

# Diagnosis for Civil Society Organizations in the state of Guerrero: their contribution to social issues

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**Abstract:** This article aims to analyze the situation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the state of Guerrero. The research involved the following stages: 1) Exploration of the available literature on CSOs in the state of Guerrero; 2) Review of the history of the state of Guerrero, mainly concerning the social movements and the so-called “Dirty War” of the seventies; 3) Systematization of journalistic notes, webpages of the CSOs and interviews with researchers working with CSOs; and 4) Review of the current situation of the role of the CSOs in relation to the state government and their degree of effect and institutionalism, determining whether they contribute to solving public issues at the subnational level.

**Keywords:** civil society, civil society organization, social movement

**Resumen:** Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar la situación de las Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil (OSC) en el estado de Guerrero. La investigación involucró las siguientes etapas: 1) Exploración de la literatura disponible sobre OSC en el estado de Guerrero; 2) Revisión de la historia del estado de Guerrero, principalmente sobre los movimientos sociales y la llamada “guerra sucia” de los años setenta; 3) Sistematización de notas periodísticas, páginas web de las OSC y entrevistas con investigadores que trabajan con OSC; y 4) Revisión de la situación actual del rol de las OSC en relación con el gobierno estatal y su grado de efecto e institucionalidad, determinando si contribuyen a resolver problemas públicos a nivel subnacional. .

**Palabras clave:** sociedad civil, organización de la sociedad civil, movimiento social

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The diagnosis was made by referring to the national situation emphasizing the behavior of the Mexican political system.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the subnational level, in the last few years, the state of Guerrero has been analyzed for the significant events that recall a political and social crisis. From the decade of the seventies in the twentieth century, and until the first two decades of this century, tensions between the political institutions and some social organizations saw significant moments for the political system and for society itself. The state of Guerrero has cases of political authoritarianism, corruption and organized crime.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Elvia León Salazar for her contribution to this work, having systematized the data contained herein.

<sup>2</sup> The national problems in the post revolution and postwar governments from 1950 to 2000 were not fully resolved. During that half of a century, governments at federal, state and municipal levels modified the route and the destiny of the ideals that the Mexican Revolution had applied and defended between 1910 and 1940. The main ones are the concentration of political power in a small, immovable group through free elections, which the specialized literature called “hegemonic party system” and the concentration of the wealth in an oligarchy that resulted in an uneven distribution of wealth in the population. The national project, adopted during this period, consisting of economic and social development to take the Mexican people into the modern sector according to the international economic circumstances. This implied the need to create an alliance between the State and the organized popular sectors. The answer from the State was corporatism, a structure that worked

## Guerrero and its civil society on the rise

The findings of the research point to Guerrero being an authoritarian regime that regressed from its sovereign entity status when the control of the governing function was put into the hands of the President of Mexico (Díaz Ordaz at the time) through the federal army, a situation that came out of that was later called the “Dirty War” (Castañón, 1998).

The discontent with a government that could not establish the bases that would contribute to fulfilling the demands of society either because indeed it did not have the necessary elements to develop its administrative capacity or because the government decided that these demands were not important. This led society to take action, not considered as movements against the establishment or revolutionary movements, but as peaceful manifestations organized at the beginning of the 80s in the twentieth century, it was among other things, the origin of the non-governmental organizations that over time became the Civil Society Organizations.<sup>3</sup>

In 2000, after 71 years of being governed by the same party, Mexico experienced a change in government at the federal level with the election of Vicente Fox Quesada, the candidate from the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN by its Spanish acronym). However, this politico-electoral transition did not take place in Guerrero until 2005, when Zeferino Torreblanca Galindo from the Democratic Revolutionary Party (Partido de la Revolución Democrática, PRD by its Spanish acronym) lost his seat as governor (Larrosa, 2008).

In the last years of the 80s in the 20th century and until today, tensions between the political center and the regions have marked significant moments in the forming of the cohesive features of the political system and the Mexican State. In Guerrero’s case, the issue is serious, since violence, in its different expressions, and poverty are seen as characteristic traits of the state. The sociodemographic data of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, INEGI by its Spanish acronym) at the end of the 90s eloquently expressed the relation between poverty and violence: the state of Guerrero occupied the last position among Mexican states in terms of running water; second to last in terms of sewage services; third to last in terms of level of literacy. These figures are comparable to the world’s least developed country: Haiti. Only 11.2% of the population had completed elementary school and according to the National Population Council (Consejo Nacional de Población, CONAPO by its Spanish acronym), 78% of the state’s municipalities were considered as highly or very highly marginalized. These statistics would allow us to deduce that the underdevelopment and poverty situations are the cause of the violent context that the state is now experiencing; however, it would be erroneous not to consider the political element.

over a long period due to its paternalist character from which both sides benefited. Over the years, this form of government ran its course and social mobilization returned, particularly the student movement in 1968, making society notice the urgent need to change from authoritarianism and its antidemocratic expression in the Mexican political system. The actors in the movement (the enlightened middle class) urged meeting society’s demands and insisted on greater opportunity for citizen involvement, meaning those who did not belong to the political oligarchy, in the government agenda; they also fought for greater freedom of expression, and to establish a foundation for social justice and true rule of law.

<sup>3</sup> The CSOs emerge from the civil society, they promote different modalities of development, some focus on questioning government decisions, play a role in political life and assume the right and obligation to participate in the designing, making and even monitoring the use of public actions. The political pluralism and opening up of the Mexican government amid the changes on the political, economic and technological domains experienced at the international level,

especially after the 80s in the 20th century, granted them a higher grade of institutionalization. The CSOs organize themselves to work on public issues or to propose alternatives on social, political and economic subjects. The recognition of this situation allowed them in some cases to negotiate with the government and to open more channels to contribute to political decisions as well as possibly obtaining resources. The CSOs continuous participation and the efficacy of their activities, as well as their power to network, are characteristics that have classified them as social actors that at times are politicized to change the public space and strengthen the civil society in the Mexican political system. The organizations and the movements went from being actors to becoming social agents, managing their workforce interests and they started to generate another type of civil society that escapes from the process of co-opting the government, moving away from its conceptualization as their privileged contact. During these years, organized society showed its influence on institutional changes, both with its demands, and with the methods used to contribute in the public space.

Guerrero was formed as a federal state on October 27, 1849 and, since then, political relations were established based on cacicazgos (chiefdoms), which have operated through partisan and patronage relationships. The state caciques exercise formal and informal power through Town Offices and State Government levels, along with, as researcher Alba Teresa Estrada states, Guerrero being the first federal entity of the country where the authoritarian regime regressed from its status as a sovereign entity to being treated as a territory by handing over the control of the function of governing to then President Díaz Ordaz via the federal army. This situation, over time, was categorized as the “Dirty War”.

Historically, Guerrero has fought against oligarchic political powers, from the post-revolutionary period and especially starting in the sixties. Dispossession, racism, inequality, abuse of power from the three government levels, corporate corruption (tourism and real estate), injustice, an inequitable distribution of wealth, accompanied by the unlawful use of army and police forces, in addition to the absence of counterweights in the electoral arena and mechanisms to limit government officials and caciques, all features that have given a unique identity to the state (Quintero & Rodríguez, 2015).

In this controversial context appeared the social fighters and political dissidents who established the foundation of social action in the state. Guerrero has presented a context of continuity, of cycles, although some critical periods and conjunctures can be identified that were key to the outline of the forms of struggle characterized mainly as radical, and reinforced by regional resistance.

The first relevant CSOs in the state of Guerrero were founded in the fifties. In 1951, the Regional Union of Copra Producers was created, then in 1957 came the Cooperative Union of Producers of Coconut and its Derivatives. Both

organizations were initially dedicated to the defense of the interests of the producers, but they were nevertheless infiltrated by members of the government and businessmen, becoming manipulated and corrupt. The political strength demonstrated by these organizations led the PRI to invite candidates from their leadership to constitutional elections. This measure, instead of favoring them, made them vulnerable to the vicissitudes of political power.

In 1959, the Guerrero Civic Association (Asociación Cívica Guerrerense, ACG by its Spanish acronym) (Enciclopedia, 2012) emerged in Mexico City, with the purpose of putting an end to the abuses committed by the governor at the time, Raul Caballero Aburto, which consisted of nepotism, theft and fraud. In July 1960, his leadership was restructured in Iguala, with Genaro Vázquez Rojas as president and Antonio Sotelo Pérez as vice president. The ACG was established to fight for the democratic transformation of the state of Guerrero through legal conduits and channels, calling for popular and civic mobilization. Genaro Vázquez and Antonio Sotelo made a quick tour of work through Acapulco and Costa Grande (La Jornada Guerrero, 2012), where they contacted leaders of regional organizations, in order to prepare a fight against the regime of Caballero Aburto. For this reason, they were repressed at the hands of state authorities. In addition to the deep and widespread discontent of the people of Guerrero, this action provoked their reaction, and led to large popular protests.

On October 21, 1960, a student conflict erupted in Chilpancingo (Informador, 2014), where the ACG played a major role. In this event, its participation exceeded the resolutions and goals set by the strike committee led by Jesús Araujo Hernández. The boundaries of the struggle did not remain at the level of student movement in search of university autonomy: the objective was to overthrow the government of Raúl Caballero Aburto, and gain control of political power. In the autumn of that same year, this popular civic movement<sup>4</sup> occupied the better part of the state of Guerrero, gained strength in public spaces and demanded that all political power be extinguished. The local government, lacking legitimacy, was paralyzed by its inability to cope with popular mobilization, and more often resorted to violent

<sup>4</sup> The strength of the movement allowed gathering groups from different social classes in the Coalition for People Organizations.

repression. On January 4, 1961, then President Adolfo López Mateos gave the green light to the of the Union to decree that all power levels be extinguished in Guerrero, and Caballero Aburto was replaced by Supreme Court Minister, Arturo Martínez Adame (López, 2012). Nevertheless, this was only achieved as a result of the murder of 16 people and dozens injured, who participated in a rally held in the building of what is now the Autonomous University.

The ACG succeeded in overthrowing several mayors, instituting municipal councils headed by members of the Association, which demonstrated and reaffirmed its importance when state elections were held, as they participated by launching candidates for several municipal offices and state governors in the elections held in 1962. The candidate was José María Suárez Tellez, who, according to the ACG, won the PRI candidate election. But Dr. Raymundo Abarca Alarcón, was recognized as governor in Decree # 1 of the State Congress, dated March 5, 1963. This fact was considered by the ACG as an election fraud, so it called on the population to ignore Abarca Alarcón's win. In response, the opposition candidates and leaders were imprisoned and the protest was repressed by police forces and soldiers in the Iguala massacre of December 30, 1962. This was important because it revealed the struggle of the people of Guerrero, who defended the principles of unhindered respect for the citizen's vote and for democracy in the state, a fact that transformed the protest methods that would lead, years later,

to the transformation of the ACG into the National Civic Revolutionary Association (Asociación Cívica Nacional Revolucionaria, ACNR by its Spanish acronym).

Between 1963 and 1965, the ACG reoriented its objectives towards the agricultural sector. During that period, groups of farmers were created, apart from the National Farmer Confederation, which was one of the pillars of the PRI. On March 21, 1963, the Emiliano Zapata Revolutionary Agrarian League of the South (Liga Agraria Revolucionaria del Sur Emiliano Zapata) was created; by January 1964, the Independent Union of Coffee Producers (Unión Independiente de Productores de Café) was formed and, at the end of that year, the Free Union of Copra Associations (Unión Libre de Asociaciones Copreras); and in July 1965, the Independent Sesame Producers Union (Unión de Productores Independientes de Ajonjolí) was formed. The creation of these organizations strengthened the ACG, which agreed with them to hold an agricultural congress in the city of Chilpancingo, on August 20, 1965.<sup>5</sup>

Lucio Cabañas is another name that stood out in the sixties, a student at the Rural School of Ayotzinapa, and participant in the teachers' union, in the Revolutionary Movement of the Teaching Profession (Movimiento Revolucionario del Magisterio) and the National Liberation Movement (Movimiento de Liberación Nacional). He became one of the most representative figures in the fight against the so-called "Dirty War" of the seventies in Mexico. Cabaña's struggles were focused on the well-being of workers, farmers and women, for which he proposed financial, judicial, educational and social reforms, and no less importantly, for changing policy supporting Mexico's dependence on the United States. Later, he formed the Party of the Poor (Partido de los Pobres), as a way of organizing students and farmers.

The political turmoil provoked by these actors had great popular support, so for this reason, persecution was intensified in order to silence all voices of protest. On November 11, 1966, Genaro Vázquez was captured

<sup>5</sup> This congress approved a program of action called "the seven points" which strived for political freedom, that is, the end of all caciques in the government, and the establishment of a popular regime made up of workers, farmers, intellectuals, patriots and students; for scientific planning of the economy whose purpose was to maximize all natural resources available in the state and improve material and cultural living for the population; for the recovery of the mineral wealth that was in the hands of North American companies; for the respect of internal trade union political life; for the expansion and effectiveness of the rights of workers; for the distribution of major latifundiums; for the rescue of forestry riches, returning them to their owners, that is to say; the farmers; for the implementation of agricultural reform and providing social security benefits to the entire population; and finally, for the literacy and cultural development of the people. Taken from the book: Breve historia de la Asociación Cívica Guerrerense, jefaturada por Genaro Vázquez Rojas, del profesor Antonio Sotelo Pérez (Enciclopedia, 2012).

in Mexico City and was subsequently transferred and confined in the Iguala prison. He was later rescued on April 22, 1968, while being transferred to a nearby hospital for treatment of an oral disease. After his release, he went to the mountains, where he announced the transformation of the ACG into the ACNR, which, due to the previously foreseen circumstances, became a method of combat, but this time, with armed forces (Cuahtémoc, 2011).

At that time, as a political and military organization, the ACNR presented the following ideology: overthrow the oligarchy, consisting of large capitalists and ruling landlords; establish a coalition government, consisting of progressive workers, farmers, students and intellectuals; get full political and economic independence; and establish a new social order to benefit the working class of the country.

Due to Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabaña's insurgence, in 1968, the army went from harassment to concrete actions to dismantle armed movements in Guerrero. The death of Genaro Vázquez was announced on February 2, 1972, after the car in which he was travelling to Sierra de Guerrero crashed against a bridge wall, at the Mexico-Nogales Highway, km 226.7, Highway 15 in Michoacán. Needless to say, that his death was not prompt, since he was arrested there and transferred to the military hospital of Morelia where hours later, his death was made public on national television (Ferreyra, 2012).

In the meantime, Lucio Cabañas continued his struggle operating from the coast of Guerrero and his Rural Justice Brigades (Brigadas Campesinas Justicieras) attacked army battalions and police units, robbing banks and

kidnapping landowners, ranchers and merchants as a way of financing their fight against the local government.<sup>6</sup> The Party of the Poor could not establish a connection with the working sector, and by 1989, it was already merging with other clandestine groups, which in 1995 became the Popular Revolutionary Army (Ejército Popular Revolucionario), then later on, the Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo Insurgente) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of the People (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionaria del Pueblo).

Lucio Cabañas managed to flee several attacks, however, on December 2, 1974, he was killed in El Ototal, and his body was placed in the custody of Governor Israel Noguera Otero, who buried him in the municipal graveyard of Atoyac. His guerrilla tactics that began as a form of self-defense turned into guerrilla fighting for seven years while Cabañas still lived.

These events paved the way for organized groups in Guerrero. For example, the indigenous people of Guerrero could overcome some of the difficulties inherent of living in a rural territory with the previously mentioned context of injustice and chiefdoms (Tlachinollan, 2015). In the 1990s, they went through an important organizational process, and launched a movement that sought to achieve sustainable development for their environmental, cultural and collective rights. They were based on community participation, and willing to face authority. To this end, on October 21, 1990, the Council of Nahua Peoples from Alto Balsas, Guerrero A. C. (Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas del Alto Balsas Guerrero, CPNAB by its Spanish acronym) was formed, with the participation of more than 22 Municipal Commissioners, and Communal and Commons Commissaries (Comisariado de Bienes Comunales y Ejidales).

The CPNAB is a non-government, non-profit organization unrelated to any political party or religious association. They struggle for a sustainable and autonomous development to eradicate extreme poverty, for the defense and promotion of human and indigenous rights, and for the respect, rescue and diffusion of the culture of the Nahua inhabitants of the

<sup>6</sup> One of the most remembered cases is the kidnapping of governor Rubén Figueroa Figueroa from May 30 to September 8, 1974, obtaining a ransom of 50 million pesos for his release (Redacción AN, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Tepecoacuilco, Copalillo, Mártir de Cuilapan (Apango), Zumpango de Eduardo Neri, Atenango del Río, Huitzuco.

Alto Balsas Region (Tlahui, 1996). It is legally registered and consists of more than 30 indigenous peoples, located in northern and central Guerrero from seven municipalities<sup>7</sup> and with a population of more than 56,000 inhabitants. It has a General Assembly of delegates, who elect members of the CPNAB Executive Council, whose representatives are generally authorities from the Nahua Peoples in the Region. Their meetings are held every year at the end of October. The CPNAB Executive Council is entitled to call Extraordinary General Assemblies whenever it deems necessary.

The CPNAB aims to validate that regional development can be achieved with a proposal different from that offered by the Federal Government of Mexico. Their struggle is integral, as they also strive for the strengthening, rescue and diffusion of culture, language, traditions and customs of the region, as an important part to continue to strengthen the sense of indigenous identity. To achieve its goals with greater impartiality, it is regulated by an Alternative Plan,<sup>8</sup> and under its own rhythm and vision of sustainable and autonomous development, executed and controlled by modifying it according to its own needs.

In 1991, the CPNAB became one of the founders of the 500-year-old Guerrero Council of Indigenous Resistance (Consejo Guerrerense 500 Años de Resistencia Indígena, CG500ARI by its Spanish acronym), which originated to oppose the construction of the San Juan Tetelcingo Dam, arguing that its construction would destroy the life, culture and environment of the Nahua Indigenous Peoples settled there.

Another sector developing significant organizations is small farmers. In January 1994, the Farmer Organization of the Sierra del Sur (Organización Campesina de la Sierra del Sur, OCSS by its Spanish acronym) was formed, consisting of men and women mainly engaged in agriculture, and is an independent organization of farmers from various towns on the coast and lowland of the state of Guerrero. It does not belong to any political party or institutional group. Its purpose is to achieve dignity and respect for the conditions of the people and the region they live in. Their work is mainly managed, coordinated and organized autonomously to generate better living conditions. The OCSS project contemplates freedom of political participation and the fair distribution of goods in the region to be essential for the full human development of young and old alike (Galeón, 2015). Like the CPNAB, the OCSS set out to protect the region's forests and natural resources, as well as to demand proof that those who had "disappeared" in the so-called "Dirty War" since the 1960s. However, their methods for obtaining resources have been radical from the beginning, and they range from roads blocks to taking municipal buildings, among other actions.<sup>9</sup>

Another important group is the Union of Peoples and Organizations of the State of Guerrero (Unión de Pueblos y Organizaciones del Estado de Guerrero, UPOEG by its Spanish acronym), an organization that emerges as a response from the indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples of the state of Guerrero, given the conditions of poverty and marginalization, reflected in serious lags in basic infrastructure, education, health, housing, access to justice, public safety, food and sources of employment.

<sup>8</sup> This plan has 13 specific programs that deal with different work areas designed by community participation of the Nahua peoples of the Alto Balsas Region.

<sup>9</sup> The OCSS expelled the motorized police from Tepetitla, which they held responsible for several of the killings and forced disappearances of social leaders of the highlands during the administration of Rubén Figueroa Alcocer from 1993 to 1996. On June 28, 1995, the OCSS convened demonstrations in Atoyac and Zihuatanejo to demand the appearance of Gilberto Romero Vázquez and to demand compliance with the pending agreements for the communities and municipalities of La Union and Coahuayutla, which consisted of construction materials and fertilizers promised by the state executive. At Vado de Aguas Blancas, municipality of Coyuca de Benítez, approximately 400 motorized, judicial and anti-riot police ambushed a contingent of approximately 60 farmers who went to Coyuca de Benítez with the same demands. After a confusing incident, the police fired at close range, killing 17 people and wounding 21 others. This event reverberated in the media and with the indignation it provoked within the civil society, the National Commission of Human Rights (CNDH by its Spanish acronym) gave enough elements to establish responsibilities; under all the pressure from the OCSS, from the relatives of the victims, from human rights organizations and public opinion, the governor fired the main officials of his government, but the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation determined that the responsibility of the massacre fell upon the governor, who on March 12, 1996 requested to take leave of his post.

Its objective is to “organize, plan and manage the demands of the peoples and communities before government entities in economic, political, social and cultural matters from a community perspective, so as to reverse the high marginalization and achieve development with an identity that meets our real needs” (UPOEG, 2015). They promote actions based on dialog and agreements with the different public entities, on all three levels of government, and with various social actors, managing social, cultural, political and economic demands to allow for integral human development; promote community development and preserve culture; strengthen the Community Safety System; promote Gender Equality and promote the Preservation of Natural Resources.

Using the same grouping logic, on October 1, 2006, the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Guerrero (Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Guerrero, APPG by its Spanish acronym) was created in Chilpancingo, consisting of at least 30 social and union organizations, including two fractions of the National Coordinator for Education Workers (Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, CETEG by its Spanish acronym), university unions, the University Student Federation from Guerrero (Federación Estudiantil Universitaria Guerrerense), the Community Development Workshop (Taller de Desarrollo Comunitario), the Popular Revolutionary Front (Frente Popular Revolucionario) and the Popular Defense Front (Frente de Defensa Popular), the Calpulli Tecuanichan indigenous organization, the Left Social Movement (Movimiento Social de Izquierda), the National Front for Socialist Struggle (Frente Nacional de Lucha Socialista), the Cuauhtémoc Indigenous Community and the Coordinator of Teacher Graduates of the State of Guerrero (Coordinadora de Egresados Normalistas del Estado de Guerrero), among others. The APPG would mainly promote social and agricultural demands. Among its requests: the dismissal of the education secretary, José Luis González de la Vega Otero; the allocation of 618 seats for graduates of teaching schools; the construction and remodeling of educational

infrastructure, primarily in the indigenous areas of the La Montaña region (La Jornada, 2006).

The demands of the social organizations can be divided into sectors, as happened in 2005, when members of ejidos and municipalities opposed the construction of La Parota hydroelectric dam (Toscana, 2011). This project consisted of installing a hydroelectric system made up of three groups of turbo generators to store water from the Papagayo River. Its purpose was to provide drinking water to Acapulco over the next 50 years, and to produce enough electricity to meet the total annual electricity needs for the state of Guerrero. Although it was said that the construction of this dam would lead to productive projects and in turn provide social benefits for communities, the farmers objected to its construction. They argued that this development project sought to give priority to the economic interests of a few over the farmers’ right to decide on their way of life, and the use of natural resources as a means of survival. Due to popular resistance presented at the political and legal levels for farmers, as well as national and international human rights and environmentalist networks, the project has been halted.

Not only did farmers and indigenous people managed to create resistance movements that resulted in organized groups and, specifically, in civil society organizations, but also environmental groups which have a strong presence in the state of Guerrero, especially since 2005, when they circulated a document on the web entitled “A program for the Guerrero land”, which was drafted by 50 environmentalists from Guerrero and consisted of 10 proposals and obligations regarding an environmental policy, natural resources in general and, particularly, the forest of Guerrero. This proposal attracted the attention it aimed for, as it revealed that the force of its action and awareness-raising went beyond its communities, and that social action was unified at the local, regional and international levels (Quintero, 2010).

In 2005, a group of environmentalists mobilized to convince the municipal government to cancel the construction of an

adventure park on the island of La Roqueta. This project was to be carried out by the company Aca Extremo, and had a permit from an Environmental Management Unit of the Ministry of the Navy and the Ministry of Economy, as well as the authorization of SEMARNAT and PROFEPA (Rosado, 2005). On December 14 of that year, Greenpeace launched a campaign against the project on the internet, until it was eventually canceled. Several authorities accused environmentalists of damaging the image of Acapulco and curbing its development, showing it as a risky place for investors. Still, the argument of the organizations working in favor of the environment was that Acapulco's development of tourism should not be carried out at the expense of the environment for any reason.

Another activist struggle in Guerrero involves organizations that favor the promotion and defense of human rights, which give support to the families of those who disappeared and were affected by the "Dirty War" of the 1970s. These organizations demand the punishment of those responsible for the disappearances, which have become a recurring reality in Guerrero. For these organizations in particular, their connection with members of the Catholic Church calls for particular attention.<sup>10</sup>

The work of these organizations consists of submitting complaints about human rights violations to the state and national offices and to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR). They carry out systematization and follow-up of each of the cases of human rights violations,

primarily against indigenous peoples, they provide legal advice, and they are actively involved in developing legal amendments such as the State Amnesty Law, published on November 11, 2002, and the State of Guerrero Law to Prevent and Punish Forced Disappearance of Persons, approved in September 2005.<sup>11</sup> Regarding public safety, the organizations suggest that more resources be allocated to welfare expenses in order to address the source of the problem. They point out that the solution to the security problem in Guerrero will not be achieved by better equipping the police force. They reject that the militarization of institutions would be a guarantee of security or, that with such militarization, there might be better results in fighting organized crime, which has become one of the most important public problems on the national and state agenda.

Forced disappearances is one of the issues that has afflicted the state of Guerrero since the period known as the "Dirty War". Javier Monroy Hernández, coordinator of the Community Development Workshop (Taller de Desarrollo Comunitario, TADECO by its Spanish acronym), stated that "in Guerrero, almost all of us have or know someone close to us who is missing, without the authorities investigating the disappearance." When interviewed to learn about the situation and legal progress of the cases of missing persons that his group has documented and denounced, in cooperation with the Committee of Relatives and Friends of those Kidnapped, Missing and Murdered in Guerrero (Comité de Familiares y Amigos de Secuestrados, Desaparecidos y Aasesinados de Guerrero, CFASDAG by its Spanish acronym), he said that this phenomenon is growing not only in Guerrero but throughout the country. The TADECO case is an example of how an organization is forced to change its way of working to adapt to the circumstances of the current context, in this particular circumstance, due to the climate of violence and insecurity in Guerrero. In 2007, one of the supporters of TADECO, Jorge Gabriel Cerón, a young 28-year-old architect, disappeared and his whereabouts are still unknown. After publicly denouncing the disappearance of Gabriel Cerón, a group of approximately

<sup>10</sup> To name but a few, the Center for Human Rights "La Voz de los Sin Voz" (the voice of the voiceless) was founded by Orbelín Jaramillo Diego in Coyuca de Benítez, who also founded the Committee of Human Rights, Sower of Hope A.C. (Comité de Derechos Humanos Sembrador de la Esperanza A.C.) in the Emiliano Zapata neighborhood in Acapulco; the La Montaña Tlachinollan Human Rights Center (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña Tlachinollan) was constituted by the diocese of Tlapa, the latter, becomes more relevant as it is fundamental to the integration of the Community Police.

<sup>11</sup> Until 2007, there were 37 cases documented where Guerrero State Attorney General's Office public servants were responsible for these forced disappearances, ranging from Director Generals and Commanders to Head of Units and State Judicial Police Officers.

18 families from the capital and other places around the state, decided to form the CFASDAG.

As of March 2011, this Committee has recorded nearly 290 murders that were not related to organized crime, registered 289 disappearances and 25 abductions. The activist said that “in these last eight years, the only thing that is certain, is the link of criminal groups with the authorities. The government legal authorities do not investigate, thus creating impunity, which leads to the despair and resignation of the victims”. Amid TADECO’s and the Committee’s struggles, there is a request to create a DNA database to identify bodies that have been found in clandestine graves. In the absence of a response to this request, some families have sought out their own relatives directly, putting their safety and lives at risk. The disappearance of the 43 youths of Ayotzinapa<sup>12</sup> established the link between criminal groups and the authorities, a situation that several organizations had previously denounced. Ayotzinapa is the most controversial case since 2014; however, Guerrero has one of the longest histories of forced disappearances (Yener, 2015).

Concerning the case of Ayotzinapa, the magnitude and nature of this event mobilized not only the

Guerrero-based CSOs, but also those that form part of international CSO networks.<sup>13</sup> Six months after the events, various human rights organizations urged the Mexican government to support the work of the IACHR’s Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI) and to implement the recommendations made by the IACHR.<sup>14</sup> Amnesty International, Peace Brigades International and the Center for Justice and International Law are some of the signatories (Camacho, s/f).

As for national scope, the CNTE teachers were in charge of launching an invitation to national social organizations to congregate in the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College (Normal Rural de Ayotzinapa). Every Saturday, meetings were held to see how to take action and support the parents of the 43 missing students. These meetings showed the interest in broader efforts and on the creation of a support network. This effort gave way to the creation of the Popular National Assembly (Asamblea Nacional Popular, ANP by its Spanish acronym), consisting of multiple organizations from several states of the republic, including the National Coordinator for Education Workers (CETEG), the Telephone Union (Sindicato de Telefonistas), the Popular Front of Mexico City (Frente Popular de la Ciudad de México), the Union of Workers of Mexico (Unión de Trabajadores de México), and the National Student Coordinator (Coordinadora Nacional Estudiantil), among others. On the 26th of each month, global actions are carried out in favor of Ayotzinapa, as an ANP plan to continue providing coverage to the case (Tlachinollan, 2015).

On September 6, 2015, the IGIE presented a report that did not coincide with the version of the facts given by the then general prosecutor of the republic, Jesus Murillo Karam. Owing to this, the ANP, presided by the parents of the 43 students who had disappeared, some legal representatives and 124 delegates from different CSOs, unions such as CNTE, STRM, SME and students from several Rural Teachers’ Colleges met on September 12, 2015 to agree on an action plan which proposed to combine the political portion with the legal portion. Some of the

<sup>12</sup> The night of September 26 and in the early morning hours of September 27, 2014, students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College were pursued and detained by a group of policemen, later handed over the students to the criminal organization Guerreros Unidos (“United Warriors”). At least, that was the version given by the Federal Attorney General’s Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR by its Spanish acronym) which also informed that after the disappearance of the 43 students, they were burned at a dump in the outskirts of Cocula.

<sup>13</sup> Some of them are: Peace Brigades International (PBI); Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL); Conectas Direitos Humanos (Conectas Human Rights); Latin American Working Group Education Fund (LAWGEF) and Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI).

<sup>14</sup> Some of the recommendations were: to continue the search for the disappeared students, to ensure preservation of evidence, to provide medical assistance to everyone affected by this crime, to guarantee access to all the information needed including a digital copy of the case file, an interview to the military personnel from the Mexican army’s 27th battalion in Iguala and that the case be treated as a forced disappearance

activities were as follows: the parents of the 43 students fasted for 43 hours; to promote declaration of September 26th as the day of global indignation for Ayotzinapa; to march from Los Pinos (the official residence and office of the President of Mexico) to Zócalo (the main square in central Mexico City); to carry out the fourth session of the National People's Convention (Convención Nacional Popular), and to invite the whole community to join in a collective effort and demand that the 43 student teachers who disappeared be presented live, as well as the punishment of the material and intellectual culprits responsible for this crime. Moreover, the ANP advocates and condemns the arbitrary arrests, as well as the murders of the social fighters throughout the country for which it demands justice and punishment of the culprits; it also calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners from the Regional Coordinator of Community Police Authorities (Coordinadora Regional de Autoridades Comunitarias Policía Comunitaria, CRAC-PC by its Spanish acronym); from the Popular Revolutionary Front in Oaxaca and from all the CSOs in the country (FP, 2015).

These mobilizations have been criticized by the federal government intelligence services, who sees them not as the result of a social protest, but as a movement led by the EPR guerrillas and the ERPI. A federal intelligence report obtained by the Proceso magazine, lists at least 11 groups behind the protests, which are presumably linked to the People's Revolutionary Army (EPR by its Spanish acronym) and the Revolutionary Army of the Insurgent People (ERPI

by its Spanish acronym). In view of the above, it would be essential to wait for a group to form from the efforts of an independent group of civil society actors, since cases of arbitrary aggression and illegal detention, misuse and disproportionate use of police force in an extensive manner towards journalists, human rights defenders, and those who exercised their legitimate right to disclose what happened at demonstrations, are all too common.<sup>15</sup>

Earlier, there have been cases of CSOs dissolving due to harassment, threats and intimidation of their members. One such case took place in 2014, when the Popular Unity Front (Frente Unidad Popular), which federates at least 10 CSOs that are human rights defenders,<sup>16</sup> demanded more information on the assassination of the leader, Arturo Hernández Cardona, and specified that the intellectual and material author of his murder was José Luis Abarca Velázquez, who was mayor of Iguala until the events occurred in Ayotzinapa. In a telephone interview, Sofía Mendoza Martínez, who would remain as the head of the Emiliano Zapata Farmer's Union (Unión Campesina Emiliano Zapata), in place of the late Hernández Cardona, mentioned that many leaders of the organizations which shaped the front, fled Iguala, and others chose not to continue to fight (Gilez, 2014).

Another case that drew public attention was the urgent complaint of Israel Sampedro Morales, president of the Human Rights Defense Network (Red de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos), who claimed that María Magdalena López Paulino and Ericka Zamora Pardo (survivors

<sup>15</sup> This is documented by the Front for Freedom of Expression and Social Protest (Frente por la Libertad de Expresión y la Protesta Social) from Article 19 of the Center for Human Rights Fray Francisco de Vitoria (Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Francisco de Vitoria), the Center ProDH, The Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Right Center, the Justice Center for Peace and Development (Centro de Justicia para la Paz y el Desarrollo, CEPAD), the Group of Lawyers (Colectivo de Abogadas) and Solidarity Lawyers Cause (Abogados Solidarios Causa), Founding Center for Analysis and Research (Fundar Centro de Análisis e Investigación), Mexican Institute of Human Rights and Democracy (Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia), Civic Proposal (Propuesta Cívica), Services and Consulting for Peace (Servicios y Asesoría para la Paz, Serapaz), National Network of Civil

Organisms for Human Rights All Rights for All (Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos) and Resound (Resonar), in its report "Control of public space: Third report on social protests in Mexico" (Propuesta Cívica, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> The CSOs that form it are: Emiliano Zapata Farmer's Union (Unión Campesina Emiliano Zapata); Lucio Cabañas Barrientos Organization (Organización Lucio Cabañas Barrientos); My Country comes First (Mi Patria es Primero); Genaro Vázquez Rojas Association (Asociación Genaro Vázquez Rojas); Ricardo Flores Magón Humanist Foundation (Fundación Humanista Ricardo Flores Magón); Users and Consumers Organization (Organización de Usuarios y Consumidores) and the February 24 neighborhood (la colonia 24 de Febrero).

of the El Charco massacre) were harassed days prior to a planned official visit to the state of Guerrero, to document the violation of human rights of social activists and fighters carrying out their efforts as members of the Solidarity Network Decade Against Impunity (Red Solidaria Década contra la Impunidad). These activists met in Mexico City, in a restaurant at the Telmex Cultural Center, along with the president of the Human Rights Commission of the Congress of Guerrero (Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Congreso de Guerrero), Jorge Salazar Marchán, as well as the filmmaker Braulio Gutiérrez Hidalgo y Costilla, finalizing the details of his visit to Guerrero, where they would meet with Sofía Mendoza Martínez. They all perceived that from another table, a man resembling a military official was video recording them. When leaving, they were followed, so they notified the coordinator of the Community Advocate Program of the Interior Ministry (Programa de Defensores de la Secretaría de Gobernación), they also notified Bishop Raúl Vera, director of Pro Center (Centro Pro) and the Network for the Defense of Human Rights. Shortly afterwards, the police agent assigned to the Interior Ministry joined them and transferred them to the Public Prosecutor's Office to make a complaint, which was settled with the following number of preliminary investigation: FCH/CUH-7/T2/00295/1401 (Gilez, 2014).

Despite the situation of violence in Guerrero, there are CSOs with institutional profiles. For example, the State Committee on Plant Health (Comité Estatal de Sanidad Vegetal, CESAVEGRO by its Spanish acronym), which acts as an intermediary between the General Directorate of Plant Protection (Dirección General de Sanidad Vegetal) and the National Health, Safety and Agro-Food Quality Service (Servicio Nacional de Sanidad, Inocuidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria, SENASICA by

its Spanish acronym) for the operation of phytosanitary programs and campaigns with the objective of preventing the introduction or dispersion of pesticides that may affect plants, their products and by-products, and thereby improve agricultural production by ensuring the phytosanitary quality of plant crops (CESAVEGRO, 2015).

Another example is the organization Honey for Solidarity and Farmers (Miel Solidaria y Campesina A.C., MISOCA by its Spanish acronym), which supports agricultural activities for indigenous and mestizo farming communities in vulnerable situations. The objective of this CSO is to help overcome the economic underdevelopment of farming communities, through technical assistance, social orientation, and education for producing and marketing their products. The Numa Gamaa Ski Yu Me Phaa SC de RI de CV Agricultural Cooperative (Cooperativa Agrícola Numa Gamaa Ski Yu Me Phaa SC de RI de CV) (variable stock limited-liability partnership) or the Xuajin Me' Phaa A.C. (Me Phaa universe or world) is a CSO that links 320 families producing hibiscus, beans, bananas, pineapple, coffee, chili, passion fruit and squash. Xuajin has a community development program with 728 families incorporated, benefiting 1,600 people from 15 communities from the high mountains of Guerrero (Red Campo, 2016).

Organizations such as the Council of Ejidos and Opposing Communities to the Dam (Consejo de Ejidos y Comunidades Opositoras a la Presa, CECOP by its Spanish acronym) represent the voice of opposition to the official declarations regarding the alleged benefits of the La Parota dam (Martínez, 2010). The presence of this council allowed the broadening of the debate and discussion on the subject and shaped a movement, which, with the backing of human rights organizations and defenders of the environment, has been far-reaching. In 2007, as a result of the Forum for Roads to Resistance (Foro Por los Caminos de la Resistencia), the State Coordination for the Defense of the Territory (Coordinación Estatal por la Defensa del Territorio) was created. On the other hand, there is a Coordinating Committee of the Spaces for Analysis and participation of Human Rights in Guerrero (Comité Coordinador de

<sup>17</sup> The Commission for the Defense of Human Rights of the state of Guerrero, the Autonomous University of Guerrero, the La Montaña Tlachinollan Human Rights Center, the Community Development Workshop (Tadeco) and the Network for Human Rights for All (Red de los Derechos para Todos).

los Espacios de Análisis y Participación de los Derechos Humanos en Guerrero), since its members<sup>17</sup> collaborated in drafting the report Diagnosis on the situation of human rights in Guerrero (Diagnóstico sobre la situación de los derechos humanos en Guerrero).

There also are CSOs that propose regional development through productive projects such as marketing of agricultural and artisanal goods from the region; of the Environment and a Sustainable Development through reforestation and preservation of biodiversity; of Cultural Strengthening through the dissemination of music, dance, history, legends, traditions and customs in Guerrero; of Health and Nutrition; of Communication and Dissemination; of Social Management with the Federal and State Government for the introduction of services and infrastructure; of Education; of Human and Indigenous Rights; of Permanent Training in Strategic Areas with the objective of increasingly develop the self-generated capacity on communities; and finally other organizations that focus on addressing the needs of vulnerable groups for their age, gender or conditions. These CSOs become a figure that diverges from other CSOs that exist in the state of Guerrero, which have a controversial profile.

The resources gathered by CSOs, have enabled the creation of development programs, and the continuity of their actions depend on the resources allocated to them. These resources are not always financial; a large amount may be in kind, in cases related to agriculture,

providing seeds or tools for seeding operations. As for monetary resources, these can be delivered in the form of scholarships, as happened in February 2014, when the State Health Secretary Lázaro Mazón Alonso led the delivery of grants to institutions responsible for providing care to people with drug addictions. In the event held at the Center for Primary Care Against Addictions (Centro de Atención Primaria Contra las Adicciones) in Chilpancingo, CSOs' work was acknowledged for helping people suffering from drug addiction problems, since they face tight economic restrictions.<sup>18</sup>

Although there are organizations with no party affiliation, there are others that have pledged their support for a candidate or party, such is the case of the Representatives of the Farmers' Alliance of Guerrero (Representantes de Alianza Campesina de Guerrero); New Dawn Organization (Organización Nuevo Amanecer), High and Low Mountain Farmers (Campesinos de La Montaña Alta y Baja); Organization Development for the Land Organization (Organización Desarrollo para el Campo); Organization of Copra Workers of Guerrero (Organización de Copreros de Guerrero); Producers of Tierra Caliente (Productores de Tierra Caliente) and other organizations grouped in the Democratic Organization of the Farmers' Union (Organización Democrática de la Unidad Campesina) and in the Standing Agricultural Congress (Congreso Agrario Permanente), which signed a political proclamation in the presence of 20 Guerrero farmer leaders where they expressed their support to the then PRI candidate for the presidency, Enrique Peña Nieto. Jesús Escobedo Rosales, representative of the Standing Agricultural Congress in Guerrero, asked the PRI national leader to be the spokesperson to present the farmers' demands to the presidential candidate: "a different government from that of the previous 12 years with the PAN, an open-door government", he said, "which will care for the land once again, because we live in complete poverty" (Pluralismo Aguascalientes, 2012).

Faced with the inability to solve all the problems that afflict the state of Guerrero, the role of the civil

<sup>18</sup> Thus the Centers for Youth Integration (Centros de Integración Juvenil A.C., CIJ by its Spanish acronym), were awarded 300 thousand pesos; the Center for Recovery and Rehabilitation for Alcoholics and Drug Addiction Taxco (Centro de Recuperación y Rehabilitación para Enfermos de Alcoholismo y Drogadicción A.C. Taxco), received 180 thousand pesos; the Center for Recovery and Rehabilitation for Alcoholics and Drug Addiction, Zone 1 Acapulco (Centro de Recuperación y Rehabilitación para Enfermos de Alcoholismo y Drogadicción Zona 1 A.C. Acapulco), was awarded 330 thousand pesos, and the Comprehensive System for Addictions, Guerrero Revive (Sistema Integral para Adicciones Guerrero A.C. Revive), received 330 thousand pesos (Quadratin Guerrero, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Law published in the State Government Official Newspaper 51, on Friday, June 27, 2014.

society and the CSOs is of utmost importance, since they become a conduit of interactions between society and the government to channel demands of the former and help provide solutions for the diverse problems in the state. In addition to the above, Guerrero has an Act to promote Civil Society Organizations, which consists of 31 articles and five transitional articles grouped in six chapters.<sup>19</sup>

On April 3, 2012, members of the Social Development Commission (Comisión de Desarrollo Social), filed before the Plenary Sitting, the Ruling with a Bill to Promote Civil Society Organizations in the State of Guerrero. Subsequently, on April 7, 2012, as a member of the Parliamentary Fraction of the Institutional Revolutionary Party of the Sixtieth Legislature and the Honorable Congress of the Free and Sovereign State of Guerrero, Deputy Julieta Fernández Márquez, presented before the Office of the Mayor of that sovereign entity, the Law for the Promotion of Civil Society Organizations in the State of Guerrero.<sup>20</sup>

There is a Federal Archive of Civil Society Organizations, which is an authority created by the Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities carried out by Civil Society Organizations, and its main function is to assign organizations a Single Registration Code (Clave

Única de Inscripción, CLUNI by its Spanish acronym) and with it, the right to access public support and incentives, mainly on a federal level.<sup>21</sup> As of 2017, 670 CSOs are registered in the state of Guerrero, distributed in 58 of the 81 municipalities of the state, concentrated mainly in the municipalities of Acapulco de Juárez and Chilpancingo de los Bravo, with more than 100 CSOs in each municipality.

In this context, the work carried out by Civil Society Organizations in different areas is extremely important and contributes to the collective good, betting on a better quality of life for the different regions of the state, supposing they have widespread support, since they work to transform the state, an action which, historically, the state itself has not been able to achieve. This collective work has fostered the economic development of the communities that make up the 81 municipalities in the state of Guerrero; it is still pertinent to have a law that regulates the relationship between the state public administration and the CSOs, so as to keep resources granted to CSOs from being used for personal benefit and to improve the quality of transparency and the level of trust in them by making the use of these resources public.<sup>22</sup>

The long crisis of insecurity crisis in the state of Guerrero, worsened by public authorities too weak to counter it, gave rise to civil groups who decided to take justice into their own hands in communities of Costa Chica and La Montaña regions. Their way of operating, considered radical and at the limits of the law, has given an unhelpful image, and has harmed their activist efforts. These civilian groups are known as Community Police (Policías Comunitarias), they apparently originated in 1995, in response to a rise in regional violence. Their creation was approved by the government of Guerrero, so the Regional Coordination of Community Authorities (Coordinación Regional de Autoridades Comunitarias, CRAC by its Spanish acronym) was born, consisting of around one thousand elements distributed in twelve municipalities.

Given the ineptitude of the government and police force to combat organized crime, the Union of Peoples and

<sup>20</sup> This Law sought to establish mechanisms to disseminate among the population, the important work carried out by civil society organizations, in order to help strengthen their professional standing, credibility and trust in the eyes of the population. This law is intended for society to participate in a more organized way in the development of the entity. It should be noted that this Law was proposed in 2012 and was approved in April 2014.

<sup>21</sup> This registration allows the organizations to enjoy of fiscal incentives and other financial and administrative supports; to receive donations and contributions, in terms of tax provisions and other applicable regulations; to access the benefits from the organizations deriving from international conventions or treaties and to receive advisory, training and collaboration from agencies and entities for better compliance of its objective and activities within the framework of programs drafted by such agencies and entities, among other benefits.

<sup>22</sup> Law No. 458 to Promote Civil Society Organizations in the Guerrero State. Available at: [http://www.guerrero.gob.mx/consejeriajuridicaconsejeria\\_juridica@guerrero.gob.mx](http://www.guerrero.gob.mx/consejeriajuridicaconsejeria_juridica@guerrero.gob.mx)

## Comprehensive Review

Organizations of the State of Guerrero (Unión de Pueblos y Organizaciones del Estado de Guerrero, UPOEG by its Spanish acronym) took as its standard, the fight against this type of corruption and created a popular court to try the detainees. The presence of these armed civil groups was concentrated mainly in rural areas where the people have assumed, necessarily, functions that are not their duty, but that of both the state and federal governments. In this scenario, the question remains as to the future of these organizations, and to observe their impact on the public space, and how they link with the CSOs, mainly with those whose objective is to support the indigenous and farmer communities (CIDAC, 2013).

The available information from the state of Guerrero identifies the majority of CSOs as a result of social movements, and indigenous, farmer, environmental and human rights movements, these are the most common examples. There is a progressive economic crisis in the state caused by widespread violence, the presence of organized crime, the inefficiency and inoperability of government authorities in the state, as well as police force.

Given the characteristics of the state of Guerrero, social mobilization is the first response to the problems that afflict society, although, mobilizations have long been spread across a wide area, creating an image of small brawls, where each organized group faced their problems on its own. However, the common themes in the demands of most of these organized groups led them to establish networks that transformed their actions and resistance in a state where economic inequality and a climate of violence have become endemic situations that do not seem to be heading towards an end in the near future.

The CSOs face a credibility problem, since their activities have often been criminalized, such as the event that occurred on January 13, 2014, when the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Center (Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez, Centro Prodh) confirmed its support for the Collective Against Torture and Impunity (Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad, CCTI by its Spanish acronym) before the criminalization that took place on January 7, through the electronic Milenio.com web news portal, which published an article stating that “social groups which were very active in that state during 2013, (such as the teacher movement and the community police) were counseled and infiltrated by guerrilla groups or members of various insurgent groups operating in the state” (SIDIDH, 2014). The CCTI refuted the media article, saying that there is no link with guerrilla organizations on either state or national level.

The paradox is that circumstances surrounding the state led to the creation of CSOs to address the various problems experienced in the region, and at the same time, these circumstances are the cause of their dissolution in some cases, when their representatives or members are victims of aggression, intimidation and in the most extreme cases, forced disappearances. Consequently, some of the actors mention that it is difficult, and to some degree overoptimistic, to contemplate that social problems faced in the state of Guerrero, could be solved by lawful and legal means, at least in these conditions. Still, we cannot say that it is an impossible process.

Due to the characteristics of the state, it is difficult to access official information that refers to the problems in the political and social scope, specifically concerning the operations of CSOs, particularly those with a non-institutional profile. To achieve the objective of forming diagnosis, the content of this article was corroborated through interviews with specialists who work together with CSOs in Guerrero. The remarkable activities and achievements of the CSOs are pointed out in this work, subsequently; we will carry out an analysis of their situation.

The long history of resistance enabled the appearance of organizations which present original forms of struggle from different fronts, and where different scenarios are articulated. In a historical account of the situation of Guerrero during the last century, we can understand the present and explain why today, the CSOs of that state have

specific traits, emerging as social movements, driven or motivated by guerrilla movements, and with demands focused on the economic aspects and human rights violations of the inhabitants of the state of Guerrero, as well as of their social fighters.

The CSOs in Guerrero, because of their characteristics, do not have a priority of being linked to the government or influencing public policies, or at least, that is what they say in their discourse. Their interests in that field are on a smaller scale, quite on the contrary, they are aimed at counteracting government actions. Guerrero CSOs have well-defined objectives, work strategies and an operations center, although they have pointed out repeatedly that the resources and spaces they have are not adequate for them.

One of the central tasks of the CSOs is that of restoring society's confidence in relation to justice. Because of the "Dirty War", this confidence deteriorated enormously, since people of different areas suffered systematic violations of their human rights. In order to restore this confidence, they have worked on denouncing and raising awareness on those responsible for justice; in addition, they follow up on the cases and establish an active participation with other national and international organizations and institutions.

Taking stock of the work of the CSOs, the achievements of each of them are analyzed separating them by areas of action. In this way, it is clear that the CSOs endorsed by indigenous groups struggle mainly to claim government support in the form of subsidies, with a permanent dispute

for their sole right to decide on the use and exploitation of the natural resources in the state of Guerrero. Most of their actions oppose what they consider the "commodification of natural resources", thus undertaking a struggle to assert their autonomy, exploiting specific forms of social mobilization.

The Community Police, consisting of indigenous CSOs, is an example of the work done to solve the problems that affect their communities. They are responsible for ensuring justice, they are accountable before the Community Assembly, and until April 2008, they were present in 72 communities and 10 municipalities, with a total of 700 community policemen.

On the other hand, farmers' organizations are dedicated to production. They are made up of cooperation and support networks. They articulate CSOs with a larger number of people than those that are part of urban unions. They petition, among other things, the resources they need to carry out their planting tasks, and to have the basic services necessary<sup>23</sup> for their agricultural work.

The CSOs that emerged from environmental movements have also played an important role in the state of Guerrero, since they used information technologies to publicize a document called A program for the land of Guerrero (Un programa por la tierra guerrerense), relevant for the attention it garnered. They created an awareness-raising campaign and promoted an action plan that reached far beyond its local scope, allowing regional and international peers to participate.

The objective of this research work is to present a diagnosis of CSOs in the state of Guerrero. The methodology proposed to analyze the work carried out by CSOs considers four guiding axes: the cooperative relationship that exists between state and organized society; the political-cultural capital of CSOs; their political identities; and the theories or methods used for their analysis. Based on this methodology, some questions arise that could be answered throughout this research.

<sup>23</sup> While in Mexico City there are only approximately 7,000 people that live in a house without toilet or sewage service, in Guerrero there are a little more than 660,000 people that live in these conditions. Moreover, approximately a third part of the population in Guerrero does not have drinking water service compared to only 1 per cent of the population in Mexico City. In other words, in Mexico City there are approximately 150 thousand people who live in a house without drinking water while in Guerrero the figure goes up to a little more than a million people (CONEVAL, 2010).

Cooperation between the government and CSOs is a tense and undesirable relationship in the state of Guerrero. The results of our fieldwork indicate that there is little connection between the government and CSOs. CSOs argue that they suffer from a lack of resources to carry out their work, pointing out that they have little or no government support, which suggests that this link between the government and CSOs is more a relationship of obstruction, and to some extent competition.

In 1961, it was ascertained how far civil society can influence political processes, when the disappearance of powers was decreed after strong pressure was exerted on the government. Before the events of Ayotzinapa, the idea of disappearance of powers in the state had already been raised, however, after the event, the discussion of the issue was resumed. Compared to CSOs from other states, in Guerrero, the relationship with political parties is minimal. Its scope is therefore less, and cannot be defined, in view of the absence of official data or evidence to account for it. However, it is possible to observe that their field of action has expanded by communicating through electronic and IT resources.

It is important to highlight that studies on CSOs should consider that they are not standardized structures, and therefore, specific investigations should be dedicated to each case or activity. In the research process, some CSOs whose objectives and identity made them stand out from the rest were observed, examples being the CSOs that assist indigenous peoples and farmers, and that support the defense of human rights and the protection of the environment. These types of CSOs form networks with Coordinators, Councils, Associations and Assemblies. Their work has enabled them to cross local and national barriers, thus achieving new processes of mobilization or reconfiguration through publication on social networks.

Stated briefly, CSOs are groups of active citizens who seek to participate in public life. Their actions can comprise, in the process, progress and setbacks. However, their impact on their communities is irrefutable, because they leave evidence of how far they can reach to achieve their goals. The analysis of CSOs in the state of Guerrero, requires a greater breadth due to the heterogeneous nature of the cases.

The particular conflicts of the state have had an impact on participation and organization processes, transforming the perception of the population, which is assumed as a legal entity, capable of claiming and demanding from the State the fulfillment of its functions. This is a historical reference for the study of political culture and all that it encompasses. The foundations of development of a civil society, established in CSOs, and the events that have shaped the state of Guerrero for decades, have brought about new forms of struggle, organization and action that make it possible to confront problems and social underdevelopment, and to achieve better living conditions.



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