between environmental activism and other changes observed in the six Mexican states bordering the United States. A distinction was made between domestic and international conflicts. The goal was to identify factors associated with the emergence and the internationalization of conflicts and to stress the different challenges posed by popular mobilization fighting against environmental problems. Multivariate analysis techniques are used on two data bases. The first uses census data and other indicators for the 273 municipalities in the states of Baja California, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, and Tamaulipas to analyze the conditions associated with variations on levels of activism. The second uses a survey of conflicts prepared from newspapers and interviews with key informants to test hypotheses about the internationalization of conflicts. Analysis of this information and further research of four case studies indicates that high levels of conflict are influenced by the regional disparities produced by urbanization and industrialization observed in the region as its economy is increasingly integrating to world markets. The study also shows the existence of political opportunities is influencing levels of activism and facilitating the process of transnational cooperation among activists. The analysis of four case studies support the argument that internationalization of conflicts is a process clearly associated with the existence of experienced activists in both sides of the border who are able to develop a common agenda focused into specific problems such as toxic waste or air pollution preferably located close to the border, and especially to regional centers of activism such as Southern California or Arizona. The analysis also suggest that government responses tend to put more attention on community protection and consider alternative technologies in those cases involving activists who are able to bring national, and even international attention to the environmental threats to the living conditions of border residents.