Urban Regime Change and Citizen Participation in Urban Policies: Conflict, Collaboration, and Corporatism in Mexico City

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CHAPTER 1

LEARNING FROM GREAT CITIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF MEXICO CITY

> "Although one of the essential projects of nation-building has been to dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and to replace it with the national, cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship. They are not the only arena. And not all cities are strategic. But with their concentrations of the nonlocal, the strange, the mixed, and the public, cities engage most palpably the tumult of citizenship. Their crowds catalyze processes which decisively expand and erode the rules, meanings, and practices of citizenship. Their streets conflate identities of territory and contract with those of race, religion, class, culture, and gender to produce the reactive ingredients of both progressive and reactionary political movements. Like nothing else, the modern urban public signifies both the defamiliarizing enormity of national citizenship and the exhilaration of its liberties" (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 188).

1.1. Overview

Every year, on the night of September 15th, thousands of Mexico City residents descend upon its main plaza to celebrate the country's independence. The same ceremony takes place in every plaza around the country but the one at the capital's *Zócalo* square is the most important and colorful of them. During my last visit to Mexico in September 2011, I was finally able to attend the famous "*Grito de Independencia*" (Declaration of Independence) celebration. I stood for hours under the rain with strangers and friends waiting for then President Fernando Calderón to ring the bell rang by Father Hidalgo that historic night in 1810. At 11 pm, as the custom dictates, the President appeared with his family on the balcony of the National Palace in front of the *Zócalo*, rang Hidalgo's bell, and proceeded to yell the names of the brave protagonists of the Mexican 10-year independence war against Spain. Once again, I was happily impressed with the way Mexicans do things, "*por todo lo alto*" (big time), as they would say. Watching some of the country's most important musicians on stage and on the large screens installed for the occasion, standing under the gigantic national flag in the center of the plaza, watching the multitude of beautiful fireworks, and thousands of Mexicans of all ages singing and dancing dressed in custom

or in the colors of their flag, I could not help feeling touched by the country's and the city's grandiosity and warmth.

Such grandiosity and warmth stand in contrast with the unfavorable depictions of Mexico and Mexico City commonly found in the international academic literature and in popular culture. On the one hand, scholars highlight the fact that Mexico was one of the very last Latin American countries to join the third wave of democratization, which started in the late 1970s (Huntington 1991; Myers 2002). On the other, Mexico City is akin to an "urban leviathan" (Davis 1994; Davis and Alvarado 2004) and a long history of authoritarianism has made popular mobilization and engagement with the state either sporadic or non-existent (Houtzager et al 2005). Similarly, representations of Mexico and Mexico City in popular culture in the United States and elsewhere usually portray them as colorful but markedly violent sites. That is the case with well-known movies like *"Man on Fire", "Amores Perros"* or *"Babel"* where kidnappings, urban violence, and extreme economic inequality characterize life in the country and in its capital city.

These themes are, undoubtedly, part of the Mexican mosaic as unending news coverage of the country reminds us on international news outlets, in particular regarding drug trafficking.[1] Nonetheless, such depictions tend to obscure other important transformations taking place such as the increasing democratization of the country after the end of the seven-decade rule on the part of the *Partido de la Revolución Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI), which had become a long-standing authoritarian corporatist apparatus in the wake of the Mexican Revolution (Davis 1994; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez 2003; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007; Tamayo 2007).[2] Most of these changes, if not all, are more visible in Mexico City than anywhere else in the country given the city's well-earned status as Mexico's dominant or

[1] For an example, see the following archival collection on the New York Times website: http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/mexico/drug_trafficking/ (accessed on March 16th, 2014).

primate city (Jefferson 1939; Cuervo González 2004).

Similarly, generalities about Mexico tend to overshadow the political distinctiveness of Mexico City in comparison to the rest of the country; namely, the more progressive stance many of its inhabitants have in a manner very similar to what happens with East Coast and West Coast cities in the United States when compared to the rest of the country. It is no coincidence, for instance, that liberal anti-PRI political candidates such as Mexico's first Minister of Education and public intellectual José Vasconcelos had Mexico City as their strongest base of support as early as 1929 (Emmerich 2005; Modonesi 2008). As I will show in Chapter 3, a key factor to understand the changes taking place in Mexico in the last few decades is the fact that the main opposition party, leftist *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Party of the Democratic Revolution or PRD) has channeled the relatively more progressive political viewpoints many Mexico City residents proudly support but had not been able to express in the political arena since 1928 when the PRI eliminated local elections and the Federal District became an appendix of national authorities (Espinosa 2004; Emmerich 2005). After the PRD won in 1997 in the first mayoral elections since 1928, Mexico City has been the first among a few Latin American cities to establish policies and legislation recognizing civil unions, same sex marriages, women's right to decide, gender equality, and the social responsibility of the state, among other rights and liberal social principles (McKinley Jr. 2007; Malkin 2010; Boltvinik 2013).

This dissertation offers some preliminary answers to the question of what scholars and practitioners interested in democratization and urban change in the developing world can learn from the profound changes Mexico City has gone through in the last three decades. It does so by developing an argument at two levels: (1) at the *city level,* I take Mexico City as an extreme case (Gerring 2007) of late democratization in Latin America (Myers 2002; Davis 2002; Davis and

[2] Nonetheless, PRI regained control of the Mexican national state in 2012 when now president Enrique Peña Nieto defeated PRD second-time candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador winning 38% of the vote over López Obrador's 32% (Archibold and Zabludovsky 2012).

Alvarado 2004) as well as for being the negative case for citizen participation engaging the state when compared with São Paulo, the other most important global and mega-city in the region (Houtzager et al 2005); (2) and at the *neighborhood level* I take the two oldest and most iconic sections of the central part of Mexico City called *Ciudad Central* as local cases. One is the relatively poor and previously neglected historic center or *Centro Histórico,* and the other is the upper-middle class and partially gentrified area of *Roma Condesa*. *Ciudad Central* is a subsection of Mexico City that groups its four central subdivisions and essentially corresponds to what the city used to be up until the 1950s. I chose my two cases in that area because land there is more contested than it is in other parts of the city because of the need to accommodate a multiplicity of users such as residents, businesses, commuters, street vendors, and tourists (Duhau and Giglia 2004) and this need is particularly acute in *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa*. As we will see in chapters 4 and 5, the fact of being the oldest and symbolically most central neighborhoods in *Ciudad Central* makes these two areas compelling as extreme cases in themselves, a fact related to their former role as privileged locations for the city's elites.

At the level of the city, I argue that Mexico City has been transitioning from a corporatist urban regime (Stone 1989) similar to the national corporatist regime in place since the 1930s to the 1990s to what I call a "pragmatic" urban regime, which began to form with the election of PRD in 1997 combining strong pro-poor and pro-capital tendencies. In the latter, PRD administrations have been putting in place a progressive social and urban agenda to guarantee poor residents' collective consumption (Castells 1979) consonant with municipal socialism (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009), while at the same time, extensively collaborating with national and international capital as entrepreneurial or neoliberal urban regimes do (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]). Although still embryonic, the emergent pragmatic urban regime has increased the divide between Mexico City and the rest of the country as new political channels (including but

not limited to local elections) provide outlets for more progressive political, social and urban policies.

From the PRI to the PRD: the Democratization of the Urban

My findings indicate that the PRD-led pragmatic regime is indeed more democratic than the corporatist urban regime the PRI had in place for almost fifty years in Mexico City. However, the legacy of the corporatist urban regime is both positive and negative insofar as it has not only meant important levels of cooptation of the urban poor by national authorities. The corporatist mode of incorporation at both the national and city levels contributed to transforming the urban poor into legitimate political actors within Mexico City's public arena. As a result, a corporatist urban regime (the modality through which corporatism manifested in Mexico City) made it harder to displace the urban poor from central areas of the city, as it has been the case in other Latin American cities as early as the mid 20th century. To be sure, at that point in time a very unique appointed mayor, Ernesto Peralta Uruchurtu, managed to prevent big-ticket downtown projects from coming to fruition, the very projects that would have displaced not only the poor but also the middle-class merchants and residents he defended (Davis 2002). And he did so by exercising an incredibly high degree of autonomy never to be seen among his non-elected successors. However, the point remains that the very features of corporatism that led to coopting the urban poor also contributed to their having a larger role in Mexico City politics than their counterparts had in many Latin American cities.

The PRD-led pragmatic urban regime has indeed changed the way not only the urban poor but also other actors in the city articulate with city (not longer national) authorities. Yet even those changes build, at least in part, on the legacy of corporatism in Mexico City. At the same time, however, those changes go beyond a mere mode of incorporation to include more subjective characteristics. In fact, the PRD has rescued a discourse centered on the importance of the city

and the urban as the expression of public life and citizenship (Holston and Appadurai 1996) while focusing on public space as a "physical, symbolic, and political" arena that reflects such a relationship (Borja and Muxi 2000: 8). As we will see in Chapter 4, such perspective is more politically significant for a specific faction within PRD that comes from the student movement of the 1980s and has helped to establish some of the most significant participatory channels in the city including those devised in *Centro Histórico*.

Citizen Participation in Urban Policy and Institutional Layering

At the level of the local cases I examine, my findings indicate that having a participatory discourse and participatory channels is not enough; at least not in urban contexts such as Mexico City where political demobilization has been the norm for extended periods of time leading to a markedly low level of engagement with the state (Houtzager et al 2005). This does not mean that citizen participation and social movements did not exist during the PRI's corporatist urban regime. As Mexican and international observers alike have analyzed, there were several waves of democratizing movements and efforts during that long period and the PRI corporatist machinery had to adjust itself and give greater concessions each time (Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez 2003; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Tamayo 2007). Moreover, in this dissertation I argue that citizen participation *engaging the state* can take various forms; not necessarily or directly conducive to higher degrees of democracy as manifested, for example, in the persistence of corporatist modes of participation or the ambiguity shown by progressive political forces such as PRD regarding opening up more meaningful participation in decision-making about urban policy.

Along similar lines, the case of upper-middle class *Roma Condesa* has had a noteworthy history of collective efforts on the part of both resident and business associations. But those associations tend to fragment or fade over time when they are not engaging city government and getting what they consider concrete or meaningful results. Part of the reason for this is that their

proposals and demands cannot be satisfied through self-provisioning as the latter has serious limits particularly in areas as densely built as *Ciudad Central*. On the contrary, residents and merchants in previously neglected historic center or *Centro Histórico* had a history of only getting involved and/or questioning the state in extreme circumstances. That was the case after the 1985 earthquakes in great part because of the negligence shown by the Mexican state (Ortiz 1997) and with protests on the part of street vendors who used to have an important presence in the area up until their expulsion in 1997 (Crossa 2009).

An interesting paradox emerges while comparing these two cases: even though *Centro Histórico* has a much lower starting point in comparison with *Roma Condesa* (as infrastructure and services in the latter are of higher quality and have been better preserved), urban renovation efforts in the former are advancing more rapidly than those in *Roma Condesa* and an increasing number of residents are participating in defining and implementing those efforts while the opposite is true in the latter. As we will see in chapters 4 and 5, the presence of a state institution that serves as facilitator of consensus and multiplier of resources in *Centro Histórico* has been the key difference between the two cases. This finding suggests that the (local) state continues to be a crucial actor for overcoming fragmentation and solving *public* problems in urban contexts. In this case, state "institutional catalysts" (Bhatta 2006) or multipliers such as the one I studied in the historic center, the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* (the Fiduciary Fund for Mexico City's Historic Center) are needed to break the impasse represented by limited resources, political apathy and/or a history of unsuccessful attempts at engaging the state.

At both levels of analysis, I am interested in exploring the common theme of the layering of political practices and institutions over time while taking the degree and nature of citizen participation in urban policies as the connecting link among those levels. In this dissertation, the layering of political practices and institutions refers to the coexistence of practices and institutions the PRI used during its seven-decade rule in Mexico with those the PRD has created

after its electoral victory in the capital in 1997. The former included a corporatist mode of incorporating the masses following the blueprint president Lázaro Cárdenas successfully devised in the 1930s through three key constituencies affiliated with the PRI: organized labor, white-collar employees, and the rural poor (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). This corporatist model took a somewhat different form in Mexico City where the rural poor became urban migrants who helped to expand the city through their own self-provisioning efforts and minimum state assistance in the form of land and basic services (Sánchez Mejorada 2005).

Many of these migrants, in turn, became the informal vendors that the PRI would incorporate as subaltern yet important allies in Mexico City's corporatist urban regime modeled after the cooptation tactics of appointed mayor Uruchurtu in the 1950s and 1960s (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996; Cross 1997; Crossa 2009; Silva Londoño 2010).[3] Landed elites were clearly left out from the corporatist coalition as the Mexican Revolution was, in great part, fought against their excessive power and that of international investors (Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). It is not a coincidence, for instance, that up until recently the Mexican Constitution explicitly prevented foreigners from owning land as stated in Article 27. Finally, small business owners and other middle-class members such as self-employed professionals had a love-hate relationship with the PRI, which usually manifested as low voting rates in favor of the party in the capital. Notably, Uruchurtu was the only mayor who temporarily managed to get this group closer to the PRI by adopting a brave position against downtown development that eventually cost him his post (Davis 2002).

Additionally, the PRI made extensive use of clientelistic networks, particularly by offering access to land and services in the outskirts of the city in exchange for votes. It also

[3] Additionally, mayor Uruchurtu's tenure constituted an exceptional period in Mexico City's history in, at least, two respects: (1) it was the only time when city residents' support for the PRI was high (it reached 68.59% by 1958 whereas the opposition dropped to 31.27%), which was part of the reason why PRI national leaders relied on Uruchurtu for 16 years, and (2) during his tenure national and city interests diverged the most as national actors such as industrialists, large-scale commercial entrepreneurs, and real estate developers wanted to transform downtown areas whereas the mayor and the traditional middle- and lower-middle classes in the city opposed that project (Davis 2002).

established various forms of cooptation masked as participation of which the "block chiefs" or *"Jefes de Manzana"* were the most famous and long-standing modality (Sánchez Mejorada 2005). In contrast, PRD administrations that have governed the city since 1997 have experimented with various models for involving citizens in urban policy decisions in more meaningful ways. Those include numerous consultations, referenda, neighborhood committees, and limited forms of participatory budgeting.[4] However, many observers including several of my interviewees, put PRD's actual openness to citizen participation in question given the ambivalence with which its mayors and legislators have handled the issue at different points in time (as evidenced in the passing of multiple and contradictory versions of Mexico City's Law for Citizen Participation), the ways in which some of PRD's more populist practices seem to resemble those of the PRI, and the fact that PRD administrations have paid more attention and resources to social policies favoring vulnerable groups and to renovation efforts in the historic center in collaboration with private investors. However, it is important to note that PRD has also had to maneuver in a distinctly difficult economic context a la Peterson (1981) as a result of being the first local government not politically aligned with national authorities since the beginning of the 20th century.

I argue that Mexico City's corporatist urban regime was a *direct* expression of the overall corporatist regime the PRI established at the national level. On the contrary, the capital's new pragmatic regime is an urban regime the opposing PRD has been creating *against* national authorities while its governing coalition capitalizes on the economic and political distinctiveness of Mexico City. While examining non-electoral citizen participation in urban policies in the city

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[4] Starting in March 2011, each of the sixteen administrative subdivisions of Mexico City or *"delegaciones"* devotes 3% of its capital budget to projects chosen by its residents through special consultations through in-person and online voting (Martínez Ventura 2013; *IEDF webpage* various dates). However, this mechanism does not involve the kind of face-to-face deliberation and sequential cycle of events usually associated with the participatory budgeting model (see Fung and Wright 2001; Abers 1998; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Hernández-Medina 2010). On the contrary, one of the few substantive experiences of participatory budgeting in the city (that of *Delegación Tlalpan*) was put in practice by one of the current leaders at the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* (see Chapter 4).

and paying special attention to its manifestation in central areas, it became apparent to me how changes in *Ciudad Central* are crucial to understanding how the corporatist governing coalition including PRI (national) government actors and its subordinate allies, pro-government labor unions and street vendors, have been replaced by a PRD (city) government allied to poor and middle class residents, on the one hand, and national and international capital, on the other.

Leftist PRD is one of the three most important parties in the country along with center-right PRI and the conservative and pro-business *Partido de Acción Nacional* (Party of National Action or PAN), which was the political force that finally defeated PRI in the 2000 national elections (Dillon 2000). Unlike its limited influence in the rest of the country, PRD has been politically dominant in Mexico City since it was first elected in 1997 and such dominance is key in the city's new urban regime (see Appendices A, B, C and D). Since then, four PRD administrations have coexisted with right or center-right national authorities either led by the PRI or the PAN. The uncomfortable coexistence with "*priista"* or *"panista"* authorities in control of the National Palace has meant, among other things, that PRD mayors have faced important financial limitations yet they have managed to be very proactive in terms of service provisioning following the lines of what Roberts and Portes (2006) call a "proactive state." According to them, local authorities in Mexico City show a high level of competence in providing services to the urban poor; once again, a dimension where Mexico City constitutes a marked exception vis-à-vis the rest of urban Mexico.[5]

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[5] According to the anti-poverty literature about Latin America, Mexico has a noteworthy record in improving services for the rural poor, starting with the implementation of "PRONASOL" by President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994). President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) dismantled "PRONASOL" because of its high level of politicization and created "PROGRESA" in 1997 (de Britto 2004). The latter was revamped into "OPORTUNIDADES" in 2002 (de Britto 2004; Coady and Parker 2009). "PROGRESA" is an exception in the literature for being the most effective conditional cash transfer program in poverty reduction in the region since most such programs have more of an impact on education attainment and limited effects on actual poverty reduction (de Britto 2004). "PROGRESA" was the first large-scale program of its kind and it reached 20% of all Mexican families in 2002 (Rawlings and Rubio 2003; Rawlings 2005). Yet, Mexican programs are rather controversial especially "PRONASOL" when it comes to Salinas' alleged cooptation agenda and his need to legitimize his administration after what most observers saw as an electoral fraud against presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. More recent

Many interviewees pointed out that second PRD mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador implemented a vast array of social and housing programs to assist various subgroups among the urban poor: senior citizens, single mothers, public school students and their families, among others (Greyson 2007). They also acknowledged that López Obrador's former protégé, mayor Marcelo Ebrard, kept those programs in place and/or expanded them while both mayors established important partnerships with international and local business sectors to obtain new investment sources for Mexico City (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007). According to Roberts and Portes (2006), as well as some of my interviewees, those social programs are in fact "preemptive" in the sense that their goal is to demobilize the urban poor. However, other interviewees vehemently disagreed and pointed out that this kind of social policies has become a hallmark of all PRD administrations in their efforts to "universalize social rights" in the city. My findings indicate that, even if the goal is not purely instrumental (and I don't believe it is), PRD city administrations face a difficult challenge in looking for a balance between the city's economic constraints (Peterson 1981) and their progressive social agenda. In turn, Mexico City's highly militant and experienced *Movimiento Urbano Popular* (Popular Urban Movement) has attempted to adapt itself to the new circumstances by exploiting its links to the PRD and the PRI. Some of its members (notably street vendors) have been losing both influence and power precisely because of the fact that the PRD has more legitimacy than other political parties to keep them in check (Grayson 2007; Hiernaux and González 2008) and because an important subsection among them is linked to the negative practices of former appointed mayors in PRI's corporatist urban regime (Crossa 2009).

I utilize the degree and nature of citizen participation in urban policies as the connecting link between the city and neighborhood levels of analysis mentioned above because it is an

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studies argue for the need to implement similar anti-poverty programs in other Mexican cities instead of only focusing on the rural poor (Damián 2006). "OPORTUNIDADES" had, in fact, expanded to small and medium-sized urban localities (Rawlings and Rubio 2003; Coady and Parker 2009).

approximate indicator of how open or democratic the new urban regime is. I am cognizant of the risk involved in conflating the two and that is why I focus not only on the quantitative side of it (what I'm calling its degree) but also the features of various forms of citizen participation engaging the state (its nature). The degree and nature of citizen participation are also crucial insofar as they indicate how (if at all) citizens are involved in resisting the deleterious effects of land commodification, a phenomenon that has accelerated in the central sections of Mexico City as a result of the city's increased integration in the global economy (Parentneir 2002). At the level of the city, and despite their tentativeness, PRD administrations have indeed established various participatory mechanisms over time and one of them, the Cárdenas administration, used a consensus-building style to engage civil society organizations on a regular basis while eliciting their support for creating the urban planning mechanisms started in his administration. In the two cases presented here, citizen participation had been historically higher among the educated and upper-middle class residents of *Roma Condesa* as the literature would predict (Almond and Verba 1963; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker 2004) and much lower and, at times, virtually nonexistent in poorer *Centro Histórico*. Nonetheless, after the *Fideicomiso* started to intervene as an institutional catalyst of citizen participation in 1997 participation in the latter is more frequent and meaningful and concrete results are more visible even though there is still a higher level of associational density in the former.

My findings also suggest alternatives to the typical urban development story where developers triumph over original residents in redeveloped areas and the latter inevitably have to leave to be replaced by incoming middle- and upper class neighbors (Feagin 1983; Fainstein 2001 [1994]; Logan and Molotch 1987; Molotch 1993). I argue that, even though the degree of influence citizens have on urban policy is relatively low in Mexico City as a whole (Houtzager et al 2005), the poorer residents in the historic center are benefiting from collaborating with institutions in city government created as part of the PRD-led pragmatic urban regime. On the

contrary, residents in *Roma Condesa* are being, at least partially, “left out” because they are a less appealing collective actor to be included in the new “pragmatic” urban regime even though their area is going through changes very similar to those occurring in *Centro Histórico*.

Analyzing this outcome and the way it relates to the history of overt conflict and clientelism in *Centro Histórico* vis-à-vis the trajectory of more formal negotiations in *Roma Condesa* provides an important contribution to the current literature expanding our understanding of urban politics in globalizing cities in the developing world. In particular, findings from this project confirm that citizen participation in Mexico City today certainly does not resemble successful cases of inclusive participation with concrete policy outcomes like Porto Alegre (Abers 1997; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2005). For the most part, my findings confirm those by Houtzager et al (2005) about citizen participation in Mexico City being mostly detached or direct in relation to the state (see Table 1.2). As Houtzager and colleagues observed, residents from both of my local cases historically engaged in self-provisioning because they have very low expectations about the state providing for any of their needs or they do interact with the state directly often through clientelistic networks.

1.2. People and Cities: the Challenge of the 21st Century

By the end of 2007 and for the first time in history, the urban population on the planet equaled its rural population. Now, one of every two people in the world lives in a city. Cities in the developing world have been and continue to be major sites of this transformation. They currently account for ninety percent of the world’s urban growth (UN-Habitat 2006). Even though much of this growth is taking place in small and intermediate urban centers, its effects are more visible in mega-cities: cities with 10 million inhabitants or more. Cities like São Paulo, Mumbai, Mexico City, Jakarta, Lagos, and others pose formidable challenges in terms of social and environmental sustainability as well as deeply ingrained patterns of inequality. Many people in urban settings in

the developing world lack adequate housing, do not have access to health, education, sanitation and other basic services, and are particularly vulnerable to violence and crime. Moreover, urban living is often synonymous with living in slums as the United Nations estimates that almost 1 in 3 of those living in cities were located in slums by 2001 (UN-Habitat 2006).

This "planet of slums," to follow Mike Davis's (2006) phrasing, is not a context where most scholars or government officials would expect democratic innovations to flourish. However, the opposite is true. Citizens and reformers from cities in the global South have showed their capacity for imagining and devising participatory institutions to relate to one another and address these complex problems through democratic and inclusive forms of deliberation (Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2005; Goldfrank 2007). Such potential exists even in mega capitals like Mexico City, where socio-economic and spatial inequality patterns are visible, intense, and durable in great part because of the city's high level of integration to the global economy (Parnreiter 2002).

This dissertation argues that, even though citizen participation in Mexico City is limited in comparison to similar urban settings (Houtzager et al 2005) it is important to expand our understanding of how more ordinary and limited forms of participation take place in the developing world; as those are more common than the extraordinary moments usually portrayed in the literature (e.g. Abers 1997, 2000; Fung and Wright 2001; Baiocchi 2005; Avritzer 2002). Mexico City constitutes an extreme case (Gerring 2007) of late democratization in the region including a markedly low level of citizen participation engaging the state (Houtzager et al 2005). Thus, according to the literature it is an adverse urban context for implementing progressive social and urban policies and fostering citizen participation given the political and economic constraints it has had for the best part of the last 100 years. The city lost its political autonomy for most of the 20th century and "*chilangos*" (Mexico City inhabitants) were not able to vote for their own mayor until 1997 (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007). Similarly, the history of the city is full of episodes of repression such as the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968 against students from

the national university (Tamayo 2007) or extreme government negligence as it was the case after the earthquakes on September 19th and 20th in 1985 (Ortiz 1997).

At the same time, however, multiple social movements have sprung from such difficult moments as the homeless movement did after the earthquakes while achieving the extraordinary feat of getting the government to build new houses for them in the historic center and moving back to the area (Ortiz 1997). Other movements have gained transformative concessions from the state (i.e. the political reforms of the 1970s and the 1990s (Davis and Alvarado 2004)), or have become important precedents for later waves of democratization as it was the case with the student movement of the 1960s, which in several ways informed subsequent mobilizations and strategies by the feminist, environmentalist, and homeless movements (Tamayo 2007; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez 2003). As this dissertation shows, such movements also informed the forward thinking and political practice of the progressive public officials who have helped transform a formerly financial institution, the *Fiduciary Fund of Centro Histórico*, into an innovative and successful "institutional catalyst" (Bhatta 2006) in the area. In other words, there is a great democratization potential in Mexico City that is just starting to unfold and which might help us in identifying paths towards more just and inclusive urban policies in other parts of the developing world.

Addressing such a crucial question would represent a step forward in solving the increasing lack of governability observed in global cities and mega-cities in the developing world (Davis 2006; UN-Habitat 2003). As the second largest urban center in the Western Hemisphere (second only to São Paulo), Mexico City is one of those places that usually come to mind when thinking about the maladies of primate and mega cities in the developing world. Its status as the primate or dominant city in Mexico is well known: the capital concentrates more than one-third of the country's GDP and almost one-fifth of its 113 million population (Parnreiter 2002). With more than 20 million residents, Mexico City's metropolitan area is infamous for its

overcrowding, kidnappings, and general anarchy. Mexico City does not fare well even when compared to similar cities in the region. In a comparative study of Mexico City and São Paulo, the other most important global city in Latin America and the Caribbean, Houtzager and colleagues (2005) found Mexico City residents' participation and overall interaction with city government to be much more subdued and less frequent than that of their *paulista* counterparts.

In order to identify changes toward more democratic forms of urban governance it is important to remember that changes in the political arena often lead to the co-existence of institutional "layers" from different eras, a phenomenon that is at the core of my argument. The Mexican political system, of which Mexico City is a crucial headquarters, accommodates different forms of state-society intermediation: overt conflict, collaboration, and the legacy of corporatism. Practices associated with each of these forms of intermediation are not replaced by new practices; rather "new" and forms of participation such as citizen consultations, participatory budgeting or public referenda coexist with "older" and less favored practices such as bloc voting or influence peddling by residents in order to be awarded neighborhood improvement projects.

1.3. Mexico City as a Primate, Global, and Mega-City: the Limits of Globalization

As we will see in Chapter 3, Mexico City is a primate or dominant city as it disproportionally concentrates most of Mexico's population and resources (McGreevey 1971; Morse 1970; Davis 1994; Cuervo González 2004; Galiani and Kim 2011). Even Mark Jefferson (1939), the creator of the urban primacy concept, classified it as such at the beginning of the 20th century. Similarly, Mexico City is a mega-city because its number of inhabitants surpasses the 10-million limit associated with extreme population growth (UN-Habitat 2007). And it is also considered a "global" city because it performs strategic functions in linking the Mexican economy to the rest of the world (Parnreiter 2002).

For these reasons, in my original formulation of this project I hypothesized that Mexico City's transformation into a global center of finance and global communications established the conditions for new, unexpected kinds of citizen participation that, in turn, recalibrated how different classes interacted with and made demands on the state. Along similar lines, I intended to expand existing understandings of the "socio-political aspects of globalization" (Davis 2002), how "new political actors" and alliances emerge in urban contexts (Sassen 2003). In particular, I was interested in how international repertoires of both capital and ideas interacted with national and local actors. My research indicates that globalization has been a crucial factor in the ongoing transition from the city's PRI-led corporatist urban regime to the PRD-led pragmatic urban regime. However, I am cognizant of the fact that the connections between global, national and local actors are more mediated and subtle than I expected. For instance, we are used to thinking about so-called neoliberal policies (trade liberalization, public deficit reduction, and the like) as the result of agendas pushed or imposed exclusively by international actors. In contrast, the transformation in the Mexican development model was mainly the outcome of a war between two factions of the political elite won by the pro-market economists from the country's Central Bank (*Banco de México*), most of which had pursued graduate studies in the United States (Camp 2002).

In the case of capital flows, as several interviewees pointed out, international capital usually allies itself with national investors and international CEOs also have a preference for camouflaging their companies' presence this way. This finding coincides with Fainstein's (2001 [1994]) results about developers in New York City and London. It is important to note that, as a result, one of the limitations of this dissertation is that it underrepresents the viewpoints of both national and international developers. Similarly, when it comes to global flows of "repertoires of participation" (Hernandez-Medina 2007) I had hypothesized that local government officials in Mexico City were ready to assume blueprints and methodologies for fostering citizen

participation developed elsewhere in the region, as it has been widely the case for the participatory budgeting model (Goldfrank 2007).

Multiple interviews, informal conversations, archival research and participant observation of dozens of events certainly indicate that public officials in Mexico City's government (as well as their counterparts in civil society) are part of the debates on urban governance, and the right to the city taking place in Latin America and in Spain. However, the way they appropriate those international scripts is deeply rooted in the local realities they deal with. In interview after interview, government officials, neighborhood residents and business owners highlighted the distinctiveness of the areas they work in. For instance, those related to *Centro Histórico* underscored the need to preserve the historic center as an area "full of life" unlike other historic centers in the region that have become "museumfied" (for the lack of a better word) for touristic consumption. Similarly, those residing or working in *Roma Condesa* often referred to the area's distinctiveness as a remnant of the "garden city" ideal in Mexico City.

1.4. Research Questions

This dissertation is guided by the following research questions:

- What have been the effects of re-establishing electoral democracy in Mexico City and the political dominance it has led to on the part of the PRD? Has electoral democracy led to new alliances (if at all) between the local state, the national state, the private sector, civil society, and Mexico City residents? In other words, is there a new urban regime emerging in Mexico City or is the urban regime the PRI built (even if adjusted for the new times) still in place?
- How has been the relationship between the local state, now controlled by a leftist opposition party (PRD), and a national (federal) state either controlled by center-right (PRI) or right (PAN) political parties? What are the implications of such a relationship on the room for maneuver the PRD has had for implementing its own agenda in the city?

- Has the PRD established a more democratic and open political system in Mexico City as it proclaimed it would? What are the implications of such an opening (if at all) on residents' chances for participating in formulating, implementing, and/or monitoring urban policies for the city? For example, is citizen participation sufficient to oppose land commodification and defend the public nature of urban space against it?
- Have the new political practices and institutions the PRD established replaced those put in place by the PRI in the past or are they merely complementing the latter? To what extent is it really possible to move away from a non-democratic or quasi-democratic past in the absence of a culture and history of citizen participation?
- How does the "double movement" (Polanyi 1944) between the trend to obtain profit by treating urban space as a commodity and the one to reinsert land into social relationships manifest in Mexico City? To what extent has land development advanced in the central sections of Mexico City as an expression of commodification associated with globalization? Are land commodification and gentrification inevitable outcomes of a newfound interest in the center of the city or can they be either stopped or, at least, slowed down by residents and their allies in city government?
- What is the role and significance of mediating institutions in these processes? Is citizen participation enough (if at all) to make inclusive urban development possible in contexts like Mexico City? Is there a role for the (local) state to play in assisting poor or marginalized urban communities so that they can have a say in the policies and changes affecting their lives? If so, how? Under what conditions is such a partnership successful? How are those mediating institutions organized and what is the relative importance of their mode of organization and the way they operate within the local state?

1.5. Key Concepts

This section presents a preliminary understanding of the key concepts used in the dissertation, which are explained in more detail while discussing the theoretical framework in Chapter 2:

First, I use the concept of **urban regimes** in order to address the urban governance implications of the momentous change initiated in Mexico City with the election of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas as the first elected (and non-PRI) "chief of government" or city mayor in 1997. Cárdenas' election not only signaled an important moment of closure for Mexico City inhabitants after almost fifty years of having lost their right to elect their own mayor (which they had in 1928) but also represented a critical juncture[6] (Mahoney 2000) informed by the electoral reforms leftist parties and social movements achieved during the 1990s. I argue that the 1997 mayoral election in Mexico City signals the beginning of a new "pragmatic" urban regime where PRD administrations have pursued a wide pro-poor agenda through a vast array of social policies while, at the same time, extensively collaborating with national and international capitalists in order to face financial limitations hostile national authorities impose upon them.

Urban regimes are "*the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions*" and those decisions are about "*managing conflict* and *making adaptive responses* to social change" (Stone 1989: 7; emphasis in the original). The two kinds of urban regimes analyzed in this dissertation embody not only different sets of public and private actors but also different modes of coordination between them. The PRI led a corporatist governing coalition allied to national manufacturing families or *"grupos"* that benefited from the party's long-standing economic

[6] For an overview of the debates about this concept in Political Science and Political Sociology, see Mahoney and Schensul's (2006). The most widely usage of the term is that "critical junctures are periods when a particular option is selected from a range of alternatives, thereby channeling future movement in a specific direction" (2006: 460). Lipsket and Rokan (1967) is a famous example in which the authors explain the evolution of contemporary political systems in Europe based on "the resolution of three critical junctures: state-church, party-church, and state labor cleavages" (2006: 460). In Latin American studies, the most famous argument is the one by Collier and Collier (1991) about the moment and mode of incorporation of labor being the most important critical juncture in the region.

policies favoring import-substitution (Loaeza 2006; Teichman 1997). This coalition also included subordinate allies such as pro-government labor unions, government employees, and street vendors through a national corporatist system the party started in the 1930s. Street vendors, in particular, have been historically affiliated with the PRI since the 1950s when appointed mayor Uruchurtu coopted them through a combination of repressive and clientelistic tactics (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996; Crossa 2009).

This coalition has been replaced by a new one led by PRD city governments allied to poor and middle class residents, on the one hand, and national and international capital, on the other. As we will see in Chapter 2, I analyze the corporatist and the pragmatic urban regimes in comparison with two other kinds of urban regimes found in Latin America: the municipal socialist model found in Porto Alegre (Abers 1998; Heller 2001; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009) and the entrepreneurial or "free market" regime found in Santiago, Chile (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]); Siavelis et al 2002; Roberts and Portes 2006; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009).

Another central concept in this dissertation is that of **citizen participation** understood as non-electoral forms of public engagement with the state. I take this form of citizen participation to be an indicator of the differences between the PRI's corporatist regime and the emergent pragmatic regime the PRD initiated. I am interested in looking at whether the latter is indeed moving towards more democratic forms of urban governance. However, I assume that, at least at the beginning of the transition, institutional "layers" (that is, practices and institutions) from different eras will tend to coexist and that the citizen participation is but a very approximate indicator of how democratic the regime is since new forms of cooptation can be masked through "more participation." The Mexican political system, of which Mexico City is a crucial headquarters, accommodates different forms of state-society intermediation: overt conflict, collaboration, and clientelism. Practices associated with each of these forms of intermediation are

not replaced by new practices; rather “new” forms of participation such as citizen consultations, participatory budgeting or public referenda coexist with “older” and less favored practices associated with a not-so-distant corporatist and clientelistic past.

Accordingly, this project subscribes to the view that we need to move beyond either/or perspectives on citizen participation while paying more attention to intermediate forms of citizen involvement in public policies. For these reasons, I look at citizen participation as a continuum of five categories where exclusion and synergistic (or ideal) participation serve mainly as reference categories whereas contentious, invited and corporatist participation are taken to be the norm. Synergistic participation implies a regular and collaborative space between citizens and policy makers that ensures mutually beneficial policy outcomes for both sides (Fung and Wright 2001; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi et al 2008). “Contentious” participation (Piven and Cloward 1979; Tilly 1986; McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998) is based on conflict-based politics and includes strategies such as public demonstrations, boycotts, civil disobedience, and others. Corporatist participation takes place through networks inherited from Mexico City’s corporatist urban regime, which entail the exchange of material outcomes for political favors. Finally, what I argue that is the dominant form of engagement with the state in Mexico City’s new pragmatic regime, “invited spaces” or induced participation is a modality where state actors define and control the rules of the game and “invite” others to take part of it under those terms. In other words, “invited participation” (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2011) is the mechanism to elicit cooperation in the pragmatic regime; even though it coexists with other mechanisms remaining from the city’s corporatist past such as cooptation and contentious politics.

The local cases in this dissertation also show how real estate can function as an urban transmission belt for economic globalization. **Land commodification** a la Harvey (1978; 2002[1989]) has significantly increased in both although the process started earlier in *Roma Condesa* (in the 1990s) than in *Centro Histórico* (in the 2000s). Both areas have had an

exponential increase in the number of luxury apartment complexes, hotels, hostels, restaurants, and other businesses established in them and both have also witnessed an increase in the demand for housing although, again, the process is more advanced in *Roma Condesa*. National and global investors of all sizes are taking part of this change; a trend for which Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim has become the most visible and iconic face. I look at urban or land development then as the concrete manifestation of these trends vis-à-vis the interventions city residents and city government do or don't do to either stop them or regulate them.

For instance, PRD city administrations, unlike their PRI predecessors, have shown much interest in regulating changes in land use. López Obrador, in particular, issued policies (the famous "Bando 2" or Edict #2) to encourage **urban recycling** in *Ciudad Central* by forbidding building new housing in the outskirts of the city. One of his goals was to provide housing in *Ciudad Central* for poorer residents who usually have to move to the periphery even leaving the Federal District for the surrounding State of Mexico. Another goal was to take advantage of the infrastructure and services in the central sections of the city that were "under-utilized" ("*Bando 2*" reprinted in Tamayo 2007). As I will show in Chapter 3, policies like *Bando 2* have had a modest yet noteworthy effect in repopulating the city's center. However, although praiseworthy in its intent, policies of this kind put even more pressure on land commodification and increase the stakes for the area's multiple users consolidating *Ciudad Central* as a highly "contested space" (Duhau and Giglia's 2004).

I also utilize the literature on state-society synergy to frame the debate around the key difference between the local cases analyzed in this dissertation: the presence of a state actor that served as an **institutional catalyst** able to bring together and multiply the effects of otherwise fragmented and, in several cases, demobilized or weak social actors. Such an institutional catalyst was present in *Centro Histórico* and absent in *Roma Condesa* and ended up making state-society relations and policy outcomes more fruitful in the former in spite of being an area with less

favorable conditions. The literature on state-society synergy (or lack thereof) helps me look at the conditions under which state actors can level the playing field among otherwise unequal players in the process of defining, implementing, and monitoring urban (and other types of) public policies. Along similar lines, the concept of an institutional catalyst is defined as an "institution that serves as the focal point to make or force desired change. The institution could be a select committee, a governmental ministry, or any other party. An institutional catalyst has, or is perceived to have, an appropriate mandate to play such a role" (Bhatta 2006: 291). As my *Centro Histórico* (Chapter 4) case shows, formerly demobilized and fragmented communities can have significant levels of success in co-producing public policy with the local state when their (more limited) resources are pooled together and/or expanded upon through the work of an institutional catalyst such as this fiduciary fund (*Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*). In this dissertation, moreover, the progressive faction leading such an institutional catalyst built upon the political practices and ideas of previous social movements in the city and, by so doing, have managed to prevent the displacement of the urban poor from the city's historic center.

Finally, this project explicitly assumes that there is an asymmetry of power between **marginalized and elite groups,** which have very different rooms to maneuver as the latter are able to exercise their "voice" (Hirschman 1970) within a given political system. At the same time, the former often have to exercise "loyalty" through their asymmetrical participation in clientelistic networks or decide to "exit" the political system altogether (Hirschman 1970; Heller 2009). Marginalized groups are sometimes able to put pressure on local authorities in order to implement policies in their favor by deploying their more limited resources in new ways: by referring to both progressive land regulations and indigenous customary traditions (Darrah 2010); by building knowledge-based alliances across sectors (Keck 2006) or by using confrontational strategies while simultaneously participating in institutionalized arenas such as the participatory budget (Hernández-Medina 2010).

1.6. Data and Methods

The methodology for this dissertation is based on both the comparative-historical tradition and the qualitative tradition of fieldwork at two levels of analysis: (a) city wide processes of both economic and political nature where the transition from the corporatist to the pragmatic urban regime is evident such as laws and mechanisms for state-society intermediation in urban policies, land use regulations and the provision of public services, and (b) two local case studies represented by a low-income and another upper-class neighborhood located in areas selected as areas representative of major changes and conflicts around land use and public services in the central section of the city.

Case Selection

Mexico City constitutes an excellent case study to analyze the joint effects of economic and political liberalization on the chances for an increased participation on the part of regular citizens in policy making and the transition from the corporatist to the pragmatic urban regimes that has been taking place as a result. Due to the seven-decade one-party rule led by the *Partido de la Revolución Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI), Mexico was a very late guest at the Third Wave democratization party that had started in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1980s. It took two more decades for the country to overcome the PRI's hegemonic rule and have its first non-PRI President, *panista* Vicente Fox from the center-right *Partido de Acción Nacional* (National Action Party, PAN) elected in July 2000. The pervasiveness of the PRI's corporatist legacy combined with the capital's unique status after losing its political autonomy during the first two decades of the 20th century (Davis 1994; Sánchez Mejorada 2005), make Mexico City an "extreme" case study (Gerring 2007) of late democratization in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The city constitutes an extreme case study in the sense that, even though it eventually followed the trends witnessed in the rest of Latin America with the incorporation of real inter-party competition, it did so at a much later date. Mexican and international analysts alike have argued that this delay, in turn, reified the non-democratic features of the Mexican political system (Davis 1994; Tamayo 2007; Alvarez and Sánchez Mejorada 2003; Greyson 2007). At the same time, comparative research with similar cities in the global South including São Paulo, the other most important global and mega-city in Latin America (Schiffer 2002), has shown that Mexico City residents exhibit lower levels of engagement with the state and build upon their traditions of self-organization and self-provisioning in order to solve their problems (Houtzager et al 2005; 2008). Even though citizens in both cities saw the state as responsible for issues such as urban services, public safety and medical care, Mexico City residents did not seem to expect their demands to be fulfilled whereas their peers in São Paulo expected city government to be at least partially responsive to their claims (Houtzager et al 2005).

Along similar lines, São Paulo offers a varied range of spaces for participation oriented towards decision-making (Houtzager et al 2005; Lavalle et al 2005) whereas this range is more limited in Mexico City. Almost one-third (33%) of citizens interviewed in São Paulo engaged in "direct" relations with the state. If that didn't work then they resorted to the use of conflict or demonstrations in "contentious" relationships (19%) and only 11% were "detached" from or indifferent to the state. In contrast, a fourth of Mexico City residents (25%) had a "detached" relationship since they did not engage the state, 22% of them took part of "direct" forms of relating to the state and only 4% took part of "contentious" relationships with the state. This comparison is summarized in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Citizen Relations to Agents of Government in Mexico City and São Paulo

Relation to State	São Paulo	Mexico City
Direct	33	22
Mediated	4	4
Contentious	19	4
Detached	11	25
Direct, Mediated, or Contentious	20	12
Detached & others	15	33
Total share of Problem Solvers	100%	100%

Source: Houtzager et al (2005), Table 4

The second level of case selection in this project concerns two local case studies located in the so-called *Ciudad Central* or central section of Mexico City. Duhau and Giglia's (2004) define *Ciudad Central* as an extremely "contested space" due to the need to accommodate very distinct types of users (residents, businesses, commuters, street vendors, and tourists). As a result, the central city has a historical trajectory of mixed land use and that trend is particularly visible in the two neighborhoods chosen as case studies in this dissertation, *Centro Histórico* and *Roma-Condesa*. Despite enjoying a more sustained associational presence and closer links to city government over time, neighbors in *Roma-Condesa* face serious obstacles trying to influence urban policy. On the contrary, the poorer and relatively less mobilized neighbors in *Centro Histórico* are slowly but surely taking advantage of new spaces for participation created through the "Rescue Program" implemented by city government in their area.

I selected *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* as my two local case studies because: (a) both areas are located within the same administrative district and are part of Mexico City's central core or *Ciudad Central*; (b) both areas have historically had similarly high levels of mixed use of land and have moved to more intensive commercial use in the last decade; and, (c) both continue to be sites of high levels of contention as a result of such changes as well as an increase in the presence of international actors, particularly real estate firms. Both *Centro Histórico* and

Roma Condesa have been physically and symbolically the most attractive part of the city in different periods: from the colonial era up until the 1940s for the former and between the 1940s and the 1980s for the latter. Both functioned as the residential location for the city's economic and political elites during those times including minorities such as the Spanish and Jewish communities. And they have started to regain part of that centrality as middle-class professionals, young couples, and foreigners have started to repopulate both areas; a trend that started in *Roma Condesa* in the 1990s. Another commonality several of my interviewees highlighted is that, given their location, both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* were also the two most severely affected by the 1985 earthquakes and the disaster had a lasting effect on their infrastructure. This negative outcome reinforced the mixed land use vocation in both areas, a feature that is highly appreciated among many of those who have moved to both places in the last two decades. Table 1.2 below summarizes key similarities and differences between the case studies.

Table 1.2

Local Cases: *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa*

Dimension	***Centro Histórico***	***Roma Condesa***
History	Central and most important part of Mexico City since its foundation in the XVI century until the 1940s.	Central and one of the most important parts of Mexico City since the 1940s until the 1980s.
Structural changes	One of the two hardest hit areas during the 1985 earthquakes.	One of the two hardest hit areas during the 1985 earthquakes.
Typical land use	Mixed: mainly retail, tourism, government office buildings, and residential.	Mixed: smaller retail (neighborhood-based), and residential. Now also private office buildings.
Relative importance	Regaining centrality since the beginning of the 2000s.	Regaining centrality since the mid-1990s.
Class (original population)	Residential site for the city's elites since its foundation up until the end of the 19th century. Initial residential site for international migrant communities (especially Spanish and Jewish).	Residential site for the city's elites since the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century. Secondary residential site for international migrant communities (especially Spanish, and Jewish).
Class (current population)	Mainly low-income and middle-class residents including the highest proportion of seniors in the city, and younger newcomers.	Predominantly middle- and upper-middle class residents including young newcomers.

Dimension	***Centro Histórico***	***Roma Condesa***
Political/party preferences	Mixed with PRD (center-left) predominance among residents, and both PRI and PRD influences among street vendors.	Mixed with PAN (right) and PRD (center-left) predominance among residents.
Traditional government counterpart	Geographical subdivision of *Delegación Cuahtémoc, Territorial Centro Histórico*, is formally in charge but lacking resources and staff has a limited presence in the area.	Geographical subdivision of *Delegación Cuahtémoc, Territorial Roma Condesa* is formally in charge but lacking resources and staff has a limited presence in the area.
Institutional catalyst	Present (*Fideicomiso* and *Autoridad del Centro Histórico*).	Absent
State-society relationship/citizen participation	Low level of associational density. More sporadic contacts with public officials yet concrete results are gained through work with specialized agencies (*Fideicomiso* and *Autoridad del Centro Histórico*).	High level of associational density. Closer and more frequent contacts with public officials yet lack of results.

Source: The author based on fieldwork, city government urban development plans (several years) and secondary data

Data Collection

Data collection for this project included interviews with key informants (academics and urban planners), neighborhood residents, leaders, and merchants, non-participant observations, and archival research conducted in October 2007, November-December 2009, and June 2010 as well as follow-up communications with selected informants after 2010. The first stage of my data collection in October 2007 revolved around conducting semi-structured interviews with key informants; mainly academics specialized in issues of citizen participation, urban social movements, and urban planning in Mexico City. This group also included former and current public officials from city government belonging to the administrations led by former mayors Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2000-2006) and Marcelo Ebrard (2006-2012). I took advantage of that first month to familiarize myself with the city and do research about new mechanisms for citizen participation implemented by both administrations. For that, I supplemented data from the interviews with news coverage and archival research, especially official planning documents such

as Mexico City's General Plans of Urban Development, and the Partial Urban Development Plans formulated for neighborhoods in either *Roma-Condesa* or *Centro Histórico*.

News coverage was particularly important in helping me making sense of an event that occurred during my time in the field, an event which resulted in becoming one of the most crucial changes in the city's recent history: the expulsion of street vendors from the *Centro Histórico* in October 2007. Data from the daily press as well as specialized weekly magazines such as *Reforma* and *Proceso* continued to inform my fieldwork during my second work visit in November-December 2009. That was when, based on the former and my interviews with key informants (which at that point also included some representatives from the real estate sector), I chose *Centro Histórico*, the historical center of the city, and the upper-middle class area of *Roma-Condesa*, as the project's two local case studies. Those two areas are the most representative sites of the profound changes and high levels of contestation around service provisioning and land use that have been taking place in the city's central core in the last two decades.

Most of my second stay in Mexico City in November and December 2009 was devoted to interviewing residents, merchants, and public officials in both neighborhoods. At that time, I also conducted non-participant observation of several events such as neighborhood meetings, cultural activities, and classes at the Citizenship School in *Centro Histórico*. Finally, during the last fieldwork trip for this project I spent another month doing research in Mexico City in June 2010. At that time, I followed up on leads from previous interviews, conducted additional observations of events in both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa,* and interviewed and/or consulted with other academics and urban planners I had not been able to locate during previous stays.

In sum, this dissertation builds upon a total of five months of fieldwork in Mexico City including non-participant observation of more than 12 meetings and public events as well as interviews with almost 50 informants (Table 1.3) spread in a three-year period from late 2007 to mid-2010; although this total does not reflect the number of interviews conducted with each one,

which is much higher. I also took advantage of a 4-day non-related professional visit in September 2011 to reacquaint myself with additional changes in *Centro Histórico* that had happened since June 2010.

Later on, I conducted additional phone interviews and/or asked follow up questions in email communications with selected informants from both cases as well as some of the academics I had interviewed as key informants. Also, I followed the news on Mexico City, *Centro Histórico,* and *Roma Condesa* both on regular news outlets and specialized and neighborhood-based blogs.

Table 1.3
Distribution of Interviewees by Type of Informant, Sector and Location
(October 2007, November-December 2009, June 2010)

Type of Informant	**No.**	**Type of Informant**	**No.**	**Type of Informant**	**No.**
City-wide		***Centro Histórico***		***Roma Condesa***	
Experts (academics and real estate professionals)	7	Experts (academics and real estate professionals)	0	Experts (academics and real estate professionals)	1
Public officials	6	Public officials	3	Public officials	1
Residents	0	Residents (*Fideicomiso*'s citizen groups)	6	Residents (neighborhood associations)	6
NGOs	0	NGOs	5	NGOs	1
Business owners	0	Business owners	5	Business owners	6
Totals:	13		19		15
Total Number of Interviewees: 47					

The main limitation of this research design was having an unexpectedly long gap between the first and second trips, which required an intensive process of re-acquainting myself with the city that delayed the selection of the two local case studies. However, this approach also allowed me to take advantage of my time away from Mexico City to further reflect upon and process the data collected during each trip. Additionally, every time I went back to the Federal District I had

enough contextual information to make sense of the changes that had occurred in the meantime; changes that might have gone unnoticed had I stayed continuously present in the field.

The research protocol for this project was reviewed by Brown University's Institutional Review Board and declared exempt. I obtained consent from interviewees following the protocol and asked for permission to digitally record them, permission that was granted the majority of the time. My notes were more extensive than usual when permission was not granted. Interviews took an average of an hour and a half. I conducted them at the place that was most convenient for my interviewees, usually their office or home. In other cases, I would meet them at public places such as neighborhood coffee shops. In the text I utilize pseudonyms for most interviewees except for those who are public figures and consented to being quoted directly as such.

1.7. The Roadmap Ahead

The dissertation starts with a theoretical framework in **Chapter 2** that examines selected strands from the literatures on urban regimes, citizen participation, the commodification of urban space, and institutions, in order to frame the questions the cases in this dissertation raise. First, the chapter addresses relevant elements from the urban regime framework (Stone 1989; Elkin 1987; Stone and Sanders 1987; Orr 1992) and the way it could be applied in Mexico City today. Second, it links Polanyi's (1944) "double movement" idea of commodification vs. decommodification with contributions from debates on globalization, urban citizenship, and real estate. Then it examines the literature on citizen participation emphasizing the intermediate mode of participation in "invited spaces" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2011). Later sections look at alternative explanations to the theoretical stance taken herein and conclude the chapter summarizing the connections between the theories reviewed and the cases at hand.

Chapter 3 examines the distinctive features of both Mexico and its capital, Mexico City, as "extreme" case studies (Gerring 2007) of late democratization in the region at both the national

and the local level. Here I fully develop the argument that Mexico City has gone through massive transformations that started in the 1980s and accelerated during the following decade as a result of a double transformation. On the one hand, a process of economic liberalization fostered by international organizations yet actively pursued by new local elites that managed to displace the PRI's old "developmentalist" guard (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010; Camp 2002). And, on the other, there was a simultaneous political opening process that would finally unravel the PRI's seven-decade authoritarian regime. This was in part an unintended consequence of the economic changes instigated by the party's new leadership but it was also a result of the persistent mobilization from below of various progressive groups such as the student, feminist, and environmental movements (Tamayo 2007; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez 2003) since the late 1960s and the successful organizational strategies the urban poor used after the 1985 earthquakes in Mexico City (Ortiz 1997).

The chapter proceeds as follows: section 3.2 provides the historical background to understand Mexico City by looking at its history of urban primacy and the role of its *"Ciudad Central"* or Central City; section 3.3 examines PRI's "corporatist" urban regime in Mexico City from its inception in 1929 to the late 1970s; section 3.4 analyzes the transition between the PRI-led corporatist urban regime and the emergent pragmatic urban regime the PRD started by looking at the period between the early 1980s (including the turning point of Mexico's 1982 debt crisis) and the mid- and late-1990s; section 3.5 looks at the economic and political side of the pragmatic urban regime in more detail whereas 3.6 compares the key features of the three completed PRD administrations to date. Finally, the chapter's conclusion in section 3.7 summarizes the analytical trends developed throughout the chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the first local case study, the predominantly low-income area of *Centro Histórico,* starting with the major transformations it has gone through. These include the last of a series of urban redevelopment initiatives initiated by leftist (PRD) city administrations

facing limited resources and hostile right-wing (PAN) national authorities in collaboration with international and local capital. I argue that, regardless of its original goals, this redevelopment process opened spaces for (invited) citizen participation in urban policy which long-time and newer residents are taking advantage. This, in turn, has been the result of the intermediary role played by the area's fiduciary fund (*Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*). Since its transformation into a public institution in 2002, the *Fideicomiso* has become an institutional catalyst capable of pooling material and symbolic resources and expanding the multiplying effects of city government interventions in the area.

The chapter proceeds as follows: section 4.2 puts *Centro Histórico* in context summarizing key background factors such as its history, its physical distribution, and the political and symbolic roles it plays in the city and the country as a whole; section 4.3 maps relevant government interventions and actors before 2007 focusing on the conflicts and differences between new and long-standing residents and between residents, city government and street vendors; section 4.4 analyzes why 2007 is a turning point in the history of *Centro Histórico* with the expulsion of street vendors and a series of institutional changes in city government that allowed the *Fideicomiso* to become a catalyst for positive urban change; section 4.5 examines those changes in more detail analyzing what I call the "learning stage" of *Fideicomiso*'s work in *Centro Histórico* in 2001-2007 whereas section 4.6 shows how lessons from that learning stage became the pillars of an exponential growth stage that extends to the present; section 4.7 analyzes the Comprehensive Management Plan for *Centro Histórico* and how it articulates the logic behind Mexico City's emerging "pragmatic" urban regime; section 4.8 zooms in on the participatory side of this pragmatic urban regime as manifested in the area in Citizen Groups and the Citizenship School as deliberate countervailing mechanisms *Fideicomiso*'s progressives have developed against gentrification; and finally, section 4.9 summarizes the main conclusions from the chapter.

Chapter 5 analyzes the second case study, the upper-middle class section of *Roma-Condesa*, where residents easily share their frustrations with the low level of responsiveness they get from local authorities in spite of their much higher levels of associational density, income, and education in comparison with *Centro Histórico.* I argue that in the absence of an institutional catalyst with the mandate or legitimacy to direct residents and business owners' efforts in *Roma-Condesa*, their attempts to improve their relationship with city government have become more fragmented and ineffective over time. Section 5.2 provides the historical background to understand *Roma Condesa* today including its significance as the second chronological location for Mexico City's elites; section 5.3 examines the most important government interventions and collective actors in the area before 2000 (a year equivalent to 2007 in *Centro Histórico* in its significance as a milestone); section 5.4 analyzes in more detail two government interventions, the Citizen Councilors that were in place between 1995 and 1997 and the 2000 Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* showing why their initial success has become the standard for (the lack of) successful interactions with city government ever since; section 5.5 looks at the Neighborhood Committees city authorities established to replace the "excessively" empowered Citizen Councils while examining the persistence with which some residents remained in the Committees for 10 years in spite of PRD's lack of interest in making them functional; section 5.6 analyzes the intense process of spontaneous urban revitalization that has been taking place in *Roma Condesa* since the 1990s through both national and international private investment; section 5.7 elaborates why I argue that the local state never quite "came back in" to collaborate with residents and businesses in the area and how the lack of an institutional catalyst similar to the *Fideicomiso* in the historic center has prevented innovative urban planning from being sustainable. Finally, the conclusion in section 5.8 brings these elements together.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with an overview of the arguments presented, the major findings, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: A "PRAGMATIC" URBAN REGIME AND INDUCED PARTICIPATION IN MEXICO CITY

2.1. Overview

This chapter looks at selected strands from the literatures on urban regimes, citizen participation, the commodification of urban space, and institutions, in order to frame the questions the cases in this dissertation raise: Is citizen participation enough (or even an adequate tool) to make inclusive urban development possible in contexts as hostile as Mexico City? What is the role and significance of mediating institutions in these processes? Is there a role for the (local) state to play in assisting poor or marginalized urban communities so that they can have a say in the policies and changes affecting their lives? In this chapter I examine how more eclectic theoretical perspectives on both urban regimes and citizen participation engaging the state can help us address these questions in a productive way.

Indeed, Mexico City's emerging "pragmatic" regime is an intermediate urban regime between the more clear-cut municipal socialist regime Porto Alegre has become famous for and the entrepreneurial one that prevails in Santiago, Chile. Likewise, one of the key features of the pragmatic regime is that citizen participation in urban affairs is not as extensive as it is the case in Porto Alegre nor as limited as it has been in Santiago. In fact, groups in both of my cases (*Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa*) resort to either participating in invited spaces controlled by the state, engaging in contentious politics especially through public demonstrations, or staying in the networks that have marked the history of the city and were a crucial part of its old "corporatist" regime. However, invited spaces have been a more successful channel for residents from *Centro Histórico*. The dissertation underscores the importance of progressive public officials and the role

public institutions can play as “institutional catalysts” of change in this regard. My cases show that participating in the invited spaces leftist PRD administrations have put in place in *Centro Histórico* has worked for residents in this area as the most liberal faction within the PRD has been in charge of putting those invited spaces in place. On the contrary, more resourceful yet divided residents in upscale *Roma Condesa* have not had such an institutional ally and their efforts and stamina have significantly decreased over time as a result.

The chapter proceeds as follows: section 2.2 addresses relevant elements from the urban regime framework and the way it could be applied in Mexico City today; section 2.3 looks at the the commodification of space by linking Polanyi's “double movement” idea of commodification vs. decommodification with contributions from debates on globalization, urban citizenship, and real estate; section 2.4 examines the literature on citizen participation emphasizing the intermediate mode of participation in “invited spaces”; section 2.5 examines alternative explanations to the theoretical stance taken herein while section 2.6 concludes the chapter summarizing the connections between the theories reviewed and the cases at hand.

2.2. Urban Regimes and Regime Change in the U.S. and Latin America

Urban regimes are “*the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions*” and those decisions are about “*managing conflict* and *making adaptive responses* to social change” in urban contexts (Stone 1989: 7; emphasis in the original; also see Elkin 1987; Stone and Sanders 1987; Orr 1992). Although the concept might look deceptively simple, the framework constitutes a “hybrid” of political economic analysis and pluralist approaches from political science (Dowding 2001; Fainstein 2001 [1994]). On the political economic side, regime analysis builds upon two strands: public choice and Marxist approaches to urban service delivery or “collective consumption” (Castells 1977) and a preoccupation with the push toward development policies in

cities. Notably, Peterson (1981) analyzes growth as a need for the city as a whole vis-à-vis unfavorable global conditions whereas Marxists see it as need for capital in detriment of other groups' priorities as shown in the "use value" vs. "exchange value" debate of the growth machine literature (Molotch 1976; Logan and Molotch 1987; Molotch 1993).

In contrast with public choice and Marxist theories, the pluralist school tends to be less deterministic regarding urban politics even though is often accused of being too naïve (Dowding 2001). Urban studies such as Dahl's (1961) classic book *"Who governs?"* about New Haven at least allow for the possibility of different groups influencing a given city's agenda at different points in time; an insight that regime analysis takes to heart. As a result, the urban regime framework is less deterministic than the growth machine model because it pays great attention to "the need for politicians to develop coalitions of interests in order to promote development. These coalitions are not coalitions of elected politicians in loose-knit party support, but coalitions of the elected, business, and other pressure organizations, and may include important bureaucratic and professional groups" (Dowding 2001: 8). Despite the potential diversity of actors involved, the centrality of politicians in regime analysis cannot be underestimated. Even if they are not the most powerful actors they are crucial because "they are the focus of pressure" (Dowding 2001: 15). However, Stone (2004) warns that this is not to be confused with a focus on personal traits of leaders as the key is to be found in the "alignment of purpose and resources" (2004: 11).

Features and Components of Urban Regimes

Regime analysis critiques and moves away from the assumption of unitary interest of Peterson (1981) and Dahl's (1961) pluralist studies in which decisions about what is best for a given city are made by consensus and the "economic imperative" rules over any other possible preference (Stone 2004). The flexibility of regime analysis also rests on the fact that it "posits a set of relationships that are difficult to achieve" which "is a fundamental difference with pluralism"

(Stone 2004: 11). Urban regime theory takes structural factors into account but does not tie end results to them. As Stone himself stresses in one of his responses to Imbroscio's critique "[a] structural factor sets the stage, but it does not write the script of the play" (Stone 2004: 11). For instance, the final outcome of what the successful coalition looks like and what is bound to achieve is partly defined by the resources its members bring to the table. In Stone's famous case of Atlanta the white business sector brought significant material and other resources whereas the African American middle class brought a more limited still crucial set of resources, particularly its control over their community's electoral participation (Stone 1989). Moreover, based on Stone's "relativity perspective", it is important to remember that resources "are not fixed" and their availability influences the relationship between the actors involved: "Each player is influenced not only by the resources it controls (of which investment activity may be one, but only one, form), but also by the resources controlled by other players and the efforts that these players make" (Stone 1998: 253).

Urban regime theory rests on the assumption that cooperation is not a given but rather an ideal state costly to attain: "The study of urban regimes is thus a study of who cooperates and how their cooperation is achieved across institutional sectors of community life" (Stone 1989: 9). Such an emphasis implies a move away from the focus on control (rather than cooperation) present in U.S. urban studies at the time (Stone 1989). This framework also acknowledges a division of labor between the state and the market at the city level, which manifests in distinct functions and potential complementarity between city officials and private business owners (Elkin 1987). In the United States, such context is complicated because of the concentration of resources at the federal level "that largely leaves to cities the task of competing for private resources" (Elkin 1987: 18; Peterson 1981; Fainstein and Fainstein 1983; Savitch and Kantor 2002); particularly since the increasing weakening of ties between national and local authorities that started in the 1970s (Fainstein and Fainstein 1983). The latter predicted that this process of

decoupling might generate a greater diversity among local urban regimes in the U.S., as it has indeed been the case (Logan and Molotch 1987; Stone 1993; Schneider et al 1995; Dowding et al 1999; Savitch and Thomas 1991; also see Table 2.1). As we will see in Chapter 3, suffering the exclusionary effects and inter-city competition associated with an over-concentration of resources and power at the federal level in the U.S. is closer to the urban reality of Mexico than to that of Europe. Mexico City, in particular, increased its economic vulnerability after having been granted the prerogative to elect its local authorities in 1997 as part of the democratizing reforms of the 1990s (Davis and Alvarado 2004).

Dowding et al (1999) suggest eight conditions to characterize an urban regime even cross-nationally: (1) "a distinctive policy agenda", (2) which is "long lived," (3) and sustained by an informal network, not one embedded in formal institutions. Such coalition operates, (4) across institutional frontiers, and (5) its policy agenda should "survive personnel and leadership changes and political successions, reflecting a specific ideology or agreement over fundamental values for members of the coalition, which allows continued electoral success" (Dowding 2001: 14). According to Dowding, the first four among these five elements are the most important ones in defining an urban regime. However, ideally they would also (6) "primarily involve the mobilization of external resources… often transcending partisan divisions" (idem), (7) include extraordinary leadership "capable of entrepreneurially assembling an unusual coalition and linking it with a distinct political vision" (idem); and, finally, they "tend to bridge institutions and community interests" usually leading to public-private partnerships (idem). It is important to note that conditions five (5) to eight (8) are empirically common features rather than essential features to evaluate an urban regime. For instance, the presence of a strong leader is usually relevant because he or she can help to solve the collective action problem (Olson 1971) whereas the formation of public-private partnerships with support from the central or national state is very

common in Europe (Dowding 2001). Similarly, Stone summarizes the key elements of regime analysis and the centrality of the governing coalition in it:

> As Gerry Stoker indicates, the puzzle to be solved is how cooperation can be achieved without an overarching system of command or without reliance on a system of market exchange. That focus derives from the assumption that the formal authority of local government, even when supplemented by forms of intergovernmental assistance, is inadequate as a means for addressing major community problems. Hence, some form of cross-sector cooperation is needed. Local governing thus involves more than government in the narrow sense. Cross-sector problem solving typically involves a coalition, and, if it addresses a problem of community-wide importance, the coalition can properly be called a governing coalition. Localities vary, however, in the challenges they take on and the effectiveness with which they address various problems. And these variations are what I see as central to urban regime analysis (Stone 2004: 10).

Stone (1998; 2004) himself emphasizes that the urban regime framework has its limitations as a middle-range theory. Its level of analysis is not appropriate for analyzing macro phenomena such as economic globalization even though those phenomena should be taken into account as contextual factors (Stone 1998; 2004). However, this feature makes it "appropriate, then, for helping to explain how communities respond to broad social and economic changes" (Stone 2004: 7). Other scholars have pointed out additional limitations of urban regime analysis, in particular the fact that it does not adequately account for shifts in urban regimes and whether intangible elements such as ideas or narratives play a role in those shifts (Harding 1994; Orr and Stoker 1994). More recently, Stone (2004) has allowed for such a possibility but only when concrete coalitions and networks lead the way. Similarly, Clark (1995) argues in favor of differentiating regime composition from the institutional terrain the regime takes place in. Most regime studies see a direct relationship between regime composition and policy choice, for example, "more progressive policies are associated with more inclusive governing coalitions" (Clark 1995: 514); but that is not necessarily the case.

Types of Urban Regimes in the United States and Latin America

What I analyze as the *corporatist urban regime* in Mexico City in Chapter 3 is somewhat similar to Fainstein and Fainstein's (1986) "directive" regime and Elkin's (1987) "pluralist" regime in

post-war United States insofar as politicians are in charge of making key decisions. However, those decisions were made at the local level whereas the federal (national) government controlled Mexico City throughout the 71-year rule of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party), and a federal or state-based locus of power is more akin to Fainstein and Fainstein's (1986) "concessionary" regime and Elkin's (1987) "federal" regime. The key difference between Mexico City's corporatist urban regime and all of the former is that it directly reflects the key characteristic of Mexico's national political system throughout this period: the mediated yet crucial political incorporation of subaltern groups such as workers, farmers, and "popular sectors" (middle class and/or white collar workers) (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). The corporatist urban regime in Mexico City, however, incorporated street vendors and other informal workers instead of farmers (Crossa 2009). Table 2.1 below shows an example of descriptive urban regimes in the United States:

Table 2.1.
A Selection of Descriptive Regime Types

No.	Regime Type	Described by
1	Maintenance	Stone (1993)
2	Development (growth machine, privatist-corporatist)	Stone (1989, 1993) Logan and Molotch (1987)
3	Middle-class progressive (or managed growth coalitions)	Stone (1993) Schneider et al (1995)
4	Mass mobilization (working class regimes)	Stone (1993)
5	Service-delivery regimes	Dowding et al (1999)
6	Pluralist regimes	Savitch and Thomas (1991)
7	Hyper-pluralist regimes (no regime)	Savitch and Thomas (1991)

Source: Modified from Table 2 in Dowding 2001, page 13

In this dissertation, I argue that Mexico City's corporatist urban regime, in place between the early 1930s and the late 1990s, was a *direct* expression of the overall corporatist regime the PRI established at the national level allied to the industrial groups it helped to create. On the contrary,

the capital's new "pragmatic" regime is an urban regime the opposing *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Party of the Democratic Revolution or PRD) has been creating *against* national authorities while its governing coalition (composed of PRD politicians and new investors in the service sector) capitalizes on the economic and political distinctiveness of Mexico City vis-à-vis the rest of the country.

Before addressing the main features of the *pragmatic urban regime* in Mexico City, let us look at another kind of urban regime present in both the U.S. and Latin American contexts. Unlike the post-war types of urban regimes Fainstein and Fainstein (1986) and Elkin (1987) analyzed for the U.S., the entrepreneurial (Elkin 1987; Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]) or corporatist (Savitch and Thomas 1991) urban regime has become pervasive in various international contexts due to economic restructuring associated with globalization (e.g. Peterson 1981; Logan and Molotch 1987; Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]; Brenner 2002; Savitch and Kantor 2002). Harvey has made the concept famous based on a Marxist dialectical understanding of place making: "though urban processes under capitalism are shaped by the logic of capital circulation and accumulation, they in turn shape the conditions and circumstances of capital accumulation at later points in time and space" (1989: 3). Also characterized as the "free market city" (Roberts and Portes 2006) this regime has a longer tradition in the United States where federal support to cities started to decrease in the 1970s (Elkin 1987; Fainstein and Fainstein 1983). In contrast, the emergence of the "free market city" in Latin America was linked to the neoliberal or Washington Consensus economic policies countries in the region implemented in the 1980s in great part due to the insolvency problems they faced (e.g. Haber 1989; Ortiz Cruz 2006).

Social movements reacting to drastic reductions in social spending and even the political repression that resulted from implementing Washington Consensus policies in Latin America since the 1980s (Calderon and Jelin 1986; Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998) helped to set up the foundations for a progressive backlash against neoliberal policies in the following decades

(Chavez and Goldfrank 2004). The late 1990s and 2000s, then, witnessed a leftist counterattack against the extreme inequality free market policies brought about in Latin America (Portes and Hoffman 2003). These new configurations are what Goldfrank and Shrank (2009) call the new *municipal socialist* urban regimes where city officials and their allies privilege wealth distribution over wealth accumulation and various progressive social and urban policies are pursued. I argue instead that a new urban regime is emerging in Mexico City with *both* strong pro-poor and pro-capital components. This I denominate a *pragmatic urban regime* where PRD administrations have implemented a progressive social and urban agenda to guarantee poor residents' collective consumption (Castells 1979) consonant with municipal socialism while, at the same time, extensively collaborating with national and international capital as entrepreneurial or neoliberal urban regimes do (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]). Table 2.2 contrasts Mexico City's pragmatic urban regime as an intermediate type between the extremes of Santiago's entrepreneurial regime and Porto Alegre's almost iconic status for municipal socialism.

Table 2.2

Mexico City's Current Pragmatic Regime in comparison with Socialist and Neoliberal Urban Regimes in Latin America

Urban Regime	Paradigmatic Case	Main Features
Socialist	Porto Alegre, Brazil	▪ Socialist urban regimes "prioritize distribution, and therefore use social funds, microcredit arrangements and participatory institutions to employ and empower their citizens" (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009: 444). Porto Alegre is the best-known case but other socialist Latin American city governments include Montevideo, Lima, Bogotá, and other Brazilian cities. ▪ Municipal socialism privileges citizen participation in urban policy, the participatory budget (PB) being its most well known expression (e.g. Abers 1998; Heller 2001; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Wampler 2007; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). ▪ Social movements in Porto Alegre were independent enough to influence city government to implement the PB (Baiocchi 2001, 2005) and later kept an eye on its implementation and outcomes (Avritzer 2002).

Urban Regime	Paradigmatic Case	Main Features
Pragmatic	Mexico City, Mexico	▪ A pragmatic urban regime combines a progressive social and urban agenda *with* close collaboration with national and international capital because of the governing coalition's need to face a hostile national government and the financial adversity the latter can impose on city administrations (Peterson 1981; Savitch and Kantor 2002). ▪ Citizen participation is a priority for city government but authorities can be hesitant about its scope as it has been the case in Mexico City (Davis 1994; Davis and Alvarado 2004). Therefore, participation takes place in "invited spaces" where state institutions define the rules of the game (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2011). Such spaces constitute the key mechanism through which authorities elicit cooperation in the new pragmatic urban regime. ▪ Still, emphasis on participation and a progressive social agenda differentiates the city from purely market-based policies at the national level (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007).
Entrepreneurial/ neoliberal	Santiago, Chile	▪ An entrepreneurial urban regime privileges mechanisms to attract foreign investment in the city: tax breaks, control or repression of organized labor, regulatory rollbacks (Elkin 1987; Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]; Roberts and Portes 2006; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). ▪ Santiago is an extreme case of market-driven urban transformations including the forced displacement of poor populations by the military regime to make the city more attractive to capital in the 1970s and 1980s and the establishment of aggressive urban redevelopment policies in the 1990s and beyond (Siavelis et al 2002; Salcedo and Torres 2004; Trivelli 2007; Lopez-Morales 2011).

Finally, other scholars have shown that urban regimes can also become "anti-regimes" when collective actors in cities fail in their attempt to organize successful governing coalitions (Castells 1983; DeLeon 1992; Yates 1977).

Explaining Regime Change: Transitioning from the Corporatist to the Pragmatic Urban Regime

This dissertation argues that Mexico City has been transitioning from a corporatist urban regime directly linked to the national corporatist regime the center-right PRI led for seven (7) decades to

an emerging pragmatic urban regime leftist PRD has been crafting since the late 1990s. In order to explain this change, we need to look at what the existing literature offers as distinctive elements of a regime shift. One criticism to regime analysis refers, precisely, to the fact that it has not paid enough attention to the conditions under which regime change can occur (Orr and Stoker 1994; Harding 1994). To be sure, regime transitions take time and the one occurring in Mexico City is far from complete. Similarly to what Orr and Stoker (1994) found in Detroit, there is a period of coexistence between old and emerging urban regimes as it occurred in that city with the established pro-growth regime and the embryonic human-capital one emerging at that time.

Going back to Dowding et al (1999) characterization of urban regimes, for them to change there would be evidence of significant shifts in, at least, some of the following components: their policy agenda, the coalition that sustain such agenda, and the ideological commitment coalition members have to such agenda regardless of leadership changes. Additionally, Stone (1989) features "selective incentives" (Olson 1965) distributed to coalition partners as a key factor for regime survival. Other important yet non-essential components of urban regimes are the existence of extraordinary leadership and the mobilization of external resources (Dowding et al 1999). More specifically, Orr and Stoker (1994: 68) suggest a three-stage framework to evaluate regime shifts: (1) the first stage involves the "questioning of the established regime" through doubts and criticism of its capacity and objectives; (2) the second stage revolves around "a conflict about redefining the scope and purpose of the regime"; and (3) the third stage is the institutionalization of the new regime including "the establishment of a new set of material incentives and a new ideological outlook" (ibid: 69).

As this dissertation will show, the first stage of regime shift in Mexico City took place as a result of PRI's increasing loss of legitimacy after the state's inadequate response after the 1985 earthquakes and the various political reforms the party conceded in response to social movement (and later also PRD-led) interventions during the second half of the 1990s. The second stage is

been taking place in the form of various experiments with progressive economic, social, and urban policies PRD administrations have been implementing in the city. As Orr and Stoker (1994: 68) argue, this stage is filled with uncertainty as new things are tried and the coalition behind the old urban regime is recomposed and/or replaced and a new one forms. For instance, PRD's hesitant attitude and drastic changes in its citizen participation policies are an example of this second stage. Mexico City is somewhere between the second and third stages of regime shift. On the one hand, some of its key components are highly institutionalized (e.g. a significant increase in social spending and the establishment of progressive social policies favoring vulnerable groups in the city). On the other hand, there have been striking differences between the three mayors the PRD has had in charge of the city (particularly regarding the urban policies they have favored) while a fourth PRD mayor, Miguel Angel Mancera, started his tenure in December 2012.

2.3. Cities, Citizenship, and Polanyi's "Double Movement" in the Global South

Economic and non-economic factors are intertwined in cities and the interaction between them drives urban change insofar as they manifest both of these struggles: the one to obtain profit by treating urban space as a commodity and the one to reinsert land into social relationships. To put it in Polanyi's (1944) words, there is a constant "double movement[7]" of commodification and de-commodification, in this case of urban space, that is part of the very essence of what cities are today. This double-movement is ongoing because there are social actors with vested interests on either side of the cycle at different points in time. On the one hand, commodification of space is related to the fact that space itself is a product of its time and capitalism has indeed colonized it

[7] The first side of Polanyi's movement refers to the violent and deliberate creation of mechanisms favoring a market economy as well as the myths proclaiming its inevitability (such as the liberal myth for *laissez-faire* policies). The first example of this was the enclosures movement in England. The "countermovement" takes place whenever society groups and their respective governments take action to put market mechanisms, once again, under society's control in order to prevent them from dislocating the social fabric even further. Some examples of the latter include the pro-worker provisions established in several European countries at the end of the19th century and "collectivist" protection mechanisms such as social security in response to the great human and social dislocation caused by the Great Depression of the 1930s.

making it, among other things, scarce (Lefebvre 1991). On the other hand, Lefebvre's (2002 [1968]) argument in favor of the "right to the city" underscores the need to go well beyond the economic and material aspects of living in an urban context in order to create a "new humanism" capable of addressing the challenges associated with urban life:

> The human being has the need to accumulate energies and to spend them, even waste them in play. He has a need to see, to hear, to touch, to taste and the need to gather these perceptions in a 'world'. To these anthropological needs which are socially elaborated… can be added specific needs which are not satisfied by those commercial and cultural infrastructures which are somewhat parsimoniously taken into account by planners. This refers to the need for creative activity, for the *oeuvre* (not only of products and consumable material goods), of the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary and play (Lefebvre's 2002 [1968]: 367).

To be sure, there are structural factors such as the nature of the prevalent economic system (i.e. to what extent are land, capital, and labor commodified and regulated) or the dominant features of the political system in place (liberal democracy, authoritarian or totalitarian dictatorship, delegated democracy, and so on). But those are constantly being shaped and redefined by social actors at different levels: the international, the national, and the local. An emphasis on social actors in this dissertation is not surprising since my research question addresses them explicitly: under which conditions are marginalized groups able to influence urban public policy in their favor in cities in the global South? Looking at conflict as a key engine in citizenship expansion, however, also points to a more general point about cities being the most important site for such struggles as underscored at the very beginning of this dissertation (see Silver et al 2010):

> Although one of the essential projects of nation-building has been to dismantle the historic primacy of urban citizenship and to replace it with the national, cities remain the strategic arena for the development of citizenship. They are not the only arena. And not all cities are strategic... Their crowds catalyze processes, which decisively expand and erode the rules, meanings, and practices of citizenship. Their streets conflate identities of territory and contract with those of race, religion, class, culture, and gender to produce the reactive ingredients of both progressive and reactionary political movements (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 188; my emphasis).

Where Holston and Appadurai (1996) see an open-ended process that can lead to either progressive or reactionary movements and outcomes, Chatterjee (2004) takes a more pessimistic stance. In his view, marginalized groups in the developing world are necessarily forced out of

civil society into what he calls “political society”, which operates with different rules from those enshrined in the “modern” Western rule of law model: “This would frequently mean the bending or stretching of rules, because existing procedures have historically worked to exclude or marginalize them. They must, therefore, succeed in mobilizing population groups to produce a political consensus that can effectively work against the distribution of power in society as a whole” (2004: 66). Hence, in many instances there is a need for neutral mediators between poor and/or marginalized groups and the state.

Layers of Singularity: Mexico City as a Primate, Global and Mega-City in the South

In order to understand urban contexts such as Mexico City, it is important to note the singularity it shows as it has accumulated multiple layers of significance based on the different functions it performs. In Latin America in particular, the first one of these characteristics, that of being a “primate” city, is closely related to being the capital of the country (Myers 2002; Galiani and Kim 2011) for “[w]hat happens in these locations not only orients local politics, economics, and culture, but it also sets national trends and standards” in many cases since colonial times (Myers 2002: 7). Unlike the more recent definition of “mega-cities,” which is predicated exclusively upon total population size[8], the concept of urban primacy refers to the relationship between a dominant city and the rest of a national or regional urban system in terms of population size, economic characteristics, and culture.

Geographer Mark Jefferson (1939) was the first to utilize the concept while identifying a law through which a primate city is “always disproportionally large and exceptionally expressive of national capacity and feeling” (1939: 231). In his analysis, Jefferson was opposing the rank-

[8] The concept was originally used to refer to cities with 8 million inhabitants or more. But it has been updated to refer to urban contexts of at least 10 million people (UN-Habitat 2007).

size rule when applied to cities later expressed in the famous Zipf's (1941) law.[9] The latter expressed a proportional relationship between cities in a country whereas Jefferson underscored that an exception to that rule was more common as many leading cities such as London, Mexico City or Copenhagen surpass the limits Zipf established (Cuervo González 2004). Additionally, primate cities disproportionally outshine other cities in their cultural importance as well as the opportunities they offer and, consequently, the attraction they exert on most of the country's population. As Jefferson said about London at the beginning of the 20th century:

> The finest wares are always to be found there, the rarest articles, the greatest talents, the most skilled workers in every science and art. Thither flows an unending stream of the young and ambitious in search of fame and fortune, and there fame and fortune are found. London is the kingdom's market for all that is superlative in intellectual and material productions. Its supereminence as a market runs parallel to its supereminence in size. It is the primate city of the United Kingdom (Jefferson 1939: 226).

Both Jefferson and Zipf's formulations have been criticized for their normative implications as they suggested that their respective formulas indicated levels of adequate or inadequate integration in a given urban hierarchy (Cuervo González 2004). Such normative assessments have been frequently used to argue that urban Latin America is dysfunctional or unbalanced in a similar fashion to Castells' (1970) idea of "urban macrocephaly" in his theory of dependent urbanization. More recently, other scholars have emphasized that urban concentration is not unique to Latin America but rather a process fundamentally linked to industrial capitalism (Singer 1979) while higher levels of economic development might even imply lower levels of concentration (Wheaton and Shishido 1980). Special care is required to interpret urban primacy trends in order to avoid the fallacy of comparing diverse urban contexts in different historical

[9] The rank-size distribution rule applies to remarkable regularity in relationships between city sizes, the sizes of businesses, wealth among individuals, etc. Famous applications of the rule include Zipf's law, the Yule distribution, and the Pareto distribution. Zipf proposed an arithmetic function in which the size of the second city in a country should be half of the first, the third a third of the largest one, and so on (Cuervo González 2004).

moments (Cuervo González 2004).[10] However, the urban primacy concept does help in identifying the centrality of cities such as the one analyzed in this project. As we will see in Chapter 3, Mexico City is indeed a primate city as it disproportionally concentrates most of Mexico's population and resources (McGreevey 1971; Morse 1970; Davis 1994; Cuervo González 2004; Galiani and Kim 2011). Jefferson (1939) himself classified it as such at the beginning of the 20th century.

Mexico City is also considered a "global" city because it performs strategic functions in linking the Mexican economy to the rest of the world. Originally introduced by Sir Peter Hall in the 1960s, the concept of the global or "world" city started a long-standing debate on the nature of cities that are crucial for and are inextricably linked to the functioning of the global economy. Such cities tend to be major political centers in their countries, host the headquarters of multinational firms and lead international financial and trading circuits, show high levels of superbly qualified workers who tend to coexist with under qualified laborers, and have a marked cosmopolitan character as they function as exceptional entertainment, art, and professional centers in a manner often similar to that of primate cities (Hall 1966; Friedman and Wolff 1982; Friedman 1986; King 1990; Taylor and King 1995; Sassen 2001 [1991]; Taylor, 2004, 2012).

Saskia Sassen contributed to re-launching the debate in the 1990s with a concept of global cities more focused on the functions these cities perform on the production side (Sassen 2001 [1991]; 1994, 2002, 2005). That is, the ways in which global cities have become "command points" in the world economy by providing key services, locations, and networks for international capital in the most dynamic economic sectors today: finance and specialized services for firms. Specialized services of this kind include those in advertising, accounting, legal services, certain

[10] "It is not enough to demonstrate that a given level of population concentration in the largest city in a country surpasses international averages at a given moment in time; it is necessary to establish that it also surpasses them for a whole stage of urban-industrial development on the planet. It is not possible to directly compare primacy levels of two different countries without reducing them to similar units, that is, without determining what is to be considered normal for each particular case" (Cuervo González 2004: 81; my translation).

types of banking, and so on “which assist, facilitate, complement, and in many cases make possible, the work of large and small firms and of governments” (Sassen 2001 [1991]: 326). New York, London, and Tokyo constitute the most important global cities, yet Mexico City and other cities in the developing world play similar roles in their respective regions (Sassen 1994: 4-5; 2002)[11]. The profound socio-economic changes Mexico City has undergone in the last few decades have transformed it into one of the highest-ranking second-tier global cities even ahead of São Paulo based on the variety of global services it offers to international investors and multinationals (Parnreiter 2002).

Real Estate as an Urban Transmission Belt for Globalization

We can think of globalization as “the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary life...” (Held et al 1999: 2). Nonetheless, there is a bias in the globalization debate that gives emphasis to the financial and communication aspects of the phenomenon (e.g. Sassen 2001 [1991], 1994: Castells 2000). From this perspective, economic globalization reinforces the commodification side of Polanyi’s (1944) “double movement” dynamic. Additionally, changes associated with globalization underscore different forms of interdependence between actors at the international, national, and local levels as in Brenner’s (2004) scalar perspective. Unlike Brenner, however, I argue that there is something specific about the ways in which linkages among these actors (public officials, developers, residents, merchants, to name a few) interact with one another in urban space. In the case of Mexico City and other global cities in the developing world, economic global flows manifest very concretely through land commodification (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]), especially through urban

[11] The Globalization and World Cities (GaWC) Research Network offers yearly classifications of global or world cities. Mexico City is classified as an “Alpha” global/world city in GaWC’s 2012 ranking as it is one of those listed as “cities that link major economic regions into the world economy”. Alpha cities occupy the third place in the ranking below “Alpha++” cities (only London and New York) and “Alpha+” cities (such as Hong Kong, Paris or Tokyo). Other Alpha cities include São Paulo, Mumbai, Chicago, Madrid, and Toronto (GaWC website at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/ accessed on March 8, 2014).

recycling in central parts of the city. That is, real estate functions as a (very contested) transmission belt of globalization, particularly in the city's central core.

Harvey's (1978; 2002[1989]), concept of the "secondary circuit of capital" examines such alternative as capitalists use real estate, i.e. the secondary circuit, as an outlet to solve their contradictory (and collectively self-defeating) trend towards "overaccumulation." That is, when capitalists need to switch excess capital accumulated in the regular or "first" circuit of manufacturing and other industries oriented towards regular consumption in one given period of time into buildings and physical infrastructure constructed for the following period. Even if we are not to accept Harvey's argument as an all-encompassing framework analysis because of the way in which new financial instruments fade the limits between the circuits he describes (Fainstein 2001 [1994]; pages 200-201), it is important to note that major corporations indeed use real estate as an outlet for diversifying their investments over time as shown in the U.S. and Canadian examples (Feagin 1983; Fainstein 2001 [1994]). Similarly, the growth machine theory Molotch (1976) inaugurated examines efforts on the part of local economic and political elites profiting from urban redevelopment (Logan and Molotch 1987; Molotch 1993).

More generally, real estate does remain a markedly distinctive sector within any economy. Not only is real estate distinct in that it shares characteristics with very different sectors: it has a cyclic nature as agriculture, its products are tangible as it is the case with manufacturing, yet its cultural impact and production processes are similar to those of the entertainment industry (Fainstein 2001 [1994]). Additionally, real estate is an economic sector capable of generating value despite Harvey's and other leftist scholars' refusal to acknowledge it:

> Despite such instances of wholly unproductive investment in property [referring to speculative transactions], real estate development can create value beyond the cost of its production. If agglomeration and access do transform territory into location; if restructured space increases business efficiency; if subdivision of land or reuse of empty warehouses creates a residential neighborhood where none previously existed; if the regulations that limit construction in a given district do actually produce a more attractive environment--then increases in land value resulting from development are genuine…

> Physicality does not make a process real nor does the intangibility of factors like agglomeration make them unreal. It is the concatenation of externalities from development that creates place, which as a whole may have a value greater than a simple summation of the costs of producing it. The claim that such gains are socially created does not overturn this assertion---the question of who deserves to receive the gain is analytically separable from the issue of whether it exists. Value anticipated from [real estate] development is not fictitious (Fainstein 2001 [1994]: 201-202).

Moreover, Fainstein's (2001 [1994]), research about many of the most influential developers in the two quintessential global cities of London and New York gives credence to Harvey's (1978; 2002[1989]) claim about capitalists' need to continuously destroy and reinvent the built environment; not only in a (highly subjective) race for profits but even as an expression of markedly gendered and racialized projects for personal recognition on the part of predominantly white male real estate executives. More generally, land, the commodity real estate deals with is very particular in that its magnitude "cannot generally be increased by human action" and it "is a commodity whose control and use are disproportionally in the hands of the powerful" (Feagin 1983: 11). Uneven urban development then often reflects capitalist needs not directly related to real estate corporations such as industrial corporations' preference for city designs that facilitate workers dispersion and control. Similarly, distinctive waves of urban growth result from industrial specialization and locational decisions made by industries in different sectors, e.g. the electronics industry tends to locate in different spaces and cities than automobile companies (Feagin 1983).

Central cities are particularly appealing for national and international developers and by central cities I refer not only to the historic centers tourists visit or the business districts where financial services concentrate. I mean more generally central sections of the city characterized by historically high levels of mixed land use, which national and international economic actors can target to reinvest capital more easily than in other alternative uses (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]; Fainstein 2001 [1994]). Urban redevelopment is the subject of an increasing literature on gentrification (e.g. Feagin 1983; Smith 2002) that is relevant to our project insofar as this process

is often considered as the only possible end result of urban redevelopment. Fainstein describes the typical redevelopment scenario as follows:

> Overall, business interests have dominated the negotiations among government, community, and the private sector on the content of redevelopment. They have been supported by elite and middle-class consumers seeking downtown "improvements" and attractive, centrally located housing. Neighborhood and lower-income groups have received some gains in some places from redevelopment. Generally, however, the urban poor, ethnic communities, and small businesses have suffered increased economic and locational marginalization as a consequence. Central business district (CBD) expansion has increased property values in areas of low-income occupancy, forcing out residents, raising their living expenses, and breaking up communities (Fainstein 2001 [1994]: 5).

Globalization, Inequality, and Citizenship in Cities vis-à-vis the Local State

Changes associated with globalization have made Castells' (1977) concept of collective consumption[12] relevant once again. This idea from the early Castells of the 1970s is key to my understanding of urban change because it is at the basis of the counter-movement or de-commodification processes led by the urban poor. For, as Holston and Appadurai (1996) point out, the extensive transformations provoked by industrialization during the second half of the 20th century generated the massive numbers of rural-to-urban migrants that now constitute the poor majorities of those cities. Import- substitution industrialization in the developing world represented what they call a first "localization" of capital and labor. The manufacturing model is now being replaced by new arrangements associated with globalization, the second "localization" but the problems created by the first model were never resolved.

The "socio-political implications of globalization" (Davis 2002) and the emergence of "new political actors" and alliances due to increasing class and spatial polarization (Sassen 2003) that both Davis and Sassen suggest to study in the developing world are part of the same set of phenomena in many cities. "Especially in the developing world, this dynamic of change seems

[12] Collective consumption is functionally equivalent to urban public services as it refers to the minimum conditions the urban poor require to survive in it such as affordable housing, transportation, health, among others (Castells 1977).

extraordinary today because many cities are undergoing two kinds of localizations of capital and labor simultaneously. First, most cities are still in the grip of nationally oriented processes of industrialization... Second, some cities have become, often at the same time, strategic and specialized sites of more globally oriented capital and labor" (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 196). Holston and Appadurai (1996) argue that the first wave of transformations associated with (and accelerated by) industrialization in the developing world lead to "the great turmoil of citizenship in cities" because of the ways in which makes wealth inequality more visible. This is the kind of change that has led to social movements of the urban poor for their rights to the city:

> These movements are new not only because they force the state to respond to new social conditions of the working poor-in which sense they are, indeed, one of the significant consequences of massive urban poverty for citizenship. They are also unprecedented in many cases because they create new kinds of rights outside of the normative and institutional definitions of the state and its legal codes. These rights generally address the new collective and personal spaces of the modern metropolis, especially its impoverished residential neighborhoods. They affirm access to housing, property, sanitation, health services, education, child care, and so forth on the basis of citizenship (Holston and Appadurai 1996: 197).

In this new context, city governments in the global South (and elsewhere) are not mere "transmission belts" (Brenner 2004: 152) for policies decided elsewhere. As their counterparts in more advanced economies, they face resource-driven constraints that might increase their dependence on private sources of capital (Peterson 1981; Savitch and Kantor 2002). Nonetheless, such problems do not necessarily drive them to shift completely to urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]; Brenner 2004; Crossa 2009). The case of Mexico City shows that local governments might instead choose their battles and devise a rather eclectic approach. In these cases, local authorities keep (or even introduce for the first time) an emphasis on providing public services and protecting the urban poor (that is, guaranteeing collective consumption) while, simultaneously, seeking very needed capital from national and international business sectors.

Even in a context marked by authoritarian practices and a contentious relationship with the national government, Mexico City's administrations have taken a "pro-active state" stance

similar to that of the national government in its famous anti-poverty programs (Table 2.1 below). As we will see in chapter 3, the capital regained its autonomy to elect its own mayor as late as 1997. Since then, there has been a conspicuous divide between the PRD (center-left) administrations in charge of the city and the PRI (center-right) and PAN (right) administrations in charge of the country. This "proactive" state (Roberts and Portes 2006) becomes one of three key collective actors in what I call a new "pragmatic" urban regime (Stone 1989). The other two are global and local capitalists whose profitability depends on commodifying urban land even further, and the organized urban poor whose survival is linked to pushing back against commodification to guarantee their collective consumption (Castells 1977). Where cities in developed countries shifted from urban "managerialism", which involves the massive provision of public services devoted to reproduce the labor force (Rousseau 2009) to urban "entrepreneurism", Mexico City turned instead from a corporatist urban regime to a pragmatic one.

The city's corporatist urban regime was similar to urban managerialism insofar as it also embodied a social contract between capital and labor and the main goal was to keep the social order in the city. Such regime differs from its counterparts in Europe and the United States in that the asymmetry of power and entitlements for labor was more accentuated in spite of the highly publicized pro-poor commitments made throughout the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1917. The pragmatic urban regime in Mexico City is not only different from other cities in the country but also from comparable cities in Latin America. For example, São Paulo has seen both progressive urban policies implemented by the Workers Party including the participatory budgeting combined with affirmative action mechanisms (Sánchez 2004; Hernández-Medina 2010) as well as market-friendly policies more recently. Nonetheless, it has not shown a *simultaneous* combination of market-friendly and progressive policies as explicit as Mexico City has so far.

Mexico City's late arrival to the third wave of democratization started in Latin America in 1978 (Myers 2002)[13] is an important factor behind the emergence of its pragmatic urban regime, especially the limited financial room for maneuver its local authorities have today (Peterson 1981). During the second wave of democracy in the region between 1944 and 1962, Mexico's capital city was in the majority of capitals (Myers 2002) as its highest political authority, the city's "regent" was appointed by the President rather than elected by people in the city (Davis 1994; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007). Nonetheless, this changed in 1997 when former PRI leader and leftist PRD candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, won the first municipal election since national authorities eliminated local elections in 1928 (Davis 1994; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007).

As we will see in Chapter 3, Cárdenas' pioneering tenure opened up new opportunities for citizen participation and contributed to shifting the distribution of power in the city; changes that have been part and parcel of the emergence of the new pragmatic regime. At the same time, however, political autonomy at the local level has increased city government's vulnerability vis-à-vis the national state as both sets of authorities are now occupied by opposing political parties. More generally, elected PRD mayors in Mexico City (as well as their counterparts in other Latin American cities) have to balance opposing interests between actors at the national and international level, on one side, and those of city inhabitants, on the other:

> Elected capital city mayors, more so than their appointed predecessors, broker demands made by two groupings of interests that reside in the capital city: one whose basic concerns are nationwide and another whose importance derives from its influence inside of the city. The first grouping has seven principal members: the leaders of national political parties, high-ranking military officers, large entrepreneurs, international traders, prominent professionals, powerful labor leaders, and lobbyists for regions of the interior. The second includes shopkeepers, middle- and lower-level bureaucrats, professionals, workers, and urban marginals… The political interests of the two groupings often conflict (Myers 2002: 4; also see Davis 2002).

[13] Myers (2002) follows Huntington's (1991) classification of waves of democratization as follows: first long wave of democratization (1828-1926), first reverse wave (1922-1943), second short wave of democratization (1944-1962), second reverse wave (1958-1975), and third wave of democratization (1978-present).

2.4. States and Citizens in "Invited Spaces": Navigating Conflict, Collaboration and the Legacy of Corporatism

In this dissertation I argue that, besides the legacy of corporatism, contentious politics and self-provisioning Mexico City inhabitants have known for so long, other forms of interaction with city government have been emerging since the late 1990s and now coexist with the former. Although limited if compared with mechanisms for citizen participation in other places, these "invited spaces" for induced participation (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2011) constitute the key mechanism through which new city authorities elicit cooperation in the emerging pragmatic urban regime. That is not the case only because PRD city administrations use invited spaces extensively but also because there is an elective affinity between the open-ended features of such mechanisms and the eclectic nature of the pragmatic urban regime.

On the one hand, invited spaces have the potential to become meaningful channels for inclusive policy formation just as the pragmatic urban regime tends to favor the urban poor and other historically marginalized groups while selectively including them in decision-making processes. On the other hand, invited participation can remain at the level of limited or short-term consultations; such as the ones recently completed in *Roma Condesa* about parking meters (see Chapter 4). And this limitation, when hypothetically considered from the perspective of such groups, is either neutral or deleterious just as the economic side of the pragmatic regime can be, when it pragmatically includes national and international investors. Given the plasticity of invited spaces there is a risk of conceptually conflating them with corporatism or only view them in a pessimistic light (Cooke and Kothari 2002).

Nonetheless, this project subscribes to neither of such interpretations. To be sure, Mexico and Mexico City did have a corporatist mode of incorporation and its legacy is alive and well in

various aspect of political life.[14] Such an outcome is not surprising as state corporatism, the form of corporatism present in the country, lasted for seven decades since Lázaro Cárdenas inaugurated the three-pillar system incorporating workers, white-collar employees and small business owners, and the rural poor (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). Although Schmitter condemns explanations of corporatism based on political culture or nationality, he did find state corporatism to be present in Latin American and Iberian countries in opposition to society corporatism, which is present in Nordic ones (Schmitter 1974).

He argued that the former is often the result of revolutionary national projects where a "new order" is built after the "rapid, highly visible demise of nascent pluralism" (Schmitter 1974: 106) whereas society corporatism is much more gradual in its development.[15] However, induced or invited participation differs from corporatism as it does not imply a monopoly of representation established upon singularly defined and hierarchy-based organized sectors following Schmitter's famous definition:

> Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and support (Schmitter 1974: 93-94).

Along similar lines, I subscribe to the open-ended perspective on "invited spaces" as examined by Cornwall and Coelho (2007) and Roque and Shankland (2007) rather than the more pessimistic

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[14] Some point to recent cases of ousting or "punishment" of union leaders who have dared to challenge presidents as evidence of this. According to Velasco Zapata (2011) this has been the case of president Carlos Salinas vs. La Quina and Carlos Jongitud, president Vicente Fox vs. Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, and president Felipe Calderón vs. Martín Esparza.

[15] Societal corporatism is found imbedded in political systems with relatively autonomous, multilayered territorial units; open, competitive electoral processes and party systems; ideologically varied, coalitionally based executive authorities –even with highly 'layered' or 'pillared' political subcultures. State corporatism tends to be associated with political systems in which territorial subunits are tightly subordinated to central bureaucratic power; elections are nonexistent or plebiscitary; party systems are dominated or monopolized by a weak single party; executive authorities are ideologically exclusive and more narrowly recruited and are such that political subcultures based on class, ethnicity, language, or regionalism are repressed (Schmitter 1974: 105).

view on the “tyranny of participation” (Cooke and Kothari 2002). Although cognizant of the risks associated with citizen participation in any realm, I believe it is important to allow for all kinds of possibilities when analyzing citizen engagement with the state: the possibility of cooptation, manipulation or distortion as well as the chances of less favored collective actors increasing their levels of agency as they learn from previous cycles of interaction with the state over time (Chaudhuri and Heller 2005). Moreover, either scenario can later be replaced for a more pessimistic or hopeful one as, for example, the “subversion” of invited spaces indicates on the “positive” side (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007).

More generally, this project subscribes to the view that we need to move beyond either/or perspectives on citizen participation while paying more attention to intermediate forms of citizen involvement in public policies. Participation of ordinary citizens in formulating and implementing policies that affect their lives is neither the idealized solution to every problem under the sun some want it to be nor the perennial cause for disillusion for supposedly being grounds for cooptation and deception in all circumstances. The “plasticity” of participation (Chaudhuri and Heller 2005) has to be taken as seriously as it limitations (Silver et al 2010; Becher 2010) and it is important to acknowledge that it can have both positive and negative outcomes (Gaventa and Barrett 2012). Emphasizing the open-ended and dynamic nature of citizen participation and how its outcomes depend upon a myriad of factors including institutional design of participatory institutions, the initial conditions of both the state and civil society, among others, has become increasingly important in the literature (e.g. Fung and Wright 2003; Melo and Baiocchi 2006; Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Silver et al 2010).

I would argue, the significance of more fluid and complex analytical frameworks to study state-society relations in general, and citizen participation in public policy in particular (e.g. Baiocchi and Heller 2005; Silver et al 2010; Becher 2010), lies in the need to understand that “old” and “new” forms of state-society engagement can take place at the same time and place.

For instance, citizens in Mexico City's central core or *Ciudad Central* attempt to influence urban policy by using the old corporatist and clientelistic networks, by showing up at various types of novel consultations, by taking advantage of contentious tactics when needed or by taking part in relatively infrequent yet ground-breaking spaces for citizen participation; while being fully aware that those spaces might disappear in the near future.

The key point here is to remember that even the most short-lived of experiences in any of these modes of engaging the state leaves a layer of practices and/or institutions on the city's legislation, daily life, and political imagery. And therefore, those layers can be rescued or built upon in future cycles of engagement (Chaudhuri and Heller 2005). This also means that conflict, corporatism, and collaboration are not mutually exclusive realities in Mexico City today. Therefore, the dissertation is also framed based on the understanding that intermediate or modest participatory spaces have been severely understudied. Not only has most of the literature focused on successful cases such as participatory budgeting (e.g. Abers 2000; Fung and Wright 2001; Baiocchi 2005; Avritzer 2002) but there has also been an over-emphasis on unique case studies leading to what Gurza Lavalle and colleagues (2005) denominated "comparative anecdotalism."

Citizen participation in Mexico City's urban policies is certainly not an ideal case. On the contrary, state-society interactions in the city as a whole are still marked by the authoritarian imagery and practices of a not so distant past. Not surprisingly then, many of the participatory spaces that have been in place have been created by state actors and there is still a notable level of suspicion among citizens about those actors' intentions or, at the very least, the feasibility of their initiatives. However, contexts such as Mexico and Mexico City in particular, do offer more insights on how to foster citizen participation and less asymmetric state-society relations since they are closer to the conditions prevalent in most of the developing world. In this sense, studying the kind of intermediate or modest forms of citizen participation that do take place in these settings defies the unspoken assumption that changes at the local level are meaningless when they

occur without having all the ideal conditions and macro-level institutions in place (Roque and Shankland 2007).

"Invited Spaces": An Approach to Ordinary Citizen Participation

Because of the reasons analyzed above, I use the concept of "invited spaces" to analyze the two local cases addressed in the dissertation: *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa*. Invited spaces exist when "institutions of the participatory sphere are framed by those who create them, and infused with power relations and cultures of interaction carried into them from other spaces" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007: 11). Invited spaces lack the bracketed power inequality of Habermas' (1996) public sphere while combining both the technical and political aspects of Avritzer's (2002) "participatory publics." Invited spaces of this sort clearly imply an asymmetry of power between state actors, usually the ones in charge of establishing the space and "inviting" civil society actors (Cornwall 2002; Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2011).

Therefore, "invited spaces" are closer to the more ordinary forms of state-society interaction and citizen participation more commonly seen in the real world. Nonetheless, even though induced participation is the opposite of the organic participation autonomous social movements lead; overlaps between the two are also possible (Mansuri and Rao 2011). For instance, that is the case when social movements take advantage of participation spaces established by the state as the women's movement, the homeless movement, and the Afro-Brazilian movement did in São Paulo's participatory budgeting (Hernández-Medina 2010).

Additionally, invited spaces can be "subverted" in order to expand their original scope in favor of participants. For example, when participants in an invited space act in different ways to what their hosts invited them there for as it happened in a participatory process in Buenos Aires (Rodgers 2007). They can also be transformed when resources invested in training members of grassroots organizations in urban Angola start to overflow the projects they had been originally

devoted for and those organizations are able to influence urban policy in a larger sense (Roque and Shankland 2007). My argument here is that the same can and has indeed happened in Mexico City's *Centro Histórico* as progressive public officials committed to citizen participation at the local level took their mandate to help in the area's recovery efforts as an opportunity to subvert and expand the invited space they helped to create. To use the straightforward language of Arnestein's (1969) classic article, those experiences started to move from being spaces originally closer to "placation" and "contestation" to being closer to "partnership[16]." In all these cases, we can see…

> …unanticipated, democratizing effects, as institutions that began with a relatively restricted remit gave rise to forms of engagement that spilled beyond their boundaries, or where social actors seized opportunities to repoliticize these spaces... These cases drive home the point that participation is a process over time, animated by actors with their own social and political projects (Cornwall and Coehlo 2007: 10).

Additionally, I want to underscore an element in common between the concept of "invited spaces" and Avritzer's (2002) "participatory publics" in spite of the more inclusive nature of the latter. In these two types of participatory mechanisms, the focus is on both the technical and political sides of public policy unlike Habermas' (1996) original idea about the public sphere not addressing public issues. Avritzer developed the concept in order to apply Habermas' (1996) idea of the "public sphere", the space where citizens come together as equals to engage in deliberation, in the context of Latin America. In his view, focusing on the potential emergence of participatory publics helps us to get an understanding of spaces in which the decision-making logic of political society is not at odds with the more egalitarian logic of a deliberative public space. In this sense, I

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[16] In this famous article, Arnstein (1969) took several urban programs in the United States as examples of her different steps in her "ladder of citizen participation." For example, evaluations of the Model Cities program in several cities depicted it as an example of both "consultation" and "placation" since the committees created for citizen involvement had ambiguous structures and responsibilities. Therefore, citizens found themselves having "once again extensively 'participated" without profiting from their participation. On the contrary, in urban programs where partnership was achieved "power is [was] in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders" (1969: 221).

think it is important to remember that both “invited spaces” and “participatory publics” can serve as incubators of democratic practices, particularly in the developing world.

Both concepts seem more applicable in Latin America and other parts of the global South given the contingent nature of democratic advancements, as a series of UNDP reports about the region point out (UNDP 2005; UNDP/OAS 2011). On the one hand, the ups and downs of democratization in the region have diminished many practitioners and scholars’ hopes about Latin America becoming a promising new land of democracy’s “Third Wave”. Guillermo O’Donnell (1999) famously declared the need for scholars of democratization to study the region not as a deviation but rather as an exemplar of transitions to democracy without consolidation. Along similar lines, other scholars have highlighted the fragility of democracies in the region due to embryonic if not nonexistent rules of law combined with the pervasiveness of “social authoritarianism”, i.e. the reproduction of social hierarchies that make Latin America the most unequal region in the world (Dagnino 1998; also see Portes and Hoffman 2003). On the other hand, Latin America and the Caribbean have also illustrated the multiplicity of possibilities associated with the emergence of vibrant civil societies and new forms of popular participation. These new experiments have the potential to transform widespread clientelistic and populist practices in the region but they can also be undermined by such practices.

Invited Spaces as part of a Continuum of Citizen Engagement with the State

As mentioned above, state-society interactions analyzed in this dissertation fall in the camp of “invited spaces” or induced participation (Cornwall 2002; Cornwall and Coehlo 2007; Mansuri and Rao 2011) for citizen participation. In other words, when ordinary citizens do take part of meaningful decisions regarding urban policies in Mexico City and, in particular, in *Centro Histórico* and *Condesa* they do under conditions mainly defined by state actors. Nonetheless, those spaces coexist (even simultaneously sometimes) with other forms of engaging the state; in

particular with contentious politics exercised by marginalized actors such as street vendors. Moreover, even though both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* have had a state-society interaction at the local level that can be characterized mainly as invited participation, it is clear that the presence of the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* has (at least partially) "subverted" the limitations associated with this form of interaction.

Invited spaces, however, are considered in this dissertation as part of a continuum of five forms of citizen participation engaging the state: the first and last ones (synergistic participation and exclusion) are mainly used as reference categories whereas the three in between (invited, contentious, and corporatist) are emphasized as the most commonly present in Mexico City. They are included in colored cells in Table 2.3 below in order to convey the idea that those three forms of intermediation are not mutually exclusive. Both citizens and state officials can, and many times, do engage in two or more of them at the same time. The first one is mainly a reference category in the context of Mexico City, which I call "synergistic participation" in which citizens, and coalitions can be successful in gaining full access to spaces for decisions on urban policies.

Synergistic participation is an ideal (yet relatively rare) type of participation, which implies a regular and collaborative space between citizens and policy makers that ensures mutually beneficial policy outcomes for both sides. This form of intermediation corresponds to what Avritzer (2002) calls "participatory publics" and Baiocchi et al (2008) characterize as a situation in which civil society shows a high associational density and engages the state on its own terms. More often, citizens and the organizations they work with have to resort to more sporadic and weaker forms of interaction either through invited spaces defined and framed by state actors or through the tried-and-true networks inherited from Mexico City's corporatist urban regime. Both corporatist networks and invited spaces are forms of state-society relationships that are inherently asymmetric since the (local) state is the one that defines and controls the rules, the times, and all the resources at play. However, the latter contain a higher potential for

"subversion" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) and are, by definition, more open-ended and fluid than the corporatist system of incorporation would ever allow.

A third way in which citizens engage the state involves the use of "contentious politics" (Piven and Cloward 1979; Tilly 1986; McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998), particularly in the form of public demonstrations, boycotts, civil disobedience, among others. Finally, citizens might be completely left out from decision-making mechanisms resulting in voluntary or forced "exclusion" or total absence of citizen participation, and this represents a fourth form of intermediation between citizens and the local state. The decisions of city officials are crucial in this regard. Previous work on São Paulo's participatory budget (Hernández-Medina 2005) suggests that different government factions usually have different agendas regarding citizen participation in public policies (also see Evans 2006). It is important to note that I see state-society relations, and in this case, the citizen participation component of them as a very fluid relationship. A form of intermediation that started being an "invited space" can be subverted (Rodgers 2007) and become more "synergistic" and vice versa. Different modes of participation can also exist at the same time, for example, when the urban poor and other marginalized groups use "contentious" strategies to keep their foot on the door and avoid being excluded from or neutralized in "synergistic" spaces for collaboration (Hernández-Medina 2010).

Table 2.3

Typology of State-Society Modes of Interaction

State-Society Form of Interaction	Main Features	Selected Examples from the Literature
Synergistic participation (reference category)	Regular and collaborative space between citizens and policy makers that ensures mutually beneficial policy outcomes. Equivalent to Fung and Wright's (2001) "empowered participatory governance" or Avritzer's (2002) "participatory publics."	Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre (Abers 2000, Baiocchi 2001, Avritzer 2002), São Paulo (Sánchez 2004, Hernández-Medina 2010), and electoral observation in Mexico (Avritzer 2002).
Invited spaces	The "institutions of the participatory sphere are framed by those who create them, and infused with power relations and cultures of interaction	Participatory budgeting in Buenos Aires (Rodgers 2007) and grassroots planning in Angola

State-Society Form of Interaction	Main Features	Selected Examples from the Literature
	carried into them from other spaces" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007: 11). In the dissertation, invited spaces have been "subverted" (Rodgers 2007) in *Centro Histórico* as progressive public officials have helped create the conditions for more citizen involvement whereas high levels of fragmentation have undermined the possibilities of association and invited spaces in *Roma Condesa*.	(Roque and Shankland 2007) are examples of "subverted" invited spaces in the literature.
Contentious politics	Public demonstrations, boycotts, civil disobedience, among others (Tilly 1986). Both street vendors in *Centro Histórico* and residents in *Roma Condesa* have used this kind of engagement at different points in time.	Street vendors in Mexico City's *Centro Histórico* (e.g. Escobedo Lastiri 2006; Crossa 2009).
Clientelistic networks	Clientelistic networks inherited from Mexico City's corporatist urban regime entail the exchange of material outcomes for political favors. This modality is present in both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* and it has been used at different points in time.	In Mexico City, the relationship between neighborhood leaders and state officials (Eckstein 1977), between street vendors and the state (Cross and Camacho 1996; Crossa 2009).
Exclusion (reference category)	Citizens might be completely left out from decision-making mechanisms resulting in voluntary or forced "exclusion", i.e. total absence of citizen participation.	In Mexico City, the relationship between subgroups among street vendors and the government (Crossa 2009).

Synergy in State-Society Relations: Coproduction and Institutional Catalysts

As I will show in this section and in chapters 4 and 5, the literature on state-society synergy as well as other strands of new institutionalism frame the debate around the key difference between the local cases analyzed in this dissertation: the presence of a state actor that served as an institutional catalyst able to bring together and multiply the effects of otherwise fragmented and, in several cases, demobilized or weak social actors. Such an institutional catalyst was present in *Centro Histórico* and absent in *Roma Condesa* and ended up making state-society relations and policy outcomes more fruitful in the former in spite of being an area with less favorable conditions compared to the latter. The state-society synergy literature is part of a broader debate in both sociology and political science among scholars who have underscored the importance of

institutions in development and public policy with a particular emphasis on the state and quite often from a historical perspective (Evans et al 1985; Esping-Anderson 1990; Hall and Taylor 1996; Evans 1997; Pierson 2001; Thelen 1999 and 2004).

The literature on state-society synergy (or lack thereof) helps me look at the conditions under which state actors can level the playing field among otherwise unequal players in the process of defining, implementing, and monitoring urban (and other types of) public policies. The rest of this section defines relevant concepts from this and related strands in the literature on institutions in both Sociology and Political Science in order to frame the idea of institutional catalysts and how it is essential to understand the cases at hand. Additionally, this review is important because of the relative lack of dialogue between urban studies and new institutionalism (Healey 1997; Lowndes 2001).

First, the overarching idea in the state-society synergy literature is that state and society "are not just linked together; each helps constitute the other" (Evans 1995: 228) and that interaction, in turn, shapes the level of legitimacy and success of each side. The outcome of this ongoing process is open-ended. Positive cases of "mutual reinforcement" like those in Brazil and Korea can take place based on a delicate balance of interests and continuous strategic adjustments. But, even in successful cases, the end result can lead to unexpected outcomes through increased mobilization on the part of the very actors (industrial workers, the middle class or the urban poor) the state helped to create (Seidman 1994; Yang 2012). Therefore, a crucial insight from this approach is the need to develop a more flexible understanding of the state and of its relationship with the rest of society. For instance, scholars in this perspective advocate for simultaneously looking at the state from two points of view:

> (1) as the powerful image of a clearly bounded, unified organization that can be spoken of in singular terms... as if it were a single, centrally motivated actor performing in an integrated manner to rule a clearly defined territory; and (2) as the practices of a heap of loosely connected parts or fragments, frequently with ill-defined boundaries between them and other groupings inside and outside the official state borders and often promoting conflicting sets of rules with one another and with 'official' Law (Migdal 2001: 22).

The state-society synergy perspective argues for an “anthropology of the state”, which disaggregates the state into the following functional and geographical components: (1) “the trenches” where the local officials (teachers, police forces, tax collectors) who are in daily contact with the citizens they serve are located; (2) “the dispersed field offices”, where middle- level bureaucrats or “implementers” are in charge of “organizing the execution of policy in a given region” (Migdal 2001: 118); (3) the “agency’s central offices” usually found in capital cities where public officials have to interact with the strongest social actors outside of the state apparatus; and (4) the “commanding heights” of the top state leadership at the national level (Migdal 1997). This “anthropology of the state” then analyzes different components within it, the relationships among them, as well as the interaction between those components and their respective environments in society. In a similar vein to that of multi-scalar analyses of state actors in Europe (Brenner 2004), this perspective calls for a more relational take on the various levels states function at.

Second, Elinor Ostrom’s concept of coproduction refers to different state actors and their interactions with society actors with regards to policy outputs on the ground. Coproduction is “the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not ‘in’ the same organization... Coproduction implies that citizens can play an active role in producing public goods and services of consequence to them” (Ostrom 1997: 86). Ostrom’s theory of coproduction is relevant to this dissertation because it helps us in looking at disaggregated actors within the state, particularly those “street-level bureaucrats” who interact most often with citizens and have high discretionary power in making decisions that shape that interaction while also looking at the role people’s participation can have in improving policies heavily based on service provisioning. As Ostrom puts it “the production of a service, as contrasted to a good, was difficult without the active participation of those supposedly receiving the service” (1997: 99). To be sure, substantial quality of life improvements in Mexico City and,

more specifically, in *Centro Histórico* and *Roma-Condesa* require the provision of both services and goods. Nonetheless, as we will see in chapters 4 and 5, many of those improvements rely on the possibility of pooling previously fragmented government and society resources together.

Moreover, the complex nature of problems associated with urban infrastructure and collective consumption (Castells 1977) in cities requires the active participation of the citizens affected by those problems. A different matter refers to who takes the lead in addressing those issues. The urban poor and other marginalized groups in Latin America and the Caribbean have done so in multiple struggles for their "right to the city" (Lefebvre 2002 [1968]). The highest manifestation of these movements in Mexico City has been the "*Movimiento Urbano Popular*" (Urban Popular Movement) articulated after the successful gains achieved by poor residents displaced by the 1985 earthquakes (Ortiz 1997; Tamayo 2007). This city wide grassroots movement has been in the decline, however, and new public actors have emerged at least in *Centro Histórico* to take the lead. The most important of those actors, the fiduciary fund or *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* has been serving as an institutional catalyst playing a role akin to that of the neutral mediators Chatterjee referred to. That is, educated middle school teachers who "mediate between those who govern and those who are governed" (2004: 66).

I agree with Chatterjee (2004) that this kind of intermediation by actors without vested interests in the process (or with interests in favor of less powerful groups) is fundamental during the first stages of citizen participation in the developing world. Successful mechanisms for citizen involvement in public policy such as the participatory budget provide that kind of intermediation, often through the public officials who are directly in contact with the participants (e.g. Sánchez 2004; Hernández- Medina 2010). Additionally, the most successful citizen participation mechanisms include built-in opportunities to facilitate participants' intensive learning about the way the local state works (Hernández-Medina 2010; Pontual 2000). In other words, the intermediation need not be permanent and can be eventually replaced by experienced citizens

who, to use Chatterjee's (2004) terminology, then move from "political society" (the political space defined by clientelism and overall dependence) to "civil society" (the space defined by ideological autonomy and self-awareness about one's duties and rights).

In any event, processes of increased citizen involvement in public policy do need to include at least some allies within the (local) state to flourish. Therefore, as Evans and his collaborators point out, we need to move beyond totalizing accounts of the state in order to better understand its role in citizens' quest for improving their quality of life in the city. In such analysis, "states emerge as disaggregated actors, simultaneously part of the problem and part of the solution" (2006: 222). However, at least some "set of state agencies must be part of the mix if greater livability is to be achieved" (2006: 222). As Becher (2010) shows in her study of an Empowerment Zone program in Philadelphia, even the intermediation role itself can take different forms (that of coordinator, representative or gatekeeper) based on the level of legitimacy and access to their own and other constituencies those playing the role are able to cultivate. Moreover, allies can belong to different state agencies and relate to one another on a regular basis as part of a collaborative or "associative network" of professionals from different state and non-state arenas committed to a common cause (Chalmers et al 1997; Keck 2002). State fragmentation can then even become an advantage for those attempting to make public policy formulation and implementation more transparent for and responsive to citizens:

> Fragmented states are unlikely to be able to construct and implement such strategies [for livability]. Yet the fact that states are not monolithic is also an advantage. It means that communities, and the social movements and NGOs that work with them, do not necessarily have to 'capture the state' in order to elicit favorable responses from public institutions. Creating alliances with the specifically relevant parts of the state may be sufficient (Evans 2002: 20).

The problem of specifying the role of intermediary actors is particularly relevant when it comes to the study of citizen participation engaging the state in Latin America and the Caribbean. There is an extended literature on new associational practices in the region (e.g. Escobar and Alvarez 1992; Alvarez et al. 1998; Houtzager et al 2005) but still too few on the articulation between

those movements and the state (Avritzer 2002; Davis 2002; Lavalle et al 2005; Goldfrank 2007). That is where the concept of institutional catalysts can be useful in explaining the role of organizations such as the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico.* An institutional catalyst is any "institution that serves as *the focal point to make or force desired change*. The institution could be a select committee, a governmental ministry, or any other party. An institutional catalyst has, or is perceived to have, an appropriate mandate to play such a role" (Bhatta 2006: 291; my emphasis). I argue that, particularly in contexts where citizens have high levels of mistrust in the state such as Mexico City (Houtzager et al 2005), institutional catalysts like the *Fideicomiso* not only set the conditions for coproduction to take place but also enhance the multiplying effect of such complementarity between government interventions and citizen actions on the ground.

This type of institutions, in turn, represents one potential solution to the problem of how to scale up fragmented or limited resources: "Communities that enjoy the benefits of synergy do not necessarily enjoy exceptional prior endowments of social capital. More crucial in practice is the question of 'scaling up' existing social capital to create organizations that are sufficiently encompassing to effectively pursue development goals" (Evans 1997: 204). Such alternatives are based on more comprehensive understandings of social capital (Daly and Silver 2008) and of citizens' preferences and capabilities as malleable and, therefore, subject to improvement (Evans 1997; Heller 1997). They can also be the result of a bias on the part of progressive public officials favoring historically marginalized and underrepresented social actors such as the urban poor, women, the less educated, racial minorities and others (Heller 2001; Hernández-Medina 2010). As we will see in chapter 4, the fiduciary fund established to support recovery efforts in Mexico City's historic center (*Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*) has played such a role by connecting limited human and material resources, fostering citizen participation, and implementing innovative urban policies to deal with a stagnant real estate market, citizen apathy and a highly deteriorated infrastructure.

2.5. Alternative Explanations

The main alternative explanation to the framework presented here would come from the pluralist camp *a la* Dahl 1961, 1971)[17] and is centered on the role of political parties and the regional divides among them in Mexico City. According to this view, the key factor that explains city government's limited responsiveness to problems in *Roma Condesa*, the most affluent of the two local cases in the dissertation, is the area's closer political affinity with the PAN (right) as a result of inter-party competition in the city. *Centro Histórico* is closer to the PRD (center-left), the argument would go, and therefore, bound to benefit from PRD administrations which have been in charge of city government since Mexico City residents regained the right to elect their authorities in 1997. Following this line of reasoning what I see as fragmentation of efforts in *Roma Condesa* is nothing more than the consequences of political pluralism and upper-middle class residents in this area are not really "up for grabs" or susceptible to being included in a PRD-led urban regime since they are already aligned with another political party.

There is certainly some merit to this argument since inter-party competition is increasingly important in Mexico City and the PAN has more influence in *Roma Condesa* than it does in *Centro Histórico*, particularly among older residents living in the former. Nonetheless, such influence has not significantly affected the amount and quality of the services *Roma Condesa* residents and businesses receive from city government. Some residents even thought that those improved while former mayor Marcelo Ebrard lived in the area. The PRD still has an important presence in the area even if PAN had an important influence on the neighborhood committees that ended up being in place for more than 10 years in *Roma Condesa*. In fact, they continue to receive high levels of service provision compared to other areas of the city including

[17] Schmitter's definition of pluralism contrasting it with corporatism is very useful in this regard: "Pluralism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into an unspecified number of ordered multiple, voluntary, competitive, nonhierarchically and self-determined (as to type or scope of interest) categories which are not created or specially licensed, recognized, subsidized, created or otherwise controlled in leadership selection or interest articulation by the state and which do not exercise a monopoly of representational activity within their respective categories (1974: 96).

Centro Histórico, as I was able to confirm through participant observation and interviews conducted in *Roma Condesa*.

A more general point, however, is that we cannot understand politics in Mexico City without taking into account the legacy of corporatism as explained previously in the chapter. Similarly, urban regime theory is used to explain the shifts taking place in the city because of the same reason why it emerged as a theoretical framework in response to pluralism. That is, the fact that pluralism does not factor in the asymmetries of power and the contingency that permeates decision-making in urban contexts (Stone 1989). On the contrary, pluralist studies assume that decisions about what is best for a given city are made by consensus and lack the flexibility of urban regime theory, which allows for the changing conditions that might or might not lead to the formation of successful urban coalitions (Stone 2004).

Another alternative explanation refers to socio-economic status, education, and other variables associated with class as direct predictors of people's engagement. This idea has deep roots, particularly in Political Science, and suggests that the lower the socio-economic status of a given individual or group, the lower their level of political participation is going to be. Almond and Verba's (1963) classic comparison of political culture in five countries (U.S., United Kingdom, Mexico, Italy, and Germany) pointed to education as a strong determinant of progressive political attitudes and political participation in general. That was also the case in later studies Verba conducted with other colleagues (Verba et al 1971, 1978, 1993, 1995). Milbrath and Goel (1977) found that a higher socio-economic status and a higher level of education are correlated with being more likely to be politically active as a result of having more resources, opportunities, confidence in one's capacity to influence government, among other factors.

Similarly, Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker's (2004) examination of three decades of panel data in the United States concluded that those who consistently identified themselves as working class showed lower levels of political engagement over time than their middle-class counterparts.

Results from this dissertation, however, show that positive correlations between class and participation do not necessarily hold over time as residents from *Roma Condesa*, the well-off case in my project, have been increasingly less likely to participate despite having more education, resources, and will to form neighborhood associations than their counterparts in *Centro Histórico*, the run-down historic center where people have been actively participating in urban policies and projects to renovate the area.

2.6. Conclusion

This dissertation argues in favor of paying more attention to ordinary forms of citizen participation in order to move beyond either/or perspectives still predominant in the literature. A more eclectic understanding of both citizen participation and of urban regimes is required to understand the transformation under way in one of the world's largest global and mega-cities. Mexico City's transformation from a "corporatist" urban regime to what I call a "pragmatic" one signals not only a break between what used to be automatically linked levels of government (local vs. national) but also gives room to the expression of the progressive political preferences among its citizens; preferences that had been buried under the authoritarian grip of the PRI-led national state for more than seven decades.

Similarly, the empirical puzzle of seeing higher levels of citizen participation on the part of residents in the poorest of the two areas analyzed in this project indicates the need to take such outlets for participation (even if limited) more seriously in order to better comprehend the factors behind such anomaly. Results from this dissertation underscore the importance of institutions and of "bringing the state back in" as the key reason among those factors has been the work of a sympathetic external actor, the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*, a local public institution, which has served as an "institutional catalyst" in this regard.

CHAPTER 3

MEXICO CITY AND "CIUDAD CENTRAL": RECONSTITUTING URBAN PRIMACY IN A NEW "PRAGMATIC" URBAN REGIME

3.1. Overview

Mexico City has been slowly but surely moving away from the corporatist past that pervaded Mexico for more than seven decades. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' historic victory in 1997 as the city's first elected mayor since 1928 constituted a critical juncture (Mahoney 2000; Pierson 2000) in that path. Some have interpreted this and other major changes taking place through PRD's political dominance ever since, to be signs of the city moving towards a "municipal socialist" urban regime (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). That is, an urban regime (Stone 1989) where city officials and their allies privilege wealth distribution over wealth accumulation and various progressive social and urban policies are pursued. I argue instead that a new urban regime is emerging in Mexico City with both strong pro-poor and pro-capital components. This I denominate a pragmatic urban regime where PRD administrations have been putting in place a progressive social and urban agenda to guarantee poor residents' collective consumption (Castells 1979) consonant with municipal socialism, while at the same time, extensively collaborating with national and international capital as entrepreneurial urban regimes do (Harvey 1978; 2002[1989]).

Urban regimes are "*the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions*" and those decisions are about "*managing conflict* and *making adaptive responses* to social change" (Stone 1989: 7; emphasis in the original). I argue that Mexico City's corporatist urban regime, in place between the early 1930s and the late 1990s, was a *direct* expression of the overall corporatist regime the PRI established at the national level. On the contrary, the capital's new "pragmatic" regime is an urban regime the opposing PRD has been creating *against* national

authorities while its governing coalition capitalizes on the economic and political distinctiveness of Mexico City vis-à-vis the rest of the country.

PRD mayors have done a lot in trying to protect the collective consumption of the city's poor as their leftist counterparts have in Porto Alegre, Montevideo, and other Latin American cities (e.g. Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). However, a different political context at the national level has represented serious economic constraints that moved the PRD to accommodating national and international capital in more deliberate ways (Peterson 1981; Savitch and Kantor 2002) than progressive mayors in other countries. PRD's difficult coexistence with right and center-right (PAN and PRI) national authorities decreased the availability of funds to implement their agenda early on (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Davis 2002) leading them to a strategic shift. In particular, Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2000-2006), having seen the extreme limitations Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas faced in his tenure (1997-2000), made a deliberate alliance with capitalists including Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim (Davis 2002; Greyson 2007).

To be sure, the balancing act PRD administrations have been able to maintain is not an easy task. Similarly oriented leftist parties in comparable urban contexts have not been able to do it; the Workers Party's short-lived tenures in comparable São Paulo being a case in point (Hernández-Medina 2010; Wampler 2007; Sánchez 2004; Davis and Alvarado 2004). Workers Party Mayor Marta Suplicy (2001-2004) also attempted catering to the urban poor and minorities through innovative programs in public education, the participatory budgeting, and widely implementing federal pro-poor initiatives while, at the same time, collaborating with Brazilian and international capitalists. However, her administration neglected cultivating middle class constituents who held the key to surviving the highly polarized political community São Paulo represents (Hernández-Medina 2010). A previous Workers Party administration in 1989-1993 Mayor Luiza Erundinha had led faced similar problems and was also defeated in the city's voting

booths (Sánchez 2004; Davis and Alvarado 2004).

As we will see in Chapter 4, Mexico City's new pragmatic urban regime is more visibly consolidated in the historic center of the city where it has also led to pragmatic, and therefore limited, forms of state-society linkages or *"invited spaces"* (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007). In this case, city government controls invited spaces and residents invited to participate usually have a subordinate role. In a pragmatic urban regime citizen participation can be heralded as a priority; and it has been to different degrees in all PRD administrations to date. But government officials might still attempt to control how citizen participation manifests to prevent it from clashing with other priorities such as the need to protect its strategic alliances with capital in the face of major financial constraints (Peterson 1981; Savitch and Kantor 2002).

I argue that Mexico City is an emblematic case of pragmatic urban regimes, which constitute an intermediate political arrangement between the socialist and neoliberal urban regimes (see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2). Moreover, there is an affinity between pragmatic urban regimes and invited spaces as the latter are also intermediate and more common modes of state-society interactions (Cornwall and Coelho 2007). As shown in Chapter 2, the pragmatic urban regime that has been taking form in Mexico City since 1997 is between the emblematically progressive case of Porto Alegre and the extreme market-based transformations of Santiago, Chile. I argue that Mexico City's pragmatic urban regime emerged in great part because of PRD's attempt to take advantage of the political singularity of the capital and in response to the opportunities and threats associated with the simultaneous economic and political openings taking place in Mexico since the beginning of the 1980s.

This chapter shows how these two processes have contributed to the formation of a new dominant coalition of actors (Stone 1989) in Mexico City including PRD city mayors, national and international investors, and in a subordinate role, and some representatives of the urban poor. On the contrary, formerly dominant PRI and PAN have lost much of their visibility and power in

Mexico City and are now concentrated in specific sectors in the capital. This transformation stands in great contrast with the pattern of dominance both the PRI and the PAN show at the national level after *panista* President Vicente Fox broke PRI's seven-decade rule in 2000. After that, two more presidents have governed Mexico: one from the PAN (Felipe Calderón, 2006-2012) and one from returning PRI (Enrique Peña Nieto, elected in 2012). Even though the PRD has been close to winning national elections with former mayors and presidential candidates Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (2000) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2006), it has not been able to substantially expand its reach beyond a few states (Modonesi 2008). Changes in the city's central areas show how a governing coalition including PRI (national) government actors and its subordinate corporatist allies such as pro-government labor unions and street vendors have been replaced by a PRD (city) government allied to poor and middle class residents, on the one hand, and national and international capital, on the other. These changes are summarized in Table 3.1 and explained throughout this and the following chapters.

Table 3.1

Mexico City's Corporatist vs. Pragmatic Urban Regimes

Urban Regime	**Corporatist (1930s – 1990s)** starting with elimination of city autonomy in 1928	**Pragmatic (1997 – Present)** starting with recovery of city autonomy with 1997 elections
Governing coalition	PRI (federal) authorities dominating both national and city political scenes ("developmentalist" generation defeated by "technocrats" in the 1980s) Traditional private sector allied to PRI and PAN national and regional authorities (governors) which emerged through ISI-based policies	Leftist PRD (city) administrations in conflict with PRI and PAN federal authorities (leading to problem of scarce resources) New faction within "bifurcated" private sector more oriented towards real estate and global transactions
Allies	Public employees and their unions mainly in education and utilities Street vendors organized in reaction to PRI's repression and later allied to it (see Chapter 4)	Public officials committed to urban and social agenda (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009) Urban popular movement organized after 1985 earthquakes and social movements (feminist, intellectuals) emerged in the 1970s in opposition to the PRI

Urban Regime	Corporatist (1930s – 1990s) starting with elimination of city autonomy in 1928	Pragmatic (1997 – Present) starting with recovery of city autonomy with 1997 elections
Priorities	Emphasis on outskirts of the city because of the need to control or coopt poor rural-urban migrants leading city's expansion (1950s – 1980s) Emphasis on corporatist structures following the three-pillar structure (labor unions - public employees – rural labor) Lázaro Cárdenas created in the 1930s Emphasis on monumentalism as a manifestation of nationalism in the city	Emphasis turned back to central part of the city ("*ciudad central")* to contain urban sprawl and recycle suitable urban space to attract foreign and national investment (exchange values) Emphasis on citizen participation because of commitment to "municipal socialism", drastic changes through "urban acupuncture", and to attract the urban poor and middle classes Emphasis on public space, collective consumption, and use values as a manifestation of citizen rights

The General Development Program for the Federal District, 2001-2006 alludes to the city's complex situation when it defined Mexico City as "the giant in chains." The document is the overall planning tool used by each city government administration to outline its understanding of the Federal District's main problems and the priorities to be followed during that period. The phrase "giant in chains" had been used before[18] to characterize Mexico as a whole and, in this case, it also conveys the idea that Mexico City continues to be one of the most marked examples of urban primacy in the region while still having its economic, social, and political potential constrained by important external and internal factors.

Mexico City has been going through a double transformation through both economic and political liberalization processes, which started to converge at the beginning of the 1980s but are still unfolding today. The 1982 economic crisis and the political effects of the 1985 earthquakes literally shook the foundations of the Mexican authoritarian regime and Mexico City was (and continues to be) the clearest and most visible reflection of those changes. My argument is that the

[18] For example, Mexico "appears as a nation with weak institutions, uncertain of its international identity: a sleeping giant that from time to time becomes agitated without being able to move" (Castañeda and Aguilar Camín quoted in Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010:1).

early 1980s constitute a critical juncture (e.g. Collier and Collier 1991; Yashar 1997; Mahoney 2000) that has shifted the nature and functions of the city, especially in its relatively less studied central areas. It is precisely by studying these centric sections of Mexico City that we can better understand the effects of the country's integration into the global economy and the gradual decline of its authoritarian regime.

The chapter proceeds as follows: the following section (3.2.) provides the historical background to understand Mexico City by looking at its history of urban primacy and the role of its *"Ciudad Central"* or Central City; section 3.3 examines PRI's "corporatist" urban regime in Mexico City from its inception in 1929 to the late 1970s; section 3.4 analyzes the transition between the PRI-led corporatist urban regime and the emergent pragmatic urban regime PRD started by looking at the period between the early 1980s (including the turning point of Mexico's 1982 debt crisis) and the mid- and late-1990s; section 3.5 looks at the economic and political side of the pragmatic urban regime in more detail whereas 3.6 compares the key features of the three completed PRD administrations to date. Finally, the chapter's conclusion in section 3.7 summarizes the analytical trends developed throughout the chapter.

3.2. Background: the Historical Centrality of Mexico City in Context

This section addresses the history of Mexico City's significance in the country and the role the central sections of the city play in that history. First, it examines the history of urban primacy the capital has shown as early as the 18th century. Second, it looks at the way in which this history is manifested in the so-called *"Ciudad Central"* (Central City) where urban recycling through major changes in land use reflects how the capital's primacy is being reconstituted.

Mexico City: a History of Urban Primacy

Mexico City has been the center of economic and political decisions in Mexico ever since it was founded as the Aztec capital of *Tenochtitlan.* During colonial times, the city became the headquarters of the Spanish conquest project in the Americas after easily displacing Santo Domingo (in what is now the Dominican Republic) at the beginning of the XVI century. Mexico City kept its prominence as the *Virreinato de la Nueva España* (Viceroyalty of New Spain) for the following three hundred years (Thorp 1998). In great part as a result of the importance gained in colonial times, some observers saw Mexico City showing signs of urban primacy as early as 1750 (McGreevey 1971) whereas others argued this occurred around 1850 (Morse 1970). Even Mark Jefferson (1939), the creator of the urban primacy law, regarded Mexico City as a significant exemplar of it at the beginning of the 20th century:

> Mexico City has a million inhabitants and is five times as large as the country's second city, Guadalajara. In Mexico, too, on the site of one of America's fines aboriginal cultures, in an environment utterly different from the environments of Europe, the primate city is a culmination of national life. Why is a Mexican from Mazatlan now in Mexico City? Because he was discontented in every way with the narrow opportunities of the little town. If he was doing badly, he thought he could do better in the capital. If he was doing well, he learned that the field of opportunity is larger there. The most famous Mexicans of the day live there, and he wanted to see them, or he can buy better or sell better. Perhaps, he will make his fortune there (1939: 227).

A key factor in this transformation was the centralization of political power in national (federal) authorities vis-à-vis state and local governments; a feature that differentiates not only Mexican cities but also Latin American ones from their counterparts in the United States (Galiani and Kim 2011)[19]. The same authors found in a comparative study of Latin American and U.S. cities that the fact of having national capital status contributed to urban primacy in Mexico more than it did in any other Latin American country in their sample for 1990 (Galiani and Kim 2011).

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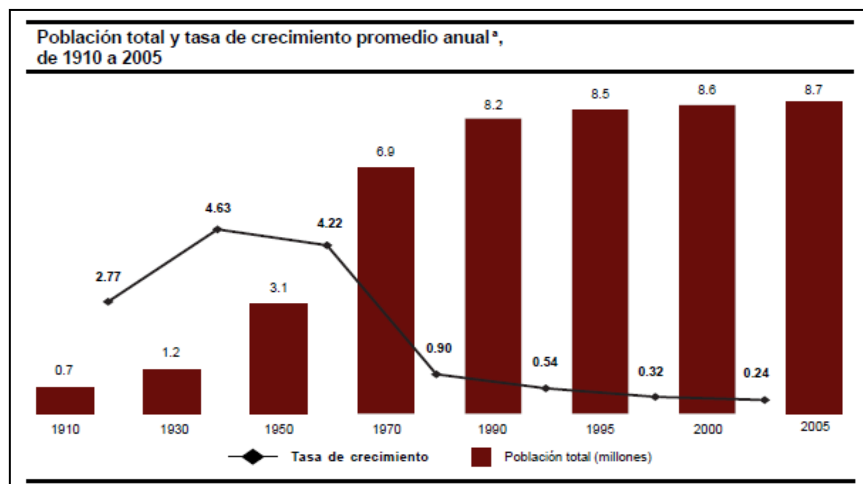
[19] "Most scholars consider Mexico to be one of the most politically centralized in Latin America as the federal government collects more than 90% of government revenues. Most of the revenues were likely to be funneled to capital cities and the remaining local governments received only 4% of those revenues in 1990 (Nickson (1995); Diaz-Cayeros (2006)). In the earlier period under Porfirio Díaz, the era between 1876-1911, it is estimated that Mexico City received more than 80% of all government investments in infrastructure (Kandell (1988))" (Galiani and Kim 2011: 8).

Mexico City continues to generate a third of the country's GDP (Parneiter 2002; Connolly 2003) and the city-region (Mexico City considered along with the other municipalities in the Valley of Mexico) has represented a third of the country's population for several decades since the demographic explosion of the 1950s (*Asamblea Legislativa* 2003). The demographic explosion started in the 1950s has de-accelerated in relative terms but it still entails a gigantic number of people in absolute terms, as well as impressive amounts of time and resources invested commuting everyday from the periphery into the center and vice versa (Sánchez Mejorada 2005; Suárez and Delgado 2009; INEGI 2009). Diagram 3.1 shows the total population and population growth rates from 1910 up until 2005. City population is no longer increasing with an annual growth rate of 4.63% as it was the case in the 1940s or 4.22% as it did in the 1960s doubling the number of people living in the city from 3.1 million in 1950 to 6.9 million in 1970. From the 1980s onwards, there has been a marked decline in the velocity of population growth with rates of only 0.90% in 1980 going down to 0.24 in the early 2000s. Still, the city had 8.7 million people living in it in 2005 (INEGI 2009; also see Appendix E).

Diagram 3.1.

Total Population and Population Growth Rates, 1910-2005



Source: INEGI 2009, p. 3

After the PRI lost Mexico City to the PRD in 1997 and the country as a whole to the PAN in 2000, the city's political and symbolic functions have not changed. If anything, specific sections of it such as *Ciudad Central* have added new functions associated, on the one hand, with a growing service economy, and on the other, with the repurposing of public parks and other areas for the enjoyment of all citizens in the capital. Such re-concentration of functions and land uses in *Ciudad Central* has been taking place in spite of the fact that Mexico City continues to expand well beyond the limits of the Federal District. One of the key functions *Ciudad Central* performs is political in the context of Mexico City's role as a sort of political magnifier for the rest of the nation to this day. In the past,

> Mexico's capital city functioned as the PRIs' amphitheater, where the ruling party flaunted its power and national spectacles were staged before audiences of *defeños*, as the capital's residents are called. Political players dramatized perceived injustices in the D.F. Poorly paid teachers from Oaxaca, disgruntled peasants from Chiapas, UNAM student malcontents, anti-PEMEX protestors from Tabasco, and other dissatisfied troupers engaged in street theater in the Zócalo, where they attained press notices, if not cheers, for their cause (Grayson 2007: 129).

Ciudad Central: Urban Recycling in Mexico City's "Contested Space"

What Mexican urban planners call *Ciudad Central* is comprised of four "delegations" (administrative subdivisions), which are territorially equivalent to what constituted most of Mexico City up until the mid-XX century: *Delegación Cuauhtémoc, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, Delegación Venustiano Carranza, and Delegación Benito Juárez*. Table 3.2 below includes the total population for each of the four central delegations, for *Ciudad Central,* and for the city as a whole. As we can see, the declining population trend in *Ciudad Central* documented by Mexican scholars and practitioners (e.g. Castillo Juárez 2007; Tamayo 2007) continued into the 1990s and 2000s. Notably, *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*, the area both of my case studies are part of, is one of only two delegations where this trend has been reversed; the other one being *Delegación Miguel Hidalgo*. In a context of massive and mostly horizontal population growth, it might be tempting to dismiss the importance of Mexico City's *Ciudad Central* or "Central City." However, it has

regained much of its foundational role as manifested in the drastic land use changes taking place in the last couple of decades.

The magnitude of the reversal is much larger in *Delegación Cuauhtémoc:* the area attracted 5,093 individuals when it went from having 516,255 inhabitants in 2000 to 521,348 in 2005. In comparison, 894 people moved to *Delegación Miguel Hidalgo* in the same period, which increased its total population from 352,640 in 2000 to 353,534 in 2005. Even though this gain represents less than 1% of the existing population in *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* in year 2000 (0.2% for *Delegación Miguel Hidalgo*), it is highly significant given the severe depopulation trend that has permeated *Ciudad Central* since the 1970s and, especially, after the 1985 earthquakes (Castillo Juárez 2007). Paradoxically, the earthquakes contributed to unlock this area to real estate markets. Real estate firms, which had not been able to purchase land in the city and had been moving towards its outskirts and the surrounding municipalities (Schteingart 2001 [1989]) have been going back to *Ciudad Central*. The relative scarcity of land in Mexico City would become a key factor behind the real estate explosion seen in *Roma Condesa* starting in the 1990s and in *Centro Histórico* since the 2000s. This explosion in turn has been both an incentive to and a result of the population growth analyzed in this section (see Table 3.2 below).

Table 3.2

Federal District: Total Population by Demarcation and Delegation, 1990-2005

Demarcation and Delegation	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Federal District	**8,235,744**	**8,489007**	**8,605,239**	**8,720,916**	**8,851,080**
Ciudad Central	**1,930,267**	**1,760,359**	**1,692,179**	**1,677,358**	**1,721,137**
Benito Juárez	407,811	369,956	360,478	355,017	385,439
Cuauhtémoc	595,960	540,382	516,255	521,348	531,831
Miguel Hidalgo	406,868	364,398	352,640	353,534	372,889
Venustiano Carranza	519,628	485,623	462,806	447,459	430,978

Source: Castillo Juárez 2007, p. 13 and *INEGI webpage*

It was precisely to address the worrisome depopulation trajectory described above that the second PRD mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador put in place the controversial *"Bando 2"* (Edict #2)

right after assuming office in December 2000. In other words, Mexico City's second elected mayor declared urban recycling in *Ciudad Central* as a top priority of his administration. The edict itself states that during the last three decades the four central delegations "have decreased in one million, two hundred thousand inhabitants whereas in delegations in the Southern and Eastern parts of the city, the population has grown in a disproportionate manner" ("*Bando 2*" reprinted in Tamayo 2007). López Obrador used his prerogatives as the head of city government to issue this "informative edict" declaring that his administration would foster "population growth [going] towards delegations *Benito Juárez, Cuauhtémoc, Miguel Hidalgo,* and *Venustiano Carranza* in order to take advantage of the infrastructure and services [in those areas], which are currently being under-utilized" ("*Bando 2*" reprinted in Tamayo 2007).

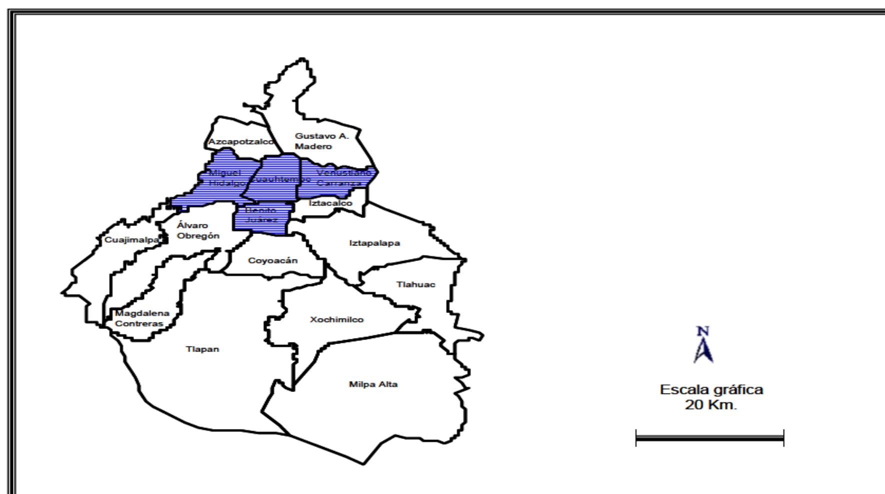
Such areas, in turn, were to be devoted to social housing for the city's low-income inhabitants as shown in the distribution of new public housing during López Obrador's administration. The Housing Institute of the Federal District (INVI), a public entity, managed most of the low-income housing projects developed in the area in this period. The INVI covered 23.13% of the accumulated unmet demand in its "*Programa de Vivienda en Conjunto"* (Joint Housing Program) in *Ciudad Central* for 2005 (Puebla 2007). That proportion is much higher than that of the first (6.99%), second (0.55%), and third urban rings (0.00%) that surrounds *Ciudad Central*, which shows how the INVI prioritized low-income housing in the latter.[20]

Coverage was even higher in *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* (44.24%), which attests to the hyper-centrality of that delegation. City residents received the announcement with skepticism while opposition parties accused López Obrador of authoritarianism arguing that publishing the edict was a way to circumvent Mexico City's Legislative Assembly (Tamayo 2007). In spite of the long-standing controversy, assessments showed that his re-densification policy had some, if

[20] On the contrary, the rate of coverage in the more extensive *"Programa de Mejoramiento de Vivienda"* (House Improvement Program) is more consistent across the city: 5.10% in Ciudad Central, 3.95% in the first urban ring, 3.25% in the second, and 2.46% in the third (see *"Cuadro 3.4"* in Puebla 2007, p. 145).

limited, impact as shown in Table 3.2 above (Tamayo 2007). By the end of the decade, people were moving back to *Ciudad Central* and, in particular, to *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*. However, the policy was significantly less successful in generating private housing for the poor. Diagram 3.2. shows the location of *Ciudad Central* (in blue):

Diagram 3.2.
Ciudad Central's Four Delegations in Mexico City: *Cuauhtémoc, Miguel Hidalgo, Venustiano Carranza*, and *Benito Juárez*



Source: López Escalante 2009, p. 2

Before addressing the characteristics of *Delegación Cuahtémoc* in more detail, let us address Duhau and Giglia's (2004) definition of *Ciudad Central* as a "contested space." As shown in Table 3.3 below, this is not only the oldest part of the city but also the area where urban recycling is most intensive given the need to accommodate very distinct types of users: residents, businesses, commuters, street vendors, and tourists to name a few. As I will show in chapters 4 and 5 on *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa*, the central city has a historical trajectory of mixed land use and that trend is particularly visible in those two neighborhoods. Each of these, in turn, constitutes a typical example of the two types of urbanism present in the central city: *Centro*

Histórico is the best model of colonial or "Iberian" urbanism in Mexico City[21] whereas *Roma Condesa*, and particularly the *Roma* subsection of it, is the best exemplar of "modernist" as well as art-deco urbanism (Porras Padilla 2001; Vargas 2010).

Not surprisingly, the predominant type of conflict over urban space in *Ciudad Central* takes place when residents are affected by other citizens' use of public and sometimes even private space. Indeed, that is the most frequent kind of conflict in both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa.* In the former, residents complain about the never-ending demonstrations and cultural events in their area as well as the restrictions imposed on them because of city government's safety measures for such events. In the latter, residents feel invaded by the presence of tourists, commuters, and street vendors, especially those who make use of their neighborhoods' multiple public parks and private parking places. Duhau and Giglia (2004) argued that, unlike residents in other parts of the city, those who live in *Ciudad Central* resort to the law in order to resolve these conflicts given their relatively higher income and education levels. Nonetheless, fieldwork in *Roma Condesa* found very little evidence of residents preferring to use legal mechanisms whereas those in *Centro Histórico* were mostly demobilized until the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* started eliciting their collaboration in urban renovation projects in 2007.

The other three urban models present in Mexico City are: the "homogeneous space" of suburban exclusivity enjoyed by the middle and upper classes in individual houses equivalent to those located in affluent suburbs in the United States[22]; the "collectivized space" of functionalist gigantic apartment complexes for the urban poor equivalent to the "projects" where racial minorities tend to concentrate in many US cities, and the "negotiated space" of the city's periphery, where property rights are blurry or nonexistent and the vast majority of the urban poor

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[21] *Delegación Coyoacán* contains the other colonial area present in Mexico City. Originally, *Coyoacán* was a separate village where Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés eventually had his headquarters. The town was absorbed in the mid-XX century as Mexico City continued to grow.

[22] The "homogeneous" space is also similar to the "city of walls" or affluent fortified enclaves in the outskirts of São Paulo Teresa Caldeira (2001) analyzed.

manage to live by building their own housing and pressuring city government for their usually limited services and infrastructure (Duhau and Giglia 2004). A great deal of the academic literature on Mexico City, and most Latin American metropolis, focuses on the "negotiated space" of the geographic and economic periphery (Sánchez Mejorada 2005; Tamayo 2007; Lezama 2010 [1993]). This is not surprising since, in Sánchez Mejorada's words, the rural-to-urban migrants who became its inhabitants ended up "co-constructing" Mexico City while building their new lives. In Mexico City, in particular, the "negotiated space" of the periphery also reflects legal and customary conflicts between different modes of land ownership. As the city continued to expand at the "violent pace" shown in Diagram 3.1. at the beginning of the chapter, new plots had to be found in the communal "*ejidos*" given to peasants after the Mexican Revolution. This explains why most of the literature on the city focuses on the periphery; a trend also fueled by Latin American theories about "urban marginality", which was often seen as directly correlated with spatial marginalization (Lezama 2010 [1993]). In contrast, looking back at the central parts of the city in order to understand the characteristics of the new pragmatic urban regime and how the highly contested convergence of economic and political liberalization, which is much deeper and visible in this area, leads to new obstacles and opportunities for ordinary citizens' participation in urban policies. Table 3.3 summarizes these four types.

Table 3.3

Urban Contexts and Conflicts about Space in Mexico City

Urban Contexts	**Contested Space**	**Homogeneous Space**	**Collectivized Space**	**Negotiated Space**
Urbanism	*Colonial ("Iberian") and modern*	*Garden City and suburbs*	*Functionalist ("The projects")*	*Informal working class*
Organization of space	Central Multiple functions	One function Public space serves as the stage for private space	Collective space replaces public space	Residual public space produced based on (self-created) housing

Urban Contexts	Contested Space	Homogeneous Space	Collectivized Space	Negotiated Space
Urbanism	*Colonial (“Iberian”) and modern*	*Garden City and suburbs*	*Functionalist (“The projects”)*	*Informal working class*
Dominant type of conflict	Coexistence of mixed uses of land. Residential use threatened by new uses of public space	Vindication of residential exclusivity. Creation or keeping of “borders” (symbolic and physical).	Impossible cooperation. Confusion regarding rights over space. Free-riding phenomenon.	Among neighbors due to violations of implicit agreements about the use of public space.
Conflict management	Resorting to contentious litigation about legal status of space.	Resorting to property rights. Legal (living in condos) or illegal (closing streets) privatization of public space.	Endemic cleavages [among neighbors]. Resorting to authorities to mediate. Retreat, indifference or anomy.	High tolerance thresholds. Norm of avoiding open conflicts until they reach a violent outcome.

Source: Modified and translated from Duhau and Giglia (2004), p. 285

Recent studies confirm the ongoing uniqueness of the central city. If anything, Mexico’s integration into the global economy has pushed the importance of *Ciudad Central* even further. Suárez and Delgado, for example, assert, “[s]ince the 1980s, predominant land uses in the central city and the first urban ring have shifted towards a service economy” (2009: 2189). More generally, the city has drastically grown in the last fifty years because people continue to move to the periphery but jobs have not followed suit at the same rate. As a result, “in absolute terms, there has been a continuing concentration of economic activity in the centre. This raises doubts as to whether job growth outside the central city has been sufficient for the development of employment sub-centres” (2009: 2189). Matters get even more complicated when the whole metropolitan Mexico City, not only the Federal District, is taken into account:

> Over the course of time, the central city’s share of metropolitan employment has been steadily declining. However, overall employment growth has been such that the central city’s percentage share has still consistently equated to the highest absolute growth. In contrast, since the 1970s, the central city has experienced negative population growth in both absolute and proportional terms (Suárez and Delgado 2009: 2190).

As I discussed above, two of *Ciudad Central*'s four delegations are witnessing an important (even if limited) reversal of this depopulation trend. For better or worse, the policies behind such success, Edict #2 in 2002 and more recently the redevelopment of the historic center, also contribute to reifying existing social and economic inequality between the privileged urban corridor that goes through the central, southern and western parts of the city where upper and middle-class neighborhoods with good public spaces, education and health infrastructure concentrate and the corridor of scarcity that goes through the central, eastern, northern parts of the city and extends to the metropolitan area. The latter concentrates low-income neighborhoods with scarce and low-quality services, and insufficient infrastructure (San Juan 2006; Nivón Bolán 2004). Yet, once again, the impressive concentration of economic activity in *Ciudad Central* makes it a rather unique phenomenon even in comparison with the more affluent southern and western parts of the city.

Given the uniqueness of the central city and the fact that it includes four different administrative subdivisions of Mexico City, why then focus on *Delegación Cuauhtémoc?* And within this delegation, why precisely *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa?* The answer to the former is that *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* shares favorable characteristics in terms of income, education, and infrastructure[23] present in the other three delegations of *Ciudad Central.* But additionally, it enjoys a condition of hyper-centrality both in geographical (see Diagram 3.2.) and economic terms, which has led to a faster rate of re-densification and overall recovery compared to delegations *Benito Juárez, Miguel Hidalgo*, and *Venustiano Carranza* (Puebla 2007). Regarding the selection of my two cases, these two areas are the two parts of *Ciudad Central*, and

[23] For instance, *Cuauhtémoc* is the administrative subdivision with the fourth highest proportion of people with college and some college education after *delegaciones Benito Juárez, Coyoacán,* and *Miguel Hidalgo*. The same is true regarding average years of schooling among persons 15 years old and older: residents in *Cuauhtémoc* had an average of 10.8 years of schooling in 2005 (10.1 in 2000), which placed the *delegación* in fourth place after *Benito Juárez* (12.9 in 2005 and 12.1 in 2000), *Coyoacán* (11.3 in 2005; 10.8 in 2000), and *Miguel Hidalgo* (11.3 in 2005 and 10.5 in 2000) (INEGI 2009).

by extension of the whole city, that have undergone the most extensive processes of urban recycling due to their economic, social, and cultural importance (Coulomb 2000; Porras Padilla 2001; Benítez Ortega 2008; Cortés Rocha and Cejudo Collera 2010; Vargas 2010). Table 1.2 in Chapter 1 summarized the key conditions that make these two cases comparable.

3.3. PRI's "Corporatist" Urban Regime in Mexico City (1920s-1970s)

This section examines the key features of Mexico City's "corporatist" urban regime that dominated the city since the early 1930s to the end of the 1990s and the economic and political changes behind it. It is followed by section 3.4 where I analyze the transition between the capital's "corporatist" and "pragmatic" urban regimes, and section 3.5, which looks at the "pragmatic" urban regime that has been taking form in the city since the late 1990s. In each of these sections I look first at the economic side and then the political dimension of each urban regime while examining the governing coalitions (Stone 1989) and other relevant actors of each. I argue that the capital's corporatist urban regime was a *direct* expression of the overall corporatist regime the PRI established at the national level. On the contrary, Mexico City's new "pragmatic" regime is an urban regime constituted *against* national authorities and its governing coalition capitalizes on the economic and political distinctiveness of Mexico City vis-à-vis the rest of the country. Let us examine each of these claims in this and the following sections.

Mexico's corporatist regime started with President Lázaro Cárdenas' (1934-1940) attempt to stabilize the political system by encapsulating armed and political conflict while still governing "on behalf of the masses" (Reyna 2009: 36; also see Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002). Cárdenas did so based on the need to neutralize the possibility of constant armed conflict and the deep political divides the Mexican Revolution had left. However, Cárdenas also believed in integrating the very groups the revolution was fought for even though he preserved an authoritarian or vertical mode of incorporation (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009).

The Mexican corporatist structure comprised three sectors: peasant groups organized in the National Confederation of Peasants (CNC), labor unions represented by the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), and the so-called “popular sector” organized in the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP), which grouped residual actors akin to what is now the Mexican middle class such as public sector employees and other white collar workers (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). Given that Cárdenas, as many Mexican presidents at the time, was a general in the military the army initially represented a fourth pillar but its formal presence in the corporatist apparatus was short lived as its professionalization grew and President Ávila Camacho excluded the army from it in the early 1940s (Reyna 2009).

In order to understand the governing coalition (Stone 1989) that led the corporatist urban regime in Mexico City I will briefly examine the nature of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Revolutionary Institutional Party or PRI), which ruled Mexico for 71 years. Originally born as the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (National Revolutionary Party or PNR) in 1929, Mexican revolutionary leaders founded the PRI as an institutional solution to the crisis that followed the assassination of general Álvaro Obregón in 1928 who had just been reelected for the presidency. The goal was to incorporate dozens of regional leaders left without any kind of mediating structures after the end of the revolution and to avert the continuation of armed struggle by Obregón’s followers. The party changed names to become the *Partido de la Revolución Mexicana* (Party of the Mexican Revolution or PRM) when President Lázaro Cárdenas started the corporatist structure the PRI became famous for. The new party looked to “articulate society with the government, more specifically, to link the masses of workers with the State” (Reyna 2009: 9). Both Anglo-American and Mexican scholars have highlighted the continuing relevance of this three-sector system grouping organized peasants, workers, and the so-called “popular sector” (Crossa 2009; Sánchez-Mejorada 2005; Davis 1994, Haber 1989).

In 1946 the party changed names once again to PRI, a modification that reflected the institutionalization of the de facto one-party system and the corporatist regime the party led (Reyna 2009) up until 2000. The corporatist regime the PRI led at the national level included peasants, workers, and the so-called "popular" sector (in a subordinate role) as well as Mexican capitalists the PRI allied with through the Mexican version of the import-substitution industrialization model (Loaeza 2006; Teichman 1997). As we will see in Chapter 4, the governing coalition of the corporatist urban regime in Mexico City would later include street vendors and other informal workers instead of peasants. The counterintuitive relevance of street vendors as political actors is due to the fact that the "post-revolutionary Mexican state created opportunities for groups within the popular sector (including street vendors) to tap into the state by virtue of its tendency to coopt members of society. Street vendors' resistance has been made possible in part by the political legacy of the PRI's three-party sector and clientelistic strategies, which have remained embedded within today's state structure" (Crossa 2009: 57).

The Economic Side of the Corporatist Urban Regime: Mexico City as an Engine for Import-Substitution Industrialization (1920s-1970s)

The corporatist urban regime in Mexico City was based on the capital's function as the central pillar of the national corporatist regime's focus on import-substitution industrialization or ISI[24]. Given the PRI's dominance in economic, political and social terms, the urban regime present in Mexico City directly reflected the economic and political features of the national regime; a relationship that would become antagonistic in the PRD-led pragmatic urban regime. Most observers agree that the secondary sector was the key factor behind the so-called "Mexican economic miracle": "From 1940 and until the end of the 1960s, an annual 6.5 percent growth rate

[24] ISI stands for "*industrialización por sustitución de importaciones*" or "industrialization through import substitution." This was the economic policy the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC) advocated for which became prevalent in most of Latin America and the Caribbean after World War II (Haber 1989).

of gross domestic product and a rate of inflation that consistently remained under the 5 percent were strong evidence of the success of the Mexican system" (Loaeza 2006: 35).

Table 3.5 below shows the relative growth of the Mexican economy as well as that of the agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors in a historical perspective (also see Appendix F). The secondary sector was indeed driving the country's economic growth at the beginning of the XX century and then from 1950 to 1970 with an 8% growth rate during the latter period. But the contribution of the service sector was almost as important. Growth rate for the latter (7.5%) surpassed that of manufacturing (6.35%) from 1970 to 1982, right before the pivotal 1982 economic crisis.

Table 3.5

Mexico: Sector-Based GDP Growth Rates (1895-2003)

Year	Total	Primary (Agriculture)	Secondary (Industry)	Tertiary (Services)
1895 – 1910*	4.04	3.20	5.50	4.18
1921 - 1950	4.75	5.13	6.31	5.28
1950 - 1970	6.44	4.41	8.18	6.38
1970 - 1982	6.60	3.32	6.35	7.50
1983 - 1987	-0.07	1.35	-0.64	-0.03
1988 - 2003	3.07	1.97	3.34	3.35

*Data for period 1910-1921 is missing in the original.
Source: Table II.3 in Ortiz Cruz 2006, p. 83

Even though manufacturing was the key sector behind Mexico's economic growth, it faced important difficulties that prevented it from becoming sustainable beyond the incentives the state gave in its version of import-substitution industrialization. Three major constraints explain the uneven and limited development of the Mexican secondary sector: the small size of the domestic market compared to the overall productive capacity of its imported manufacturing plants, the lower productivity of workers compared to that of the labor force in advanced economies, and the high cost of imported capital goods it became dependent upon. The latter, combined with the scarcity of domestic private funding sources, "reinforced the manufacturing sector's tendency

toward oligopoly and monopoly production and further encouraged a style of industrialization dependent on government protection and subsidies" (Haber 1989: 5).[25]

The Mexican economy started facing structural problems in the 1970s due to the exhaustion of the "inward-looking" industrialization model put in place and the resulting decline in the role of manufacturing. In a way though, Mexico was able to "postpone" dealing with those problems up until the beginning of the following decade by using income generated through oil production and exports abroad (Connolly 2003). In fact, three quarters of export earnings at the beginning of the 1982 crisis came from the sales of oil and "Mexico, unable to control either interest rates or the price of oil, pegged its future to these risky and uncertain sources of growth because its manufacturing sector, long the motor of its economic expansion, could no longer drive the economy" (Haber 1989: 2). The "Mexican miracle" had abruptly come to an end. As we will see in the following section, a new model based on economic liberalization would supplant import-substitution industrial policies of the "developmentalist coalition" defeated by a new "technocratic" type of leadership under PRI presidents Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) and Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000), and later continued by PAN presidents Vicente Fox (2000-2006) and Felipe Calderón (2006-2012).

[25] He adds "Contrary to much of the popular mythology about the Porfiriato [Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship], Mexican manufacturing companies of that era –even some of the monopolies- lost money as often as they made it. In fact, although the rate of profit picked up after the Revolution, manufacturing in Mexico was over the long run an extremely risky and often unremunerative enterprise" (Haber 1989: 6).

The Political Side of the Corporatist Urban Regime: the History of Mexico City as a Mirror of the PRI Political Regime (1920s-1970s)

Given its status as the capital of Mexico, Mexico City has had a strategic role in national politics that has both benefited and negatively affected its inhabitants. Many argue that the city's lack of political autonomy was in place for seven decades because of its strategic importance at the national level (e.g. Davis 1994, 2002; Emmerich 2005; Reyna 2009). Early on revolutionary leaders, even those convinced of the merits of local autonomy, decided they could not afford not having absolute control of the capital (Emmerich 2005). Diane Davis argues in her classic book about Mexico City, *Urban Leviathan,* that:

> …Mexico's leaders have denied the capital's local residents their own independent structures for democratic participation, in order to prevent residents with neighborhood or other more parochial concerns from interfering with urban administrative goals. This, in turn, has meant that until recently, Mexico City's populations have been forced to use national political structures to express local concerns. As a result, policy conflicts and administrative decisions about the growth, nature, and spatial or sectoral character of Mexico City have had direct repercussions on the national economy, on national corporatist political structures, and on the balance of power in national politics (Davis 1994: 5).

Mexico City's loss of autonomy goes back to 1928 when President Obregón eliminated democratically elected representation implemented by President Madero in 1911; and reverted back to a centralized form of urban governance in place during Porfirio Díaz's dictatorship (Davis 1994). Nonetheless, Sánchez Mejorada (2005) points out that the federal Executive branch had already made legislative changes to assume all levels of local administration in the city in 1901 and 1903. In the case of Obregón's move, the main goal was to undermine the power gained by organized labor at that point. In more general terms though, this solution, as well as the 1903 legislative changes, were reactions to an inherent conflict between the "executive logic" of the federal government's political needs vs. the "representative logic" of municipal autonomy (Rodríguez Kuri quoted in Sánchez Mejorada 2005: 31). This conflict had resulted in a never-ending succession of changes regarding Mexico City's autonomy during the 19th century. Liberal rulers preserved local elections in various forms where Mexico City's male citizens were able to

participate whereas conservative ones put the ability to designate city's authorities squarely in the hands of the national caudillo (Emmerich 2005).

From 1928 on, the national government implemented a series of pseudo-democratic forms of institutional representation in the capital following a corporatist model of incorporation. Not surprisingly, the history of institutionalized citizen participation in the Federal District is linked to that of the one-party regime in Mexico City. The first of these institutions was the Consultative Council of Mexico City created the same year. The Council included thirteen (13) representatives from the following sectors: commerce, tenants, property holders, public and private employees, workers, mothers' associations and peasants (Davis 1994). Davis notes that the reasons why the Council "…took on a corporatist character stem in large part from the ways in which resident populations in the capital were already organized" (1994: 68) and the fact that they represented the most vocal groups at the time.

Nonetheless, the city's lack of formal autonomy did not imply that all forms of citizen participation were neutralized during this long period. Diverse social groups such as neighborhood associations, women's groups, small industrialists, and merchants fought to have their demands heard whenever they were not included in relevant decision-making mechanisms. For example, these sectors mobilized after the weakening of the Consultative Council in the 1930s. Additionally, the city ended up having a "hybrid" government starting in the 1940s which functioned as a national ministry but had relative autonomy to face problems usually addressed by local administrations (Sánchez Mejorada 2005: 32). Mexico City's demographic explosion took place during this period. The city's population nearly tripled between 1940 and 1960 in a change that overwhelmed its infrastructure and services (Davis 1994).

The expansion of the *"colonias populares"* or popular neighborhoods fueled by internal immigration to Mexico City played an important role in this regard. In spite of efforts by some public-private alliances to provide adequate housing, these areas still had serious shortages in

service provisioning in 1957 according to a survey conducted by the national Housing Institute that year (Sánchez Mejorada 2005). The *"colonos"* literally built the city by occupying land and then negotiating with public officials for services and legal recognition. In so doing, they "built various spheres for inclusion: that of the neighborhoods, that of the '*colonias proletarias'* (working class neighborhoods)" and that of "their reluctant acceptance [by others] as members of the city… They built a social citizenship without political rights" (San Juan 2006: 36). Sánchez Mejorada argues that the emergence of the "*colonias*" led to a response by city government, which became the genesis of the corporatist structure of participation in the city:

> What happens is that institutionalized participation starts to develop in 1940. At that time, a big part of the population migrates to the city and the government doesn't have means to provide housing for all those people. As a result, the government allows, as part of the city's urban policy, that people invade areas in the periphery and the '*colonias populares*' start to emerge. In fact, at the beginning these were not even invasions; rather people started buying land bit by bit. There were two types of land sections. The regular ones that...were very expensive because they had all services including transportation. And the other ones were the *'colonias populares'*, which constituted irregular sale of land... Then the Federal District's government, in an attempt to establish some degree of control, creates the law establishing that people in '*colonias populares'* should select their representatives and those representatives will be in charge of managing those areas. And all of these changes follow a very corporatist structure because this is precisely when the PNR and [later] the PRI emerge (Interview with Cristina Sánchez Mejorada, October 15th, 2007).

The quote above is representative of the perspective several Mexican researchers hold, more notably Sánchez Mejorada and Lucía Alvarez (2003), who disagree with the tendency to underestimate the space for participation available due to and contested through the clientelistic political system created by the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI). PRI's 70-year rule would not have been possible without support from the popular sectors the party led during and after the Mexican Revolution. As a result, the Mexican corporatist governance structure relied on three pillars: peasant groups organized in the National Confederation of Peasants (CNC), labor unions represented by the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), and the so-called "popular sector" organized in the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP), which actually grouped public sector employees and other white collar workers (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009).

This structure, in turn, was the instrument President Lázaro Cárdenas created to guarantee political stability without denying the class compromise achieved after the Revolution and sealed with the 1917 Constitution progressive provisions workers and peasants had fought for: "It was not until Lázaro Cárdenas found a way to bring all sectors of Mexican society into a unified party, in the 1930s, and accommodated the workers and the peasants by building a welfare state that social peace was attained and investors once again perceived that the political system would be stable over the long run" (Haber 1989: 197). The PRI portrayed itself as a modernizing and nationalistic party for most of its time in power mainly through its industrialization efforts (Haber 1989). Appeasing international capital by showing the PRI had control over workers and other sectors was crucial particularly because of the nationalization of oil Cárdenas had done (Modonesi 2008). Future party leaders would follow Cárdenas' example of cementing and renewing the regime's legitimacy through corporatism and clientelism[26], and a distinctively high level of power concentration in the form of presidentialism (Gil 1992; Camp 2002).

During the late 1940s and 1950s, when the meteoric growth of the city begun the emphasis was on institutions designed to deal with the expanding "*colonias populares*" in the periphery (Sánchez Mejorada 2005). Partially because of the need to find outlets for the political frustration accumulated before and after the 1968 student demonstrations, and in part because of the PRI's need to regain some of the legitimacy and social control the regime lost after the Tlatelolco massacre, leaders of the one-party system reinvigorated the figure of the "*Jefes de Manzana*" (Block Chiefs) created in the 1950s.

[26] A *panista* leader (from the PAN opposition party) argued in an interview: "We maintain that the PRI is not a party; we consider it to be a placement agency that does outreach work at election time. It is not a party, because a party gambles its fortune at election time, so to speak. The PRI does not do this, because it uses government monies; it doesn't jeopardize its own funds. This is why it is not a party but a mere government agency… It would be an easy thing for us to compete against another political party. Instead, we are obligated to compete against the government and its pressure to distort election results" (Pablo Emilio Madero Belden interviewed in Gil 1992: 126).

The PRI's long-standing political machinery started to crack with the ramifications of the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of students and other civilians after months of massive demonstrations in favor of democratization (Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez Enríquez 2003; Tamayo 2010). The state made some concessions in the 1970s through modifications to the country's electoral laws. These concessions were important insofar as the PRI regime allowed for the Communist party's legal participation, all opposition parties received funding and support, and opened up electoral opportunities at the local and state levels for other opposition parties (Tamayo 2000; Emmerich 2005; Klesner 2006). The real goal was to regain legitimacy after the 1968 massacre and facilitate "the transformation of radical political ideas and strategies of guerrilla movements… in order to integrate them into the institutional framework" (Loaeza 2006: 42).

In practice, the new electoral structures put in place with the 1977 law increased the PRI's presence at the local level through a "sophisticated model of citizen participation… [designed] to strengthen and render the structure of the state party functional again" (Espinosa 2004: 17). According to the architect of these reforms, *Secretario de Gobernación* (Ministry of the Interior) Jesús Reyes Heroles, not implementing this legal modification would have entailed the risk of "…exposing ourselves to the breaking up of the state order and the national political order" (Reyna 2009: 67). In the 1970s the government also allowed neighborhoods to elect their own block chiefs although they were usually part and parcel of the PRI's machinery for political and social control (Sánchez Mejorada 2005; Alvarado 2010). This figure was renamed as "*Presidentes de Colonia*" (Neighborhood Presidents) in the 1980s (Alvarado 2010).

3.4. The Transition from the Corporatist to the Pragmatic Urban Regime (1980s-1990s)

This section analyzes the beginning of the end of the PRI-run corporatist urban regime in Mexico City by looking at the national and city-level changes behind it. On the economic side, this transition was the result of a shift in the country's response to new economic conditions at the

international level. Such change, in turn, resulted from the rise of a new technocratic leadership inside the PRI, which would leave behind the nationalistic and industrial policies of the party's previous leadership in favor of market-led reforms (Teichman 1997; Werner et al 2006; Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010).

On the political side, this generational shift would have the unintended consequence of contributing to displace the PRI from power while facilitating a peaceful (although contentious) political transition to the first non-PRI governments since the 1920s. In parallel fashion, this transition also witnessed the "awakening" of Mexican civil society after the 1985 earthquakes; a crucial transformation that took place almost exclusively in Mexico City (Davis 1994; Ortiz 1997; Tamayo 2000; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez Enríquez 2003; Klesner 2006). As we will see, these changes unleashed a second critical juncture (Mahoney and Schensul 2006) for the capital including the return of its political autonomy. The re-establishment of local elections to Mexico City would result in the political dominance of the PRD over the city ever since. As we will see in section 3.5, the PRD is the political party closest to representing the progressive political and social viewpoints most residents from the capital have always had in stark contrast with the rest of the country. It is no coincidence that liberal anti-PRI political candidates such as Mexico's first Minister of Education and public intellectual José Vasconcelos had Mexico City as their strongest base of support as early as 1929 (Emmerich 2005; Modonesi 2008).

The Economic Side of the Transition: the Victory of the Technocrats over the Developmentalist Coalition (1980s-1990s)

After decades of pursuing policies focused on the expansion of manufacturing and the development of its internal market, Mexico changed course during the 1980s to embrace the virtues of free trade in response to its 1982 debt crisis (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010; Werner et al 2006; Teichman 1997; see Appendix G). This crucial shift redefined the Mexican economy as a whole as well as the positioning and functions of Mexico City, its most important urban engine.

The Federal District lost most of its industrial base and started to develop a more service-based economy consistent with the specialized yet diverse set of services transnational firms require in global cities (Abrahamson 2004; Sassen 2001 [1991]).

The loss of the capital's industrial base started in the 1980s and signaled the beginning of a far-reaching transformation in the Mexican economy. The import-substitution industrialization or ISI-like nationalist model the PRI had put in place since the 1930s gave way to an export-based neoliberal model started by the Miguel de la Madrid administration (Loaeza 2006; Teichman 1997). Some observers have argued that de la Madrid's policies were mainly a response to the severe economic crisis his administration inherited from predecessor López Portillo[27] (see Cypher & Delgado and Wise 2010) after decades of accumulating problems disguised under the rug of revenues the oil industry produced. Others see de la Madrid as the leader of the first of three "technocratic" PRI administrations that deliberately led Mexico towards a new economic model[28] (Teichman 1997; Connolly 2003; Reyna 2009).

Both sides agree, however, in identifying president Carlos Salinas de Gortari as the most important architect of this transition followed by Ernesto Zedillo, the last PRI president before PRI's return to power in 2012. Both sides also agree in that the new Mexican economic model is based on the utilization of cheap labor, so much so that it heavily relies on three sectors: (1) the

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[27] Most if not all the authors quoted in this section refer to president López Portillo's 1982 nationalization of foreign banks at the end of his administration as a "desperate" attempt to counter the incipient economic crisis. Some even in the Mexican Left saw this move as ill based given its lack of sustainability and traction (indeed de la Madrid reverse the measure at the very beginning of his term). For example, Jorge Alcocer Villanueva sustained in his interview with Carlos Gil (1992) that López Portillo's nationalization attempt was just a "bureaucratic and administrative" act, which lacked the kind of social mobilization and support enjoyed by the post-Revolution nationalization initiatives of the 1930s.

[28] For example, PRD presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas highlighted the continuity between the de la Madrid and Salinas administrations: "As secretary of budget and planning, Salinas was in charge of implementing these economic policies, the same ones that have become a carbon copy of the 'recommendations' made to us by the International Monetary Fund" (Cárdenas Solórzano interviewed in Gil 1992: 162). On the contrary, Cypher and Delgado and Wise (2010) sustain that the Miguel de la Madrid's administration ended up being caught between the pressures of international financial institutions on one side and the Mexican elite on the other.

maquiladora industry, (2) what Cypher and Delgado Wise call the "disguised" *maquila* industry where firms also operate as assembly centers, and (3) the extensive migration of Mexicans to the United States.[29] The first two sectors represented 60% of all exports in 2008 (Cypher & Delgado and Wise 2010) whereas Mexican migrants working in the U.S. transferred $13.3 billion dollars to Mexico in 2003, a source of income only surpassed by oil exports that year (Randall 2006).

How was it that the PRI, a ruling party historically committed to nationalism and the expansion of the internal market as a means for economic growth, leaped into some of the most aggressive free market policies seen in Latin America and the Caribbean? A big part of the answer to that question is "because it had to." The 1982 crisis triggered by Mexico having to default on its foreign debt changed the external conditions the country and the region have faced ever since (Cypher & Delgado and Wise 2010; Werner et al 2006; Thorp 1998). For example, "in 1982 the Mexican economy registered a negative growth rate, -0.6 percent, and the rate of inflation was 99 percent; in 1993 economic growth had a catastrophic level, -5.2 percent" (Loaeza 2006: 36).

A second and less debated reason why the PRI, rather than an opposition party like the PAN which has long advocated for anti-statist pro-market policies, took upon itself opening the Mexican economy to international trade, getting rid of most state-owned businesses, drastically reducing the public sector deficit, or eliminating the widely cherished collective land (*ejido*) system in rural areas refers to the generational and ideological shift that affected the country's economic and political elites. A new generation of US-trained economists or *"tecnócratas"* (technocrats) within the PRI was able to displace the party's old guard and allied itself with the dominant faction of the business elite (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010; Camp 2002).

[29] The first two sectors are so similar that Mexican authorities have grouped them under the same category since 2006: the so-called "Manufacturing, Maquiladora, and Export Services Industry Program" or IMMEX. IMMEX firms sent 90% of their exports to the U.S. in 2007. Both sectors, in turn, represented an average of 78% of Mexico's exports since 1994 to 2006 (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010).

The main loser resulting from this shift was the "developmentalist coalition" constituted by experienced PRI policymakers who tried to build upon the successes of Mexico's import-substitution manufacturing model while correcting its flaws. This coalition attempted to focus Mexico's industrial production by creating more linkages between it and other economic sectors, selectively producing machinery and other capital goods, and developing the country's export capacity with an emphasis on key sectors such as the auto industry (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010). The members of the developmentalist coalition were "professional cadres" of economists who had been working in state policies towards the industrial sector for many years. In what proved to be their last attempt to achieve these goals, they managed to create the National Program to Develop Industry and Foreign Trade (PRONAFICE), which functioned during the last four years of the de la Madrid administration (1984-1988):

> The introduction of PRONAFICE came at a moment of high tension between the business elite and the "developmentalist coalition" policy makers who sought to continue and deepen the era of state-led industrialization. These tensions served to drive the peak business associations into a determined opposition to the broader aspirations of PRONAFICE. As a result, only five of the ten strategic programs [proposed in PRONAFICE] ever received funding –and for most of these the support was woefully insufficient (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010: 36).

Even though PRONAFICE was in place until 1988, the Pact of Economic Solidarity signed between President de la Madrid, the business, labor, and peasant sectors in 1987 represented the developmentalist coalition's defeat. The 1985-1986 economic crisis also weakened it considerably (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010). Moreover, the pact indicated an important shift in governance and problem-solving arrangements from that moment forward. Not only was the State no longer capable of even pretending to solve the crisis unilaterally (as López Portillo had done in vain) but also the pact itself became the default decision-making model based on consultation. It has been argued that switching to pact making has become the norm in the Mexican political system, a norm that has benefited different groups at different points in time, but has had the overall effect of debilitating the political system as a whole (Loaza 2006). The business elite has

benefited the most from this change since it can (and it does) marshal its resources into the time-consuming and costly studies and negotiations that this conflict resolution style entails.[30]

The dominant faction of the business elite was (and still is) represented by the CCE, the *Consejo Coordinador Empresarial* (Business Coordinating Council), which defends the interests of the most powerful economic conglomerates or *"grupos"* in Mexico. The conglomerates embody the highest level of resource and power concentration among "large firms" estimated to be just over 3 thousand (3,051) around the country. These large firms "constitute only 0.3 percent of all companies, but they own 74 percent of all business assets, pay 69 percent of all salaries and wages, employ 52.3 percent of the (formal) workforce, and produce 74 percent of all value added" (Maria y Campos quoted in Cypher & Delgado and Wise 2010: 3).[31] Some of these groups have participated in the intensive urban recycling trend going on in the central districts of Mexico City. One of the richest people in the world, Carlos Slim Helú, is the most famous business leader in this category. Slim is the head and founder of *"Grupo CARSO"*, the woefully influential conglomerate encompassing communications, real estate, and mining businesses. As I will show in Chapter 4, Slim has played a crucial and visible role in the redevelopment of the city's historic center (Mehta 2007; Cárdenas Estandía 2009; Stevenson 2010).

Unlike what had been the Mexican tradition in economic policy, negotiations towards NAFTA consolidated the shift initiated with the Economic Solidarity Pact of 1987. That is, the business sector was no longer following the lead of the state but rather started participating directly in the definition and implementation of policy (Loaeza 2006; Cypher & Delgado and

[30] An example of ad hoc pact making benefiting other groups is the way in which the Zapatistas have taken advantage of it to circumvent established political institutions like Congress (Loaeza 2006).

[31] The "*grupos*" also resemble the monopolies and oligopolies that marked the beginning of manufacturing at the end of the XX century. In particular, the lack of viable funding sources combined with the risky nature of this industry led to industrial companies' disproportionate dependence on less than 25 merchant financiers. The "overall effect was that a tight clique controlled Mexico's most important manufacturing companies. The same group of people combined again and again to form new enterprises, with the result that the level of interlock among corporate boards of directors was quite high" (Haber 1989: 67). This group of "financier-industrialists" also constituted "the economic backbone of the Porfirian state" (69).

Wise 2010). For example, in June 1990 the CCE created the think tank COECE (*Coordinadora de Organismos Empresariales de Comercio Exterior* or Coordinator for Foreign Trade Business Organizations) to assist its members in the NAFTA negotiations. Not only were COECE representatives accompanying Mexican negotiators on a regular basis but they also helped selling the agreement to the U.S. Congress and the general public through their lobbying offices in Washington, DC. Interestingly, "COECE contested many of the initiatives advocated by the U.S. negotiators, but it was so anxious to obtain new injections of FDI [foreign direct investment] that it was willing to retreat on almost every major point save the denationalization of oil, gas, and electricity production" (Cypher & Delgado and Wise 2010: 76).

The irony is that opening up the Mexican economy, being as it was a clear victory for the technocrats in government and the conglomerates, ended up taking place at their own peril due to a series of unintended consequences. When NAFTA was finally implemented, the conglomerates were being severely affected by the 1994-1995 economic crisis "…limiting and in some instances destroying their plans for successful restructuring to meet the requirements of the new export model. The effect of the crisis was to bifurcate the Mexican business elite" (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010: 77-78). Also, PRI technocrats like presidents Salinas and Zedillo could not foresee that the economic transition they modeled would eventually put in jeopardy their party's rule.

Most analysts focus on international trade being the basis of the country's new economic model because liberalization in this area constituted the basis of this momentous shift leading one analyst to say: "By mid-September 2004, Mexico was one of Latin America's most open economies with eleven free trade agreements, including thirty-two countries around the world…" (Randall 2006: 8). Similarly, a team of Mexican economists concluded that trade liberalization constituted the most important structural transformation during that period, which started in 1986 with Mexico's entrance into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which would

later become the World Trade Organization[32]. Nevertheless, policy changes went far beyond trade. They included sharp reductions in public expenditures under both de la Madrid and Salinas, Salinas' de facto destruction of the land redistribution system (the *ejido*) that had been a flagship of the Mexican revolution, the privatization of most state-owned enterprises, among other measures (Teichman 1997; Warner et al 2006).

To be sure, critics of the neoliberal turn such as Cypher & Delgado and Wise (2010) highlight how this new form of "subordinated integration" into the global economy has led to the dismantling of the Mexican manufacturing sector in order "to fit the structural requirements of the U.S. economy" (2010: 10-11). Even sympathetic observers acknowledge that "[f]rom 1985 to 2000, the *maquiladoras* became the main source of creation of industrial jobs, and the second most important source of foreign exchange. For U.S. enterprises that established maquila operations in Mexico, this scheme was very advantageous because it allowed them to dramatically reduce labor costs" (Randall 2006: 9). On the contrary, enthusiasts of the economic efficiency gained through these policies view a closer relationship with the U.S. in a positive light. Indeed, some of them point at the "synchronization" of the Mexican economy with that of the U.S. as a sign of success (Werner et al 2006: 82-83).

Once again, both sides agree when it comes to the fact that Mexico has not been able to gain more from its very drastic opening of its economy precisely because of the country's lack of competitiveness vis-à-vis other cheap-labor based exporters (mainly China), on the one hand, and countries with higher levels of education and technological sophistication, on the other. According to Randall, starting "in 2000, a worldwide increase in free trade eroded Mexico's ability to compete in the United States because other nations covered by free trade agreements had labor costs much lower than those of Mexico, which had not developed an industrial,

[32] For instance, "The value of imports subject to permits as a percentage of the total fell from 83 percent at the beginning of 1985 to 28 percent by the end of 1986. From then on, especially during the 1990s, trade barriers were progressively eliminated from an average tax on imports of 9.7 percent in 1990, to 3.7 percent in 1995, and 2.2 percent in 2003" (Werner et al 2006: 77).

technological, or educational policy that led to comparative advantage in industry based on skills, rather than on cheap labor" (2006: 9).[33]

The 1982 economic crisis deepened Mexico City problems through strict cutbacks in public expenditure given its dependency on the federal Executive Branch. In 1984, the federal government had to take over Mexico City's debt (Connolly 2003). The capital also lost more than 385,000 manufacturing jobs as the industrial sector lost money and governmental policy was being redirected towards export-based activities. The combined effects of rising unemployment, inflation, and public cutbacks led to a rapid growth in informal labor in the city particularly street vendors. The economic and social catastrophe was further compounded with the thousands of lives lost and physical destruction of the 1985 earthquakes in the city center (Ortiz 1997; Connolly 2003). Mexico City residents saw their incomes and quality of life decline sharply and rapidly in this period. For instance, Eckstein's (1990) classic work shows marked differences in the way in which residents in one of the neighborhoods she studied, talked about their welfare twenty years after her first time doing fieldwork in 1967-1968:

> Most residents have seen their living standards plunge with IMF-backed cutbacks in subsidies, inflation, and declining employment options. Everyone with whom I spoke in 1987 noted that *colonos*' purchasing power had declined in recent years. The optimism expressed in the 1960s and 1970s was nowhere to be found. By the latter 1980s some *colonos* could only afford one meal a day, and even those who were better-off complained that they could afford about half as much as before the 1982 debt crisis (Eckstein 1990: 216).

Mexico City has largely recovered from the deterioration it suffered during the 1970s and 1980s and has recovered its place as Mexico's most important economic engine and model.[34] Greater

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[33] Similarly, Werner and his colleagues asserted that: "During the period 2001-2003, Mexico's share of U.S. imports fell by approximately 0.5 percent, while China increased its share by 3 percentage points. China's vigorous commercial activity represents a challenge for other manufacturing countries, therefore in the years to come, Mexico must improve in export sector's competitiveness to face that challenge. The unfavorable external environment that the Mexican economy faced during the early 2000s raised awareness of the need to strengthen inner sources of growth. More specifically, lack of productivity growth and general competitiveness were pointed to as possible reasons why, in conjunction with the U.S. slowdown, Mexico's economic performance in these years was disappointing. Although the economy started to recover by the end of 2003, those and many other challenges persist" (Werner et al 2006: 84-85).

Mexico City generates a third of the national GDP and it concentrates the majority of international firms doing business in the country (Parnreiter 2002). Along with São Paulo, Mexico City has become one of the leading global cities in Latin America showing a rapid expansion in the number and quality of services offered to global firms, particularly in finance, insurance and real estate (Abrahamson 2004; Parnreiter 2002; Schiffer 2002). Additionally, the city is among Mexico's frontrunners in urban competitiveness.[35] Research conducted by the federal Department of Economics and CIDE, a prestigious Mexican think tank, Mexico City was ranked third in their city competitiveness index for 2007 (Cabrero Mendoza & Orihuela Jurado 2009). The capital city improved its ranking with respect to 2003 (when the index was first produced) based on four dimensions: economic, urban, socio-demographic, and institutional. In fact, Mexico City shows a relatively balanced level of performance in all four dimensions, which is only surpassed by Monterrey and Chihuahua (Cabrero Mendoza & Orihuela Jurado 2009).

Mexico City is one of sixteen (16) "modernizing" urban centers identified in 2007. Not surprisingly, the competitiveness of the capital reflects both the advantages and disadvantages associated with its long history of urban primacy in the country (e.g. Davis 1994; Garza 2000; Davis and Alvarado 2004). On the one hand, Mexico City concentrates most of the country's knowledge generation and human capital infrastructure, a constitutive factor of the urban dimension of competitiveness. On the other hand, Mexico City occupies one of the lower rankings regarding the socio-demographic side of competitiveness, which includes the indicators more closely related to the wellbeing of its population, e.g. human development index, unemployment, average family income, crime levels, and so on (Cabrero Mendoza & Orihuela

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[34] For example, Mexico City entrepreneurs at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century provided the blueprint for their peers in other cities. According to Haber, the latter "replicated the process that had occurred in Mexico City among their European-born counterparts, moving from commerce to money-lending, and eventually setting themselves up as bankers and industrialists" (1989: 81).

[35] CIDE used the following definition: "Urban competitiveness refers, therefore, to the process of generating and disseminating competencies, the capacity of cities to participate in a globalized environment, how cities are able to create environments that are conducive to the development of competitiveness by their economic and social agents" (Cabrero Mendoza 2009: 11; my translation).

Jurado 2009). For instance, the capital has shown relatively low levels of unemployment in recent years but the level of criminality is relatively high (see Alvarado 2010).

Moreover, even though Mexico City still concentrates a disproportionate share of the country's resources, pro-poor policies implemented since the 1980s have had a clear rural bias to the detriment of the city's poor population (Randall 2006). Both the famous National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL) created by Salinas (1988-1994) as well as PROGRESA (Program for Education, Health and Nourishment), the anti-poverty program implemented throughout the second part of the Zedillo administration (1997-2001), focused on the needs of the rural poor. It was not until a year into the first non-PRI administration of Vicente Fox that PROGRESA was broadened to include semi-urban and urban communities under its new name: OPORTUNIDADES (Opportunities) (Randall 2006).

The co-existence of these two trends, the relative improvement of conditions in rural areas accompanied by few changes in that direction in urban areas, has been one of the reasons behind the consolidation of the political divide that has long existed between Mexico City and the rest of the country: "The recent amelioration of the condition of the rural poor may contribute to the high approval ratings of [former] President Fox, while the limited improvement of conditions in urban areas is consistent with the paradoxically equally high backing in fall 2004 of the candidacy of his political opponent Manuel López Obrador for the 2006 election" (Randall 2006: 12). Even earlier during the 1990s, the opening of the Mexican economy contributed to the Federal District industrial corridor losing its preeminence to Northern cities and states as well as urban centers in the adjacent state of Mexico (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010).

The Political Side of the Transition: Starting the Demise of the One-Party System (1980s-1990s)

In 1997, more than half of Mexicans were living in a community ruled by a political party other than the PRI and the two biggest opposition parties, the PAN and the PRD, jointly held more than

half the seats at the federal Chamber of Deputies (Loaeza 2006). After seven decades of PRI dominance over the Mexican political sphere, signs of a strong multi-party system were finally starting to emerge. Although born from a long trajectory initiated in the 1970s with a series of limited concessions the PRI had to give to deal with specific junctures, this process of political liberalization picked up speed during the 1990s leading to the election of the first mayor for Mexico City in 1997 and the first non-PRI national government in July 2000. This section analyzes these processes in more detail. In order to put such trajectory into context, Table 3.6 summarizes the most important changes in the Mexican political system throughout this period.

Table 3.6

Changing Characteristics of the Mexican Political Regime

Mexican authoritarianism	Emerging democracy
One-party dominance (1929-1994)	Three-party system (1995 to present)
Presidentialism (1934-1997)	Divided government (1997 to present)
Excessive centralism (until 1990s)	New federalism (1984 to present): greater financial autonomy of *municipios* Increasing opposition control of state and municipal governments (1989 to present)
Corporatism (1936-1990s)	Declining importance of major interest associations of labor and peasantry (1980s to present) Greater independent influence of business (1988 to present)
Clientelism (until 1994)	Emergence of popular organizations (1985 to present) Erosion of sources of patronage (1980s to present)
Corruption (continuing)	Repeated pledges to eliminate corruption
Electoral fraud (until 1994)	Independent electoral authorities and clean elections (1994 to present)
Weak judiciary subordinate to executive (continuing)	Efforts to strengthen judiciary (1995 to present)

Source: Klesner (2006), Table 21.1, p. 386; also see Avritzer (2002)

The 1968 student movement was a crucial precedent of the political openings analyzed herein. The political crisis that followed the government's repression of UNAM students opened up some

new spaces for participation, which gradually expanded throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Three crucial changes took place in this period: (1) the emergence of an explicit political and intellectual anti-government opposition; (2) the formation and strengthening of independent public opinion; and (3) the proliferation of multiple forms of social mobilization (Tamayo 2000; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez Enríquez 2003). Nonetheless, international and Mexican observers alike agree that the turning point in Mexico's recent political history was Mexico City residents' spontaneous response to the 1985 earthquakes (Davis 1994; Ortiz 1997; Tamayo 2000; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez Enríquez 2003; Klesner 2006). A series of four quakes including two taking place on September 19th and 20th with magnitudes over 7.0 left more than 10,000 dead, 412 collapsed buildings, and at least 3,000 structures seriously damaged (Moreno Murillo 1995).

An important reason why the earthquakes signaled a rupture point or critical juncture in Mexican history was the poor response the state had afterwards. A statement by the Minister of Urban Development at the time best exemplified the government's reaction when he declared: "there are no disaster victims in the streets. The real disaster is the collapsed buildings" (Grayson 2007: 132). People realized that, with all its power, the PRI had the ability to congregate thousands of workers and peasants for Labor Day demonstrations and yet its cadres were not able or willing to help the victims. "Mexico City residents had to cope with the crisis with minimal official help. Taxis became ambulances, ham-radio operators configured a communications network, and agile young people –known as "moles" or *topos*-dug through the rubble with their hands looking for victims. *'We realized for the first time that we could help each other without relying on the government,'* remembered one community activist" (Grayson 2007: 134; my emphasis). As a result, Mexico City residents ended up modeling direct citizen involvement for the rest of the country (Loaeza 2006) while realizing the limitations of both the Mexican state and the PRI machinery behind it:

> It is noteworthy that from this time forward [the time of the quake], these new political actors avoided going through the PRI, because, among other reasons, the economic crisis and the reduction of public expenditure had significantly and inevitably diminished the resources the party needed to maintain its clientelistic networks. In fact, in order to attend to the requirements of aid for the victims of the earthquake, the representatives of the de la Madrid government met with the leaders of the organizations that had been formed by families and residents to define programs of reconstruction and compensation in a scheme that could be seen as a precedent of the PSE [Pact of Economic Solidarity signed in 1987] (Loaeza 2006: 39).

To be sure, there had been important urban popular movements in Mexico before. Residents from the capital engaged in this kind of mobilization around collective consumption (Castells 1977) and social reproduction issues after the 1985 quake as part of what Bennet (1992) calls the "third wave" of urban popular movements in the country. The first wave included *Frentes Populares* (Popular Fronts) in places like Puebla and Guadalajara and the creation of legendary organizations such as COCEI[36] in Oaxaca in the early 1970s. After a period of repression and cooptation by the government during the second half of the 1970s, the second wave represented an increase in maturity and further coordination among the groups created earlier, particularly through the National Coordinator of Urban Popular Movements (CONAMUP) constituted in 1981. It also signaled the emergence of groups in new areas including the Valley of Mexico where Mexico City is located. The *Unión de Colonias Populares* (Union of Popular Neighrobhoods or UCP), the *Movimiento Popular de Pueblos y Colonias del Sur* (Popular Movement of Villages and Neighborhoods from the South or MPPCS), and the *Coordinadora Regional del Valle de México* (Regional Coordinator from the Mexico Valley) were all created between 1979 and 1981. In other words, organizational levels among the urban poor in Mexico City after 1985 did benefit precedents in other areas. But the participation of residents and the concentration of urban movements in the capital (Bennett 1992; Tamayo 2000) was the decisive catalytic event in moving those grievances into the national public sphere.

[36] COCEI stands for *Coalición de Obreros, Campesinos y Estudiantes del Istmo* (Coalition of Workers, Peasants, and Students from the Isthmus), now a country-wide and internationally famous group which managed to form the first socialist municipal council in the country in 1981 (Bennett 1992).

Another contributing factor to the transition, the establishment of Mexico City's Assembly of Representatives, was closely linked to the capital. In 1986 president Miguel de la Madrid granted a higher level of autonomy to the city through a political reform of the Federal District government. This initiative culminated in the passing of the 1988 law creating the Federal District's Assembly of Representatives (Alvarado 2010). Despite the law's limitations since the new assembly was not a full legislative body, most analysts agree that its creation constituted an important first step in "democratizing the city and restituting the political rights of its inhabitants to freely elect their representatives" (Espinosa 2004: 19). Most observers agree that the Assembly did not fulfill the great expectations the population had about it yet its creation represented "an effective link on the road towards democratization in the city" (Mirón Lince 1998: 4).

A second political reform in the 1990s led to the 1994 *Estatuto de Gobierno del Distrito Federal* (Government Statute of the Federal District, hereafter EGDF). This achievement was the result of the mobilization of the "*Movimiento Urbano Popular*" (Urban Popular Movement) and negotiations involving opposition parties, intellectuals and PRI reformers. The EGDF functioned as a proto-constitution where city senators defined some of the first autonomous institutions Mexico City would enjoy in a long time, in particular, the crucial election of the mayor. The EGDF also confirmed the representative channel of the *Consejeros Ciudadanos* (Citizen Councilors), included in a 1993 political reform (Mellado Hernández 2001). As we will see in Chapter 5, Citizen Councilors became particularly important in my second case, *Roma Condesa*, to the extent that their brief tenure (1995-1997) was comparable to participation channels implemented in "municipal socialist" urban regimes such as Porto Alegre (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009).

Shortly after, Mexico City residents played an essential role in the first substantial electoral change to PRI's political dominance. The increasing mobilization of student, women's, environmental, leftist, and a multiplicity of other progressive groups as well as intellectuals and

artists during the 1980s (Tamayo 2000; Mellado Hernández 2001; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez Enríquez 2003) combined with the splintering within the PRI to create a new electoral force. Lázaro Cárdenas' son, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, along with experienced organizer Porfirio Muñoz Ledo led the reformist faction *"Corriente Democrática"* (Democratic Current) within PRI (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Modonesi 2008). The party created as an alliance between *"Corriente Democrática"* and the groups above became the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Democratic Revolution Party), which has been inextricably linked to Mexico City ever since.

Originally established as the *"Frente Democrático Nacional"* (National Democratic Front), the PRD became the progressive political platform to compete against the PRI in the 1988 elections. By so doing, the PRD led the first real electoral challenge to PRI's political dominance while capitalizing on the changes the urban poor and others had led: "by 1988, the urban poor, along with peasants, teachers, and some sectors of the working class, had almost two decades of experience organizing autonomous or dissident movements… The collective memory of the urban poor now included organizing as an expected feature of city life" (Bennett 1992: 255). The Front lost the election to PRI's Carlos Salinas de Gortari in what many considered a major electoral fraud through the manipulation of the computer system used in the election (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Modonesi 2008).

The PRD and its main leader Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas continued to test the opening of the Mexican political system by taking advantage of new reforms in Mexico City. But the transition was not without setbacks. The creation of the Legislative Assembly and additional constitutional and legislative reforms in 1993 and 1994 did not substantially curtail the influence the PRI exerted through its three-tier corporatists system, and the geographically based structure of *"Jefes de manzana"* (Block Chiefs) as the latter were PRI activists in charge of channeling urgent demands and neutralizing conflicts in their areas (Sánchez Mejorada 2005; Espinosa 2004). Additionally, the fraudulent defeat of Cárdenas in the 1988 national elections reduced citizens'

enthusiasm and willingness to participate for a while after having "rediscovered" their political rights in response to the 1985 quakes (Espinosa 2004).

The series of political reforms implemented in Mexico City would finally reach a tipping point with the substantial modifications implemented in 1996, which started to signal the beginning of the end of the PRI's corporatist regime. As a result of these changes, "the head of the [city] Executive branch would no longer depend on the President of the Republic, instead he/she would have his/her own basis of popular legitimacy" (Espinosa 2004). According to politicians such as Porfirio Muñoz Ledo who played an important role in organizing the political forces that took Cárdenas and the PRD to City Hall, the imposition of Carlos Salinas de Gortari as the presidential candidate for the PRI years before had alienated many of the smaller political parties. Those, in turn, joined forces with the PRD again in Mexico City's mayoral elections in 1997 (Grayson 2007).

Cárdenas was elected as the city's "Head of Government" in 1997, became the first elected mayor in Mexico City since 1928 and entered office as a virtual vice-president (Grayson 2007).[37] This second turning point in national and city politics has led to four consecutive PRD city administrations with mayors Cárdenas from 1997 to 2000, Andrés Manuel López Obrador from 2000 to 2006, Marcelo Ebrard from 2006 to 2012 (Gil 1992; Alvarez 2006) and Miguel Angel Mancera Espinosa who was elected in October 2012 for period 2012-2016. The importance of electoral reforms in this process cannot be exaggerated:

> Electoral reforms addressed two main features of the electoral regime. First, the federal electoral authority [IFE] had been headed by the secretary of the Interior (Gobernación) since 1946 and always included a majority of members in one way or another linked to the PRI… In the 1990s, the opposition pushed hard to reduce the extent of PRI control on the IFE, first succeeding in removing the president's power to appoint the membership of the IFE's executive committee in 1994, and then entirely removing the secretary of the Interior from the management of the IFE in

[37] "In the words of journalist Miguel Angel Granados Chapa, Cárdenas 'assumed the post of mayor as if it were a parallel presidency. The enormous expectations that he unleashed upon his arrival in the capital's government constitute an enormous challenge. Never in Mexican history has so much interest been aroused by the inauguration of someone who was not president" (Grayson 2007: 145).

> 1996… From 1996 forward, a professionalized IFE led by citizen councilors approved by all major political parties has run Mexico's electoral processes…
>
> Second, as the ruling party for seven decades, the PRI enjoyed many perquisites of incumbency… including campaign financing… By the 1996 electoral law, private sources of campaign finance are supposed to be limited to 10 percent of total campaign spending. The remainder of campaign funds come from the government, distributed by the IFE to parties according to a formula based in part on past election performance… Although the PRI remained favored by this public campaign-financing scheme, its advantages over the other parties were greatly reduced (Greyson 2007: 390-391).[38]

The PRD and its allies continued to foster political reforms in Mexico City using its majority in the city's Legislative Assembly. However, the party also started showing a hesitant attitude towards citizen participation that would start alienating its allies in civil society as attested by several key informants. In 2000, the "*delegados*" in charge of each of the 16 delegations or administrative subdivisions were elected instead of appointed by the mayor (Martínez Asad 1996; Espinosa 2004; Alvarado 2010). Year 2000 also was the inaugural moment for the new and highly popular *"comités vecinales"* (Neighborhood Committees) established in the second version of the Law for Citizen Participation.

Although these committees had more limited prerogatives than the short-lived Citizen Councils established in the first version of the law, many city residents participated enthusiastically in their election. The new Law of Citizen Participation approved in 1997 established that the committees would be elected every three years. This did not happen for almost 10 years. On the contrary, as some key informants confided, the *comités vecinales* became the subject of a protracted political impasse among factions within the PRD, the dominant political party in Mexico City. And new committees would not be elected up until the end of 2010 during the Marcelo Ebrard administration. A PRD-dominated Legislative Assembly postponed new elections for the committees in three separate occasions apparently because of the party's lack of interest in contributing to having functioning participation channels at the local level

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[38] The Mexican electoral reform process is now seen as an exemplar in the region. For an analysis of the first electoral observation process done after the reform, see Avritzer (2002).

(Alvarado 2010). Nonetheless, there were other interesting channels developed during the following decade as I examine in sections 3.5 and 3.6. Table 3.7 below presents an overview of the history of state-society intermediation and citizen participation in Mexico City to summarize the discussion so far and contextualize the following sections.

Table 3.7

History of State – Society Relations in Mexico City regarding Urban Development

Period	Main changes at city level	Channel	Characteristics
		1928: Mexico City loses its autonomy to elect the mayor	
1930s - 1940s	**Focus on rebuilding Mexico City** after the Revolution	Consultative Council created in 1928	The Council included 13 representatives from commerce, tenants, property holders, public and private employees, workers, mothers' associations and peasants (Davis 1994).
1950s – 1960s	**Accelerated growth** and geographical expansion + city consolidates its role as **Mexico's growth machine**	Designated block representatives in the "*colonias populares*" channeled through a special authority for the *colonias*.	The "*colonias populares*" (working class neighborhoods) where migrants to the city established themselves were the main engine behind the city's explosive growth. The authorities incorporated them into the corporatist regime through special channels devised only for them (Sánchez Mejorada 2005).
		1968: Student movement and the Tlatelolco massacre take place. Estimates place the number of casualties at 300 or more.	
1970s	**Decentralization of city government** results in current 16 delegations	Actual implementation of the *Jefes de manzana*	Central part of PRI's corporatist structure at the level of the territory including the *colonias populares* in the outskirts of the city. This structure was the main modality of citizen engagement with the state at this level.
1980s	**Urban mobilization** including highest impact of the "Urban Popular Movement"	*Jefes de manzana* and Urban Popular Movement	Block chiefs continue to be the main modality of formal intermediation with the state. But they are increasingly displaced by autonomous urban popular movement leaders, such as the ones formed after the 1985 earthquakes.
		1985: Mexico City's earthquakes leave more than 10,000 thousand dead, destroys 412 buildings and damages more than 3,000	
1990s	**Political and electoral reforms** including the election of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (PRD) as the first non-PRI mayor in 1997	*Fideicomiso para el Centro Histórico* created in 1990	The fiduciary fund was established by the private sector and renowned public figures to help "recover" *Centro Histórico*.
		1995: Law for Citizen Participation is approved 1997: Cárdenas (PRD) becomes first elected mayor since 1928 1998 reform of the Law eliminated Citizen Councils	
		Consejeros ciudadanos (citizen councilors)	The original Law for Citizen Participation passed in 1995 contemplated the election of Citizen Councils, which had a relatively high level of influence. The councils were in place approximately from1995 to1997.
		Comités vecinales (neighborhood committees)	Established through a modification of the Law for Citizen Participation replacing the Citizen Councils, these neighborhood committees do not only have an advisory role.
2000s	**Economic and spatial changes** in the city, leading to urban recycling in the four central	2000: López Obrador (PRD) becomes 2nd elected mayor 2000: *Bando 2* is issued to reverse depopulation in *Ciudad Central*	
		Partial Plans of Urban Development and *Comités vecinales*	Main state-society interface during the López Obrador administration. The Partial Plans were part of what was to become a long-term city wide Program of

Period	Main changes at city level	Channel	Characteristics
	delegations or *Ciudad Central*		Urban Development (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000a and 2000b).
		Participatory Budgeting in selected areas	At least two "delegaciones" in the city implement participatory budgeting initiatives. The most renowned is the one established in *Delegación Tlalpan*.
		2006: Marcelo Ebrard (PRD) becomes 3rd elected mayor	
		Citizen groups and Citizenship School	Created to work with the fiduciary fund in *Centro Histórico* to coordinate renovation plans. The groups manage the budgets and choose contractors for public works in their streets.
		Neighborhood Citizen Advisors	These advisors work with city government on issues of public safety and justice.
		Citizen committees	New neighborhood committees are elected across the city. The committees are renamed as Citizen Committees in the new law.
		2010: a new Law for Citizen Participation (2014 [2010b]) is approved at the Legislative Assembly. The law establishes new general mechanisms such as a form of participatory budgeting at the Delegations.	

Source: The author based on fieldwork and Alvarado 2010; Klesner 2006; Espinosa 2004; Sánchez Mejorada and Alvarez Enríquez 2003; Mellado Hernández 2001; Tamayo 2000.

3.5. PRD's "Pragmatic" Urban Regime in Mexico City (1990s-Present)

This section presents an overview of the emerging urban regime the PRD has led in Mexico City since the mid-1990s by analyzing its main pillars: on the economic side, the alliances the PRD has made with national and international investors to capitalize on the revalorization of real estate in the central section of the city and, on the political side, the ambitious social and participatory agenda it has put in place to favor poor and middle-class citizens, on the other. This I call a *"pragmatic"* urban regime because the leftist PRD has had to be pragmatic in pursuing the balancing act of pushing a progressive urban and social agenda of inclusive social policies and citizen participation in the definition and implementation of selected urban policies while, at the same time, ensuring the financial means city government needs (Peterson 1981; Savitch and Kantor 2002) in a context of antagonistic relations with federal authorities led by either the PRI or the PAN.

The Economic Side of the Pragmatic Urban Regime: Real Estate as an Urban Transmission Belt for Globalization in Mexico City (1990s-Present)

A key argument of this dissertation is that revalorization of real estate in Mexico City's *Ciudad Central* has taken place since the 1990s and has become a key pillar of the PRD-led pragmatic urban regime. This pillar consists of public and private investment in real estate in the central parts of Mexico City as a key urban manifestation of economic liberalization; a process started in the 1980s as analyzed earlier in the chapter. Such investment has taken various forms including urban redevelopment projects in the historic center, the recycling of colonial and modernist houses and buildings for residential and non-residential purposes in the historic center and in *Roma-Condesa*, and the destruction and replacement of those units in order to free up land for the construction of new apartment buildings for the gentrifying forces of middle- and upper-class professionals and young families drawn back to *Ciudad Central* in the last 10-15 years. As shown in Chapters 4 and 5, the 1985 earthquakes led to massive changes in *Centro Histórico* and *Roma-Condesa's* land markets; changes that explain Mexican investors' newfound willingness to put their capital back in *Ciudad Central* after decades when such choice was unprofitable for them as well as the rapid entrance of global investors.

The role of real estate as a "secondary circuit of capital" *a la* Harvey (1978; 2002[1989]) has a long tradition in Mexico, as it has been crucial for the Mexican upper classes for at least a century. Investment in properties in the outskirts of the colonial city became the main instrument the aristocracy (along with some foreign capitalists) used to recover economically from the constraints imposed on them during the Revolution: "Between 1910 and 1940, the owners of most urban properties belonged to the old landed aristocracy. While the Revolution expropriated the [rural] estates practically without compensation, urban properties were not affected. Thus, after the Revolution… the aforementioned aristocracy received enormous rents once again based on the great increases in the price of urban properties" (Schteingart 2001 [1989]: 126).

The role of the state in the construction industry became dominant once again during the 1960s and 1970s, as it had been for most of the city's history since colonial times, to be displaced once again during the second half of the 1970s when private developers took over. The economic crisis of the 1980s, combined with developers' lower levels of access to land, evened these trends out and contributed to an increase in public-private partnerships in the housing sector (Schteingart 2001 [1989]: 126). One important trend during this period was that real estate companies rarely built housing units in the Federal District, let alone in the central section of the city. Indeed, those with housing projects in the D.F. only worked in four of the sixteen *delegaciones: Tlalpan, Coyoacán, Cuajimalpa,* and *Benito Juárez* (Schteingart 2001 [1989]); out of which *Benito Juárez* was the only one located in *Ciudad Central*.

Building housing units in the city had become the responsibility of public institutions given an increasingly more difficult access to land.[39] Several interviewees from real estate companies in Schteingart's (2001 [1989]) pioneering study complained about the fact that building low-income housing had become non profitable and they were considering to switch to other areas such as luxury housing. Although the switch was not visible yet in the trends shown in her study, it is not surprising that luxury apartment buildings were precisely the main type of investment found in neighborhoods like *Roma-Condesa* after the 1985 earthquakes de facto freed up and significantly lowered the price of the kind of land real estate companies had lost access to in previous decades.

Another important trend regarding real estate investment in the greater Mexico City up to the 1980s is the virtual absence of banks as partners and/or direct investors. This absence is not due to lack of interest on their part but rather to the need to camouflage their involvement because of the explicit prohibition against banks owning land for real estate purposes established in the

[39] Schteingart (2001 [1989]) explains that most real estate companies had also abandoned the practice of keeping big extensions of land (so commonly used during the first half of the 20th century). Instead, most now prefer to buy land from public institutions in more favorable conditions and only as the need arises.

Mexican Constitution. In spite of this obstacle, there are several banks famous for their links with the real estate sector: *Banco Atlántico* since the 1950s, BANAMEX, and BANCOMER (Schteingart 2001 [1989]). Several of them have even been linked to the explosion of commercial plazas started at the beginning of the 1990s, usually in partnership with global investors: "For example, in Mexico City alone there was an estimated increase of more than $3.5 billion in commercial building construction from 1989 to 1992. More than $1 billion was sunk into 150 new shopping centers many used to house the offices of stock brokerage firms trading shares in Mexico's wildly growing stock market, and one half billion dollars was poured into new luxury hotels" (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010: 63). By 2000, Mexico had become one of the most important real estate markets around the world as shown in Table 3.7 below and Mexico City is the most important site for those global investments:

Table 3.8

Largest Commercial Real Estate Markets

Country	Real Estate Value (billions of US$)	Percent of Total (billions of US$)
United States	$4,997	34.42%
Japan	1,966	13.54
Germany	1,075	7.40
United Kingdom	1,039	7.15
France	791	5.45
Italy	657	4.53
Canada	396	2.72
Spain	378	2.60
Hong Kong/China	288	1.98
South Korea	237	1.63
Australia	232	1.60
Netherlands	229	1.57
Mexico	**200**	**1.38**
Switzerland	144	0.99
Belgium	137	0.94
34 other countries	1,754	12.08
Total	$14,519	100%

Source: Lachman (2006), Figure 8 on page 11

The Political Side of the Pragmatic Urban Regime: Ups and Downs of PRD's Unchallenged Dominance in Mexico City (1990s-Present)

Centrist and leftist parties along with intellectuals, artists and social movement groups created the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* (Party of Democratic Revolution or PRD) as a joint organizational platform to compete in the 1988 election as analyzed above. Although ultimately defeated at the national level, that was the first time the PRD and its allies showed the important electoral force they could become; the second time occurred with Andrés Manuel López Obrador in 2006 (Modonesi 2008). The 1988 federal election jump-started a radical transformation of the Mexican political system (Gil 1992). A transformation that would be significantly expanded with Cárdenas' resounding victory in Mexico City's 1997 elections: he garnered 47% of the vote on July 6 while his party, the recently founded PRD, won 45.4% of the seats in the city's Legislative Assembly (Espinosa 2004: 28). Table 3.8 below presents the results of city elections starting in 1997[40] and shows the resulting political dominance the PRD has had ever since.

Table 3.9

Results from Mexico City's Mayoral Elections 1997-2012

Election year / Party	PRI (center) and allies	PRD (left) and allies	PAN (right) and allies	Elected mayor
1997	990,234 (25.08%)	1,861,444 (47.14%)	602,927 (15.27%)	Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (PRD)
2000	998,109 (22.8%)	1,506,324 (34.5%)	1,460,931 (33.4%)	Andrés Manuel López Obrador (PRD)
2006	NA	2,213,969 (46.37%)	1,301,493 (27.26%)	Marcelo Ebrard (PRD)
2012	940,188 (19.73%)	3,027,460 (63.58%)	647,006 (13.61%)	Miguel Angel Mancera (PRD)

Source: Based on *Cuadro 2*, p. 29 in Modonesi 2008 and *IEDF webpage* (various dates)

PRD administrations have led noteworthy policy transformations in the city especially through the implementation of ambitious social policies, the creation of new participatory mechanisms through new legislation, and, starting with López Obrador's administration, important public-

[40] Mayoral periods are six-year long just as presidential ones. Nonetheless, one of the decisions during the transition and political reforms that led to the first election of the mayor in 1997 was to have that first period last only 3 years to make the calendar of local elections coincide with the one for federal elections.

private partnerships to renovate the city's center. The PRD has thus channeled the more progressive political stance Mexico City residents proudly support but had not been able to express in the political arena since 1928 (Espinosa 2004). In so doing the party has also contributed to distancing Mexico City even further from the rest of the country; a fact made evident in a de facto division of labor where the PAN was in charge of the Presidency since 2000 until PRI's comeback in 2012 while the PRD has been in power in Mexico City since 1997. This reflected a more profound divide made visible by the end of the 1990s in the Mexican party system "into pro-regime and anti-regime camps… The PAN and the PRD came to be seen as offering two different versions of an anti-regime message-a moderate but pro-democracy, pro-business stance by PAN, and a more intransigent, anti-PRI, pro-economic nationalism on the part of PRD" (Greyson 2007: 392). This divide continues today as the PRI is, once again, at the forefront of national politics and PRD also regained control of Mexico City after the 2012 national and local elections.

PRD's dominance in Mexico City has not come without controversy. Many observers including some of my interviewees have pointed out that clientelistic practices are still present in city government and there has been a lack of holistic policies regarding citizen participation (Sánchez Mejorada and Álvarez Enríquez 2003; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Álvarez 2006). Several of the academics and urban planners I interviewed including some close to the party shared their disillusionment. In particular, people were disappointed with PRD's incapability to capitalize on its legislative majority to move forward concrete urban development and citizen participation policies. Conflicts between two bands within the party, the more pragmatic and seasoned members with legislative and managerial experience who had come from the PRI (such as party leaders Cárdenas and Muñoz Ledo) on one side, and the more radical grassroots leaders from both leftist and social movement groups such as legendary city-wide network *Asamblea de Barrios* (Neighborhoods Assembly), on the other, clashed constantly within the Legislative

Assembly making basic agreements impossible to reach (Davis and Alvarado 2004). As we will see, this resulted in the PRD settling on using "invited spaces" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) for interacting with Mexico City's citizens instead of more radical participatory mechanisms leftist local governments have put in place in other Latin American cities (Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009).

An important case in point was the protracted debate around the first versions of the city's Law for Citizen Participation. PRI representatives at the Federal District's Legislative Assembly approved the first version of the law in 1995. Opposition parties including PRD refused to approve it even though it included some important features that reflected long-standing demands the urban popular movement had championed for years. In particular, the "Citizen Councils" established in the law had the ability to supervise the work of the 16 delegation chiefs in the city regarding each delegation's Urban Development Plan and annual plans. The PRI gave those concessions as part of the reforms the party was making in Mexico City to recover its electoral clout (Sánchez-Mejorada 2009). And, as we will see in Chapter 5, Citizen Councilors in *Roma Condesa* would take advantage of those features to a great extent.

PRD representatives and other progressive groups rejected the law because it represented a setback as it was not included in the Federal District's "Statute of Government" and did not contemplate more radical innovations favored by PRD and its allies. The latter included provisions such as "neighborhood assemblies that would have recourse to referendums and plebiscites if necessary" in order to channel the organizational strength of urban groups behind PRD such as the *Asamblea de Barrios,* the urban popular movement, the *Earthquake Victims*, among others (Davis and Alvarado 2004):

> Both sets of proposals made eminent political sense, in no small part because the PRD had from its inception pushed for a more representative and participatory politics, with citizens directing government policymaking. This plan would also allow the PRD to fully distinguish itself from the PRI, a tactical move which was intended to guarantee further citizen support for the party in both the city and nation as much as to make it easier for capital city citizens to participate in local politics (Davis and Alvarado 2004: 142).

To be sure, the Citizen Councils did end up clashing with existing neighborhood organizations in some parts of the city, as the PRI's intention was to preserve its corporatist structure in the territory as much as possible (Sánchez-Mejorada 2009). The problem was that the PRD was not able to move its more radical proposal for citizen participation forward. The party was not able to convince either the PRI or the PAN in this regard. The former ignored the PRD's proposal because it feared "that the creation of powerful citizen committees would strengthen the PRD to such a level that it would be able to contest the PRI in national elections for the president" (Davis and Alvarado 2004: 143). The PAN, in turn, presented its own proposal instead of supporting the proposals made by either the PRI or the PRD and ended up boycotting both. The PRD then established new political alliances with more radical groups such as the Popular Front in Iztapalapa, the STUNAM (National University Administrative Workers Union), and the SME (Mexico City Electricians Union). This, in turn, alienated more centrist groups in the party (Davis and Alvarado 2004).

The resultant Law for Citizen Participation approved in the Legislative Assembly in 2008 ended up being even more diluted than the 1995 version the PRI had approved on its own. Members of the new "Neighborhood Committees" established in the 1998 law had only consultative functions instead of the supervisory role Citizen Councilors had in the 1995 version (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Sánchez-Mejorada 2009). PRD's internal fragmentation only increased with time as several key informants noted in their interviews with me. This increasing factionalization led to a long stalemate that prevented the continuation of the Neighborhood Committees until mayor Ebrard's administration reactivated them in a new form in 2010. As we will see in more detail in Chapter 5, the Neighborhood Committees elected in 1999 were supposed to be replaced through a new election three (3) years later. Nonetheless, this did not happen as the López Obrador administration implemented new guidelines regarding citizen participation and conflicts within the PRD at the Legislative Assembly brought debates about the

law to a stalemate for the following 8 years. As a result, more than 70% of the Neighborhood Committees in the city stopped functioning. And those still in place became “atomized”, “fragmented” or “depleted” (Vargas 2010).

The 1998 Law for Citizen Participation also contained dispositions such as giving citizens the right to start plebiscites, referendums, popular initiatives, and so on. Several did mention that such advancements were limited since they did not have the legal weight they would have had if included in the city’s Statute of Government (also see Davis and Alvarado 2004). The PRD approved a new round of modifications to the law in 2004 taking advantage of its majority at the Legislative Assembly. However, the PAN blocked its implementation by asking the federal Supreme Court to rule on its constitutionality while arguing that the Neighborhood Committees resembled Cuba’s local committees. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the law yet the PRD was not able to convene new elections (Sánchez-Mejorada 2009). The 2004 version of the Law for Citizen Participation renamed the former “Neighborhood Committees” as “Citizen Committees”, the name with which they are still functioning today. The stalemate would not be resolved until 2010 when new Citizen Committees were elected with very public support from the Ebrard administration.

In my interviews, many intellectuals and residents communicated their frustration at what they saw as PRD’s incapacity to solve its internal problems and move forward important issues for Mexico City. Nonetheless, they still tried to keep their faith in the PRD as the main political vehicle of the Mexican left and made sure to mention successful experiences in participatory planning: the public consultation convened by the ministry for urban development and housing (SEDUVI), direct citizen participation in the Conservation Program for Housing Units (PRUH), and the interesting though short-lived participatory budget initiative put in practice in one of the city’s “delegations” or administrative subdivisions, *Delegación Tlalpan*. I will analyze some of these innovations in more detail in the following section.

3.5. Building the Pragmatic Urban Regime: Three Mayors, Three Styles

Part of my argument in this dissertation is that the new pragmatic urban regime that started to emerge in Mexico City since 1997 has both pro-poor and pro-capital tendencies as PRD mayors have had to balance obtaining fresh resources from national and international capitalists with implementing a vast array of social and participatory policies. Each of the three mayors who have completed their tenures so far has done so following a distinctive style in consonance with his priorities. All of them, however, has had to deal with the high expectations many inhabitants have with their party given its status as the most progressive political force in the city. In this context, many of my interviewees (including academics close to the PRD) argued in favor of the extensive social policies the party has implemented yet shared their frustration regarding the limits of the participatory initiatives the party has put in place. Also, a vocal minority (much smaller than expected) criticized the fact that a PRD-led city government has collaborated with national and international capital, a comment that emerged mainly among residents in the historic center and some key informants.

A common theme among my informants, which manifests a key conflict in the new pragmatic urban regime, is the lack of continuity that has resulted from the very distinct agendas each PRD mayor has pursued regarding citizen participation. As we will see below, Cárdenas three-year administration (1997-2000) focused on interacting with *civil society organizations and created city-wide participatory mechanisms*, López Obrador (2000-2006) emphasized participation of *residents at the territorial level*, whereas Ebrard (2006-2012) encouraged participation in *specific policy areas*, such as safety. This section addresses the priorities and challenges these three administrations faced and it briefly addresses the priorities of current mayor Miguel Angel Mancera whose administration started in December 2012. A practical cause for the differences among administrations, as any elected official knows, is the need to differentiate him or herself from former incumbents. This is especially true if they have been his

or her mentors in the past; a handicap both López Obrador and Ebrard had to deal with. A more profound reason for the differences has been the increasing internal fragmentation the PRD has experimented over the years, as it has become a "catch-all party" for the Mexican Left (Klesner 2006). Table 3.9 introduces the channels for citizen participation privileged by each PRD administration to date whereas the rest of the section expands on the overall features of each:

Table 3.10

Mechanisms and Laws for Citizen Participation during PRD Administrations in Mexico City (1997-Present)

PRD Administration	Overall Priorities regarding State-Society Relations	Mechanisms for Participation/ Intermediation with Local State
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas / Rosario Robles[41] (1997-2000)	Emphasis on interaction with civil society organizations. Built the legal foundation for participation mechanisms and urban planning used by the following administrations.	▪ Election of the initial "*comités vecinales*" (neighborhood committees) in 1999 after eliminating the more powerful channel of Citizen Councils in 1997. ▪ Formulation and introduction of second (PRD-led) Law for Citizen Participation to the Legislative Assembly. ▪ Formulation and initial implementation of the first city wide Urban Development Plan and formulation of Partial Programs for Urban Development around the city including extensive citizen consultations. ▪ Multiple meetings and agreements with NGOs and other civil society organizations.
Andrés Manuel López Obrador / Alejandro Encinas (2000-2006)	Focus on territory-based participation. Pragmatic alliances with private capital and others to funnel funds into the city (especially in *Centro Histórico*). Massive expansion in social services for the poor.	▪ Emphasis on implementing Partial Programs for Urban Development around the city including extensive citizen consultations. ▪ Two delegations, *Delegación Tlalpan* (2001-2002) and *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* (2001), experiment with participatory budgeting but they are later discontinued. ▪ First consultations and studies in *Centro Histórico* by the *Fideicomiso* after its reactivation and transformation into a public entity in 2002. ▪ PRD sponsored modification of the Law for Citizen Participation in 2004 renames the Neighborhood Committees as "Citizen Committees."

[41] Both Cárdenas and López Obrador left office a year before the end of their terms to campaign for the presidency. The city's Legislative Assembly appointed Cárdenas' Minister of the Interior *("Secretaria de Gobernación")* Rosario Robles in his place. The same happened later with Alejandro Encinas, López Obrador's Minister of the Interior, who became "chief of government" after López Obrador's departure.

PRD Administration	Overall Priorities regarding State-Society Relations	Mechanisms for Participation/ Intermediation with Local State
		▪ Neglect of "*comités vecinales*" (neighborhood committees) and impasse over second Law for Citizen Participation in the Legislative Assembly (the impasse would last until 2010).
Marcelo Ebrard (2006-2012)	Focus on law and order and a more pro-business stance. Continuation of urban redevelopment in *Centro Histórico*. Less emphasis on citizen participation in general yet continuation and expansion of social services for the poor.	▪ Establishment of citizen groups in *Centro Histórico* convened trough the *Fideicomiso*. They make decisions on renovation projects and administer project funds (see Chapter 4). ▪ Mainly consultative citizen groups that partner with authorities from the 16 *delegaciones* to work on safety and policing (Alvarado 2010). ▪ Election of new Citizen Committees in November 2010 after a 10-year interruption. ▪ The Legislative Assembly approves a new Law for Citizen Participation in 2010, which is reformed again in August 2011. ▪ City wide participatory budgeting mechanism asking residents to choose projects to be implemented using 3% of their delegation's budget.
Miguel Ángel Mancera (2012-Present)	Continuation of Ebrard's general policies and pro-business stance including the urban redevelopment process in *Centro Histórico* and social policies for the poor initiated in the López Obrador administration.	▪ New Citizen Committees were elected in 2013 following the regular calendar established in the current Law for Citizen Participation. ▪ Implementation of the new "Transparency and Accountability Committees" as part of the city's Transportation Plan established in 2011. ▪ The 2010 Law for Citizen Participation is reformed in March 2014.

Sources: The author based on interviews, city planning documents (various years), Mexico City's government webpage and secondary sources

Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas Focuses on "Governing with the People" (1997-2000)

In the words of the Planning Director at the city's Ministry of Urban Development (SEDUVI) at the time, the Cárdenas administration attempted to work closely with citizens "under the logic of governing with the people" (Ordóñez Cervantes 2003: 43). Being the first democratically elected city government after almost fifty years, Mexico City residents had understandably high expectations regarding this administration. According to several interviewees and other observers, Cárdenas and his team tried to advance a participatory approach to urban development as their key strategy to satisfy such expectations. To this end, the Cárdenas administration prioritized the

following lines of action: (1) implementing the planning system set in the *Ley de Desarrollo Urbano del Distrito Federal* (Federal District's Law of Urban Development); (2) extensively collaborating with civil society organizations; and (3) creating a general Division for Citizen Participation devoted to foster a culture of citizen engagement in the city. Additionally, the first Mexico City residents elected their first Neighborhood Committees, which replaced the Citizen Councils in place between 1995 and 1997. However, the latter were not part of Cárdenas' priorities for his administration.

First, the Cárdenas administration, as well as many collaborators from civil society, devoted a lot of time and effort to the three planning levels established in the city's urban development legal framework: a general or city-wide plan, plans for each of the sixteen delegations or administrative divisions in the city, and partial plans for areas within the delegations. Of these three levels, the Partial Programs are the ones more "in touch with the neighborhoods" and they include detailed guidelines for future projects in each community (Ordóñez Cervantes 2003: 43). The Cárdenas administration started to formulate thirty (30) Partial Programs (which López Obrador would continue) with relatively high levels of citizen involvement throughout the city.

The Urban Development Law for Mexico City stipulates different goals for the partial programs depending on the area of the city they were located in. In general, the Partial Programs were established to either address social problems such as land invasion and lack or services and infrastructure, to serve as containment mechanisms to avoid the expansion of the population into fragile ecosystems around the city or to foster urban recycling in the four central delegations in order to prevent outmigration from the area (Ordóñez Cervantes 2003). More specifically, thirteen (13) urban plans for areas in the outskirts of the city were devoted to nature conservation, five (5) located in *Ciudad Central* had the goal of reversing depopulation from the center, three (3) were established because of their "development potential", three (3) were implemented to

foster “metropolitan integration”, and six (6) for conservation of historical buildings (*Asamblea Legislativa* del DF 2000a and 2000b: 4).

Second, a recurrent theme in most of my interviews with key informants in Mexico City is that the Cárdenas administration privileged collaborating with civil society organizations in all issues including those regarding urban development. An example of this approach was the fact that Cárdenas and his team invited the prestigious public university UNAM and other public and private academic institutions as consultants in the process for elaborating the Partial Programs for Urban Development starting in 1998. For instance, UNAM participated through its Program for Studies about the City, its Architecture Department, and the Institute for Social Research (Ziccardi 2003). The inclusion of academic institutions and NGOs as technical partners in the process is considered as one of the main achievements resulting from implementing the Partial Programs since this sent a signal of non-partisanship to the citizenry (Mellado Hernández 2003).

Despite having initiated the Partial Programs, which are by definition *territory-based* planning and participatory mechanisms, the Cárdenas administration focused more on interacting with civil society organizations rather than with territory-based ones. Several interviewees identified this preference as a window of opportunity for influencing long-term urban policies rather than short-term projects. However, this might represent a bias on the part of academics that see themselves as the natural representatives of such a long-term perspective on planning. For instance, a key informant for this project explained that the Cárdenas administration represented “a lost opportunity” in the sense that there was much more that could have been gained from this incipient collaboration between civil society organizations and city government.

Nonetheless, there were other reasons to consider the Cárdenas administration as a “lost opportunity” regarding both citizen participation and urban development in the city. Notably, Cárdenas had little room to maneuver as head of an autonomous city government given his status as the leader of the national opposition. His status meant that PRI national authorities as well as

the PAN used all the mechanisms at their disposal to suffocate the new local government in Mexico City. For instance, "[s]tarting in 1998, on the basis of a legislative decision passed with support from both PRI and PAN parliamentary groups in Congress, the Federal District was excluded from an important provision in the federal budget *(Ramo 33*) that earmarked funds for infrastructure and services at the state and municipal levels" (Davis and Alvarado 2004: 147). Moreover, even as that source of funding was eliminated, the Cárdenas administration "was forced to make good on an immense public debt inherited from the previous PRI administration, a pressing fiscal obligation that further restricted his urban policy-making capacities" (Davis and Alvarado 2004: 147).

Antagonism from the federal government also manifested in a downsized budget for the city in 1999, which forced Cárdenas to look for funding with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank. However, national authorities had to approve such loans and their approval was purposefully delayed. Similarly, cuts in funding made the mayor consider alliances with the real estate sector for big projects that could generate additional revenue. Such alliances, however, alienated both citizens and PRD members "who felt that a left-leaning mayor would (or should) be unlikely to support projects directly associated with the city's real estate elite" (Davis and Alvarado 2004: 148). Additionally, Cárdenas had to face problems that had become much more serious than they were under his predecessors, such as public insecurity and an almost-year long strike at the national university. His popularity plummeted when he chose to accept intervention from the (Federal) Police after multiple rounds of negotiations had failed. At that point he had lost support from both moderates and the radical left in the city (Davis and Alvarado 2004).

Finally, the Cárdenas administration privileged strategies to "reestablish the city's social fabric" through participation, as one informant put it, by creating the Federal District's Division of Citizen Participation. As we will see in Chapter 4, this is the institution where *Centro Histórico's* "believers" in citizen participation first met after having known each other as student

leaders at UNAM and where they first tried to develop a participatory approach to urban development. The Division concentrated on a myriad of cultural events intended to serve as demonstration effects for generations of *chilangos* (Mexico City inhabitants) used to the "myth that we were not able to organize anything." Leaders at the Division had a background rooted in the social sciences and the humanities (social psychology, theater, political science, and so on), which they used to create a network of 1,200 young promoters devoted to foster cultural changes in the city. The idea was to "decriminalize" public concentrations and the historic center, which the PRI had portrayed as means and sites associated with "chaos" after the protests those left homeless by the 1985 earthquakes organized in the area. One of the former leaders at the Division for Citizen Participation explained, for example, that during the first half of the 1990s manifestations were not even allowed to reach *Zócalo*, the emblematic central square in *Centro Histórico*, even though such processions were (and still are) a long-standing tradition in the city.

The Division of Citizen Participation organized large and highly organized concerts and other cultural events at "*el Zócalo,"* precisely in order to counteract the authoritarian imprint the PRI had left on the city. As we will see in Chapter 4, this work later informed the participatory approach public officials used at the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* as well as their emphasis on projects to rescue the democratic nature of public space. For instance, volunteers from the Division's network were in charge of getting the *Zócalo* and other sites ready, collecting and distributing supplies (e.g. paint cans and tools for painting murals or buildings), assisting with public security, etc. Some of the events included Guinness record-breaking activities such as making the world's largest chessboard, the world's largest sandwich, among other impressive feats (e.g. Puig 2013).

López Obrador Focuses on the Territory, Urban Recycling and Social Policy (2000-2006)

Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) led a colorful and, according to several observers and many of my interviewees, highly successful tenure as head of city government in Mexico City (Davis 2002; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Greyson 2007). He worked towards three priorities: (1) focusing on territory-based rather than sector-based policies and actions in his relations with city inhabitants, thus moving away from Cárdenas' emphasis on interacting with civil society and promoting citizen participation; (2) privileging housing in central sections in the city by looking "inward" in order to stop Mexico City's horizontal expansion; and (3) establishing an ambitious social policy agenda concentrating on vulnerable groups such as women facing gender-based violence, children, senior citizens, and so on.

A theme related to the second priority yet crucial across the board was the fact that AMLO made a deliberate alliance with national and international capitalists including Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim after having seen the extreme financial limitations his predecessor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas faced in his tenure (Davis 2002; Greyson 2007) as I analyze in Chapter 4. Interestingly, López Obrador's political trajectory of close work with grassroots organizations gave him enough political capital to make such an alliance while, at the same time, retaining control of his constituents (Davis and Alvarado 2004).

First, López Obrador moved away from the model Cárdenas inaugurated in which city government elicited direct collaboration from civil society organizations such as NGOs, universities, and think tanks in the definition of urban policies to a territory-based agenda based on his premise of "the poor first." According to a close collaborator I interviewed more than three years after the end of López Obrador's tenure, such shift was the result of the mayor's interest in responding to the needs of "ordinary citizens" articulated in the multiple consultations he had had during his campaign as a candidate to become Mexico City's "Chief of Government" (mayor). This shift meant that many middle-class and civil society allies in the PRD's periphery felt

excluded while the new mayor portrayed himself as approaching the "masses" in a move consistent with his style and political trajectory (Grayson 2007; Modonesi 2008). In practice, this implied weakening the general (non-territory-based) channels for citizen participation in urban policies such as Mexico City's Division for Citizen Participation. Similarly, several key informants (including academics close to the PRD) lamented that the López Obrador administration de facto stalled the Neighborhood Committees and that internal fights between the mayor's and other factions within the PRD had made impossible to approve the new (1998) Law for Citizen Participation let alone implement the previous one approved in 1995. Manuel Canto Chac, one of the most important Mexican academics on civil society compared Cárdenas and López Obrador's tenures:

> It was a brief tenure. Cárdenas was [in city government] for a year and a half and then left to lead his [presidential] campaign. Therefore, there wasn't much time to see very clear trends. The thing is that with PRD's second administration, which was López Obrador's, there was an idea of participation but in another direction. At that time, it was a very territorialized participation. The assumption was that all programs had to be brought down to the territorial level for people to participate. So it was more of a community-oriented mechanism for participation, which was even in conflict with other forms of participation, more civil forms of participation if you will. Because López Obrador's framework attempted to identify participation only in the territory but there were not only demands but also experiences of citizen participation at the level of given sectors, if you will. That caused conflicts to such a degree that the laws of social development approved during the last months of Rosario Robles' administration [who had replaced Cárdenas] were not transformed into concrete regulations during López Obrador's entire six-year administration (Interview with Manuel Canto Chac, October 16th, 2007).

López Obrador did continue the work Cárdenas and Rosario Robles initiated to the extent that his administration also followed the guidelines established in the city new urban development law and his administration followed up on collaborative efforts initiated with civil society organizations regarding the Partial Plans for Urban Development. Following the logic of the urban planning system included in the law, the next step was to go down the ladder from citywide to delegation-based to partial programs of urban development. Nonetheless, López Obrador and his team took this step even further by limiting the participation of think tanks and professional associations in the definition of urban policy while putting more resources in their work with

territory-based organizations instead. As we will see in Chapter 4, López Obrador was pragmatic enough to sometimes appear to act against the interests of his constituents (most notably in alliances with private capital and the Catholic Church), yet an emphasis on the territory helped him strengthen his historical relationships with unions, street vendors, other informal workers, poor "*colonos*" (residents in working-class neighborhoods), and the like (Greyson 2007).

López Obrador's emphasis on the territory manifested through the implementation of the Partial Programs for Urban Development, the third and last component of the long-term city wide Program of Urban Development; even though planning for establishing them (as well as the elaboration of the 16 Delegations Programs) started under the Cárdenas administration. Additionally, during López Obrador's tenure, some of the newly elected *delegados* put in place participatory experiments like encouraging residents' participation in their delegation's administrative councils (Alvarado 2010).

A couple of the 16*"delegaciones"* or city administrative subdivisions even implemented short-lived processes of participatory budgeting: *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* (2001) and *Delegación Tlalpan* (2002). The latter is particularly interesting since the person who directed it was one of the creators of the participatory agenda at the successful *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, these developments are not an indicator of AMLO's openness towards citizen participation. On the contrary, the person in charge of developing the participatory budget in *Tlalpan* had previously left Mexico City's Division of Citizen Participation precisely because of the low profile it ended up having during López Obrador's administration. Instead, he decided to "wait it out" at *Tlalpan* where he was invited to work by a progressive "*Jefe Delegacional*" (Delegation Chief or *Delegado*), Gilberto López y Rivas. Several interviewees mentioned *Tlalpan* as a positive reference of participatory approaches to urban development. According to observers,

it involved a structured cycle[42] with phases devoted to awareness raising activities, elaboration of proposals, voting for proposals, integrating proposals in the delegation's operational plan, and follow-up. There was a concrete mechanism for citizens' direct involvement in "monitoring teams" in charge of supervising the implementation of projects voted in the participatory budget and included in the operational plan. For instance, in 2001 the process generated 8,234 proposals and 573 were included in planning for the delegation whereas 362 out of 6,027 were included the following year (Morales Noble 2004).

Second, AMLO's administration worked with the premise of "reversing the natural and induced trend towards extensive growth to create a policy that promotes intensive [urban] development" (Castillo Juárez 2007: 14). The idea was, as López Obrador's minister for Urban Development and Housing put it, "to rebuild the built city" (Castillo Juárez 2007: 14). AMLO also used his prerogatives as the head of city government to issue *Bando 2* (Edict #2) as an "informative edict" declaring that his administration would foster population growth in the central delegations of the city in order to foster urban recycling.

That is, the administration would foster migration back "towards delegations *Benito Juárez, Cuauhtémoc, Miguel Hidalgo,* and *Venustiano Carranza* in order to take advantage of the infrastructure and services [in those areas], which are currently being under-utilized" ("*Bando 2*" reprinted in Tamayo 2007). For instance, in a book about *"Bando 2,"* López Obrador's former housing minister describes the high levels of resistance many community organizations showed against the edict fearing that it would leave them homeless after years of negotiation with previous authorities to get their houses in the periphery. On the contrary, she explained, the ministry signed 20 exchange agreements to transfer land previously assigned in the periphery to one of the four central delegations. This resulted in building 2,360 houses in such areas (Castillo

[42] Structured cycles including various phases are typical of most participatory budgeting models. They are more commonly established on a yearlong basis and usually involve information sharing, elaboration of proposals, and various rounds of approval and/or election of PB representatives (for some examples see Fung and Wright 2001; Abers 1998; Avritzer 2002; Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Hernández-Medina 2010).

Juárez 2007). Working with Slim and other capitalists was also related to this priority to the extent that their investments contributed not only to deal with the financial limitations a PRD-led city government faced vis-à-vis a PAN-led national government (Peterson 1981; Davis and Alvarado 2004) but also in order to contain the city's horizontal expansion by fostering urban recycling in *Ciudad Central*.

Finally, another key signature of the López Obrador administration was the implementation of a wide array of social policies focused on the most vulnerable groups in the city: the elderly, school children, single mothers, victims of gender-based violence, among others. According to a former high public official close to AMLO who worked in this area during his administration, these new policies were implemented in response to concrete demands people presented to López Obrador during his mayoral campaign. Another interviewee, a former middle-level manager who worked at city government during this administration and was very critical of it in several respects, did concede that López Obrador's extensive social programs started to break with the corporatist past of the PRI by "universalizing social rights" in Mexico City. Citizens no longer had to rely on their membership in one of the federations of workers, farmers or public officials affiliated with the PRI in order to access key social services.

Furthermore, the social policies López Obrador and his team devised and implemented have become part of the PRD's governing style in Mexico City very much in line with the progressive tenets of municipal socialism (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). Marcelo Ebrard not only continued the social programs established in this period but also expanded the scope of several of them and current mayor Mancera seems to be doing the same. Additionally, many of these programs have become demonstration effects for implementing more general policies through legislation in Mexico City and in the rest of the country. For instance, the former middle-level manager mentioned above highlighted how the food pension program for the elderly had contributed to create a favorable context to draft and approve the law establishing "the universal

right of the elderly to their food pension" in Mexico City a few years after the program was initiated. Other states in the Mexican Union have also adopted their own versions of López Obrador's social programs. This interviewee highlighted that governors from the three mainstream parties have implemented such policies although "none with the scope that they have here in the city."

Marcelo Ebrard Focuses on the Private Sector and Public Safety (2006-2012)

The sharpest contrast between PRD administrations to date has been between López Obrador's and the one led by his former protégé Marcelo Ebrard. Ebrard, originally from the PRI and later a mayoral candidate for the now disappeared Party of the Democratic Center, withdrew his candidacy to support López Obrador's winning ticket in 2000. Having worked as López Obrador's minister of public safety and later as minister of social development, Ebrard was very astute in gradually distancing himself from his former boss, as the latter became a political liability after losing the controversial 2006 election to President Felipe Calderón. To be sure, the new mayor had to avoid alienating the new *panista* president given Mexico City's ongoing need for federal funds. However, this was also part of a strategy to build his own basis of support while undermining the ones behind López Obrador as it will become apparent in Chapter 4:

> Ebrard was determined to avoid any semblance of co-government in which he would occupy the *Antiguo Palacio del Ayuntamiento* [City Hall Palace] and López Obrador would dominate grassroots activists. As part of the low-key rupture with his predecessor, the new mayor has taken control of major elements of the city's street vendors, pirate taxi organizations, El Barzón debtors, nightclub proprietors, bar owners, public-sector unions, and other groups that once functioned as AMLO [López Obrador]'s shock troops" (Grayson 2007: 272).

Ebrard's tactics can be read as indicators of the factionalization going on inside the PRD, (Davis and Alvarado 2004), which he officially joined in 2004, but they also respond to some clear-cut policy priorities of his administration. Ebrard expanded Guiliani-like public safety initiatives he started as López Obrador's minister (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Davis 2002). In fact, the only institutionalized venues for citizen participation at the beginning of his term were limited to this

field while abandoning the Neighborhood Committees (now Citizen Committees) started during the Cárdenas administration and the partial plans for urban development Cárdenas initiated and López Obrador implemented. To his credit though, he did publicly support the re-installment of the Citizen Committees when, in a surprising turn of events, the city's Legislative Assembly resolved the legal impasse that had stalled the committees during the second half of 2010. Mayor Marcelo Ebrard personally (and very publicly) led the election of new neighborhood committees in November 2010 with more than 44,000 citizens registered to participate (Bolaños 2010). This last development clearly confirmed Citizen Committees as the most important city wide participatory mechanism in Mexico City today.

Some of my interviewees, however, saw this as an instrumental move on Ebrard's part to expand his influence on the citizenry given his presidential aspirations. Several key informants argued that the Ebrard administration did not have much interest in helping citizens "move to the level of policy formation." Some considered Ebrard even more pragmatic than López Obrador in his dealings with the private sector yet less committed to encouraging citizen participation or creating new social programs beyond the ones his former mentor created. On the contrary, several informants emphasized that Ebrard's priorities included continuing the "broken windows" public safety policies he had started to implement when he was in charge of López Obrador's public safety plans. Those informants emphasized that such approach to public safety, like that of Rudolph Guiliani, was part of Ebrard's pro-business project to enable minimum conditions for the blossoming of the private sector in the city (also see Davis 2004). Some even denounced the administration for manipulating results from citizen consultations to preserve this public safety agenda. The informant mentioned above manifested his concern about the way city government had distorted results from citizen assemblies that took place in 2001 and that were supposed to inform Mexico City's policies on public safety:

> Therefore, I say that [the process] is subject to being manipulated on the part of the authorities and, on the other hand, to not being able to satisfy expectations. I am talking about the public tenders for instance. Basically, the dates in which the consultation to the neighbors took place were too tight without any previous analysis. The neighbors decided based on their perspectives of what they thought could help in fighting crime. In many cases, it had nothing to do with police matters rather with prevention from a cultural perspective. Those types of things obviously were not in the package of things the government traditionally offered. All that led to an imposition based on the logic of the government and that the government decided directly about where resources were to be spent even though there were processes in which the [citizen] assembly had decided the opposite (Fernando, former public official, October 2007).

Finally, Mexico City has a new PRD mayor, lawyer and university professor Miguel Angel Mancera, who won the city's mayoral elections in December 2012. Even though Mancera has been in charge of city government for a little more than a year, he has not made a sharp distancing from his predecessor as Ebrard had done with López Obrador. In fact, he publicly offered to continue Ebrard's policies particularly regarding public safety (for example, by increasing the number of security cameras from 13,000 to 20,000), environment (continuing city policies on recycling), and transportation (by expanding the rapid bus system or *Metrobús* and the ecological cycling *Ecobicis* program)[43]. According to my informants, he also has some interesting proposals regarding social policies but they have not been yet implemented.

Having been Mexico City's Attorney General, Mancera has experience in the penal system. Interestingly enough, Mancera is serving as a PRD mayor but is not a member of the party; probably a sign of the party's pragmatic stance to winning elections with attractive candidates as it did with Ebrard in 2006. In terms of policies regarding citizen participation, the government was again able to convene the election of the new Citizen Committees for period 2013-2016 following the regular calendar established in the current Law for Citizen Participation. Mancera's administration has also implemented the new "Transparency and Accountability Committees" defined in the city's Transportation Plan the Ebrard administration defined along with the Legislative Assembly in 2011 as I will examine in Chapter 4.

[43] See news coverage on CNN Mexico at http://mexico.cnn.com/nacional/2012/01/12/miguel-angel-mancera-ofrece-continuar-las-politicas-de-marcelo-ebrard (accessed on February 9, 2014).

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter analyzed how simultaneous economic and political changes taking place in Mexico in the last 30 years have helped cement a new urban regime in its capital. Mexico City had been the scenario where PRI national authorities made more visible the three-legged corporatist system President Lázaro Cárdenas created in the 1930s. In fact, the first two of the three pillars of such political system (labor unions, public employees, and rural labor) also became crucial allies in Mexico City's corporatist urban regime along with the street vendors first repressed and later incorporated by PRI appointed city administrators.

Paradoxically, the highly educated and pro-market PRI leaders of the 1980s and 1990s that displaced the old guard that created the ISI-based corporatist Mexican state also created the conditions for the displacement of their party from Mexico City's governing coalition. This occurred as the political strength of PRI's traditional constituents in the city (organized labor, street vendors, and public employees) was undermined through the very changes the new generation of PRI "technocrats" brought about. Those included sharp increases in living costs, sales of key public companies such as the phone company acquired by Carlos Slim, combined with the drastic reduction of state legitimacy as a result of its failures in addressing the destruction and loss of lives the 1985 earthquakes caused[44].

The latter, in turn, fueled the grassroots urban movement or *"movimiento urbano popular"* mobilizing the urban poor (Ortiz 1997; Tamayo 2007), whose leaders have become the basis for the PRD's political dominance in the city since the second half of the 1990s. In this context, the fact that PRD administrations have experimented with various forms of citizen participation mechanisms ever since (see Table 3.9) reflects not only their ideological commitment to progressive urban governance or municipal socialism but also their attempts to

[44] Another important change that undermined another key PRI constituency (rural labor) was the elimination of the collective land (*ejido*) system. Nonetheless, this had limited impact on Mexico City and was partially compensated by implementing conditional transfer programs in the rural areas such as the famous PRONASOL program President Salinas started during his tenure (Britto 2004).

continue winning over the urban poor and at least some sections of the city's middle class. Simultaneously, sales of key public companies have helped consolidate new private leaders like billionaire Carlos Slim. This shift has not only represented a major transfer of state wealth (formerly a PRI monopoly) to private hands but has also provided PRD mayors with the possibility of allying themselves with national capital not necessarily tied to the PRI or the PAN. This so-called "bifurcation" of the Mexican business elite (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010: 77-78) has been a crucial factor in the emergence of the new pragmatic urban regime.

Despite PRD's ideological commitment to promoting citizen participation, the moving terrain it stands on has moved its city administrations to an intermediate place between the socialist urban regimes their leftist counterparts have put together in Porto Alegre, Montevideo, and other Latin American cities (Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009) and the neoliberal urban regimes put in place in cities like Santiago in Chile (Salcedo and Torres 2004; Trivelli 2007; Lopez-Morales 2011). A challenging national political context has represented serious economic constraints that moved the PRD to accommodating national and international capital in more deliberate ways (Peterson 1981) than progressive mayors in other countries. PRD's difficult coexistence with right and center-right (PAN and PRI) national authorities decreased the availability of funds to implement their agenda early on (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Davis 2002) leading them to a strategic shift. In particular, Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2000-2006), having seen the extreme limitations Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas faced in his tenure (1997-2000), made a deliberate alliance with capitalists including Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim (Davis 2002; Greyson 2007).

This combination of factors, in turn, explains PRD city administrations' volatility regarding the scope and modalities of citizen participation in urban policy they are willing to live with (as shown in Table 3.10). I argue that limited yet valuable *invited spaces* put in place by public officials in Mexico City are an integral part of the new *pragmatic* urban regime and the

more consolidated the new regime is (as it is the case in *Centro Histórico*), the more visible and forward the invited spaces public officials offer to residents in the area. That is, as one-sided as these spaces might be they have the potential for multiple uses. Citizens participating in them (allied to the most progressive public officials in charge of them) can try to “subvert” them by expanding their scope or, alternatively, other public officials and their allies can use them to further cement the emerging pragmatic urban regime by incorporating previously unorganized residents as new allies in it.

In the following chapter, I will show that there was at least a “subversive” moment of “unexpected democratization” (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) in *Centro Histórico* through an alliance between the area’s fiduciary fund and the residents it invited into the urban redevelopment process. In Chapter 5, I will show how an area with similar characteristics (*Roma Condesa*) has not yet elicited a similar kind of interest in PRD city government officials because of the higher level of autonomy and organizational strength business and residents’ associations have in the area. That is, because of the higher chance for “subversion” invited spaces would have there.

CHAPTER 4

CENTRO HISTÓRICO: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AS CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

4.1. Overview

In this chapter I argue that, in order to understand the *pragmatic urban regime* that has been taking form in Mexico City in the last 10-15 years, we need to focus on its sharpest manifestation to date: the inclusive and comprehensive urban renewal process in *Centro Histórico.* It is there where we can more clearly see the balancing act PRD city administrations have been doing in order to implement a progressive social and urban agenda to guarantee poor residents' collective consumption while, at the same time, deliberately accommodating national and international capital. This balancing act includes implementing limited mechanisms for citizen involvement in the form of *"invited spaces"* (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) mostly controlled by city government where residents have a secondary role.

Despite their limitations though, invited spaces like those present in *Centro Histórico,* represent a significant move away from the exclusionary and cooptation practices the Mexican state used on a regular basis. Those spaces can also be "subverted" or transformed from within by expanding their original scope (Roque and Shankland 2007; Rodgers 2007); a phenomenon that also took place here under the leadership of progressively minded public officials working at the area's fiduciary fund or *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*. I argue that the latter played a key role needed for opening the city's political structure to regular citizens in a context marked by acute pressures on land commodification, a highly demobilized resident population, and significant levels of deterioration in both urban infrastructure and services.

As we will see, officials from the *Fideicomiso* are committed to "municipal socialism" (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009), the Latin American trend and urban regime many leftist

governments have implemented in the region. I found "municipal socialism" to be influential on an important section of Mexico City's government (particularly the *Fideicomiso*) comprised of practitioners committed to creating the conditions for the fulfillment of citizens' social and economic rights in a manner similar to what Goldfrank and Schrank found in Montevideo, Porto Alegre, Bogotá, and other Latin American cities governed by the Left. People working at the *Fideicomiso* can even be seen as exemplars of the high performing public employees devoted to social change in developing countries so easily discounted in the literature (Tendler 1997).

However, there is also a risk to idealize their role. To be sure, the *Fideicomiso* is one of several actors within city government and its very strengths as an economically and politically autonomous institution can also isolate it from influencing city administrations' overall agenda. For example, the fund could only have a marginal (if any) influence on reducing former administrations' hesitancy in implementing the Neighborhood Committees as analyzed in the previous chapter. Also, the urban renewal process in *Centro Histórico* in the last two years has accelerated to the point that residents' involvement through the *Fideicomiso's* invited spaces (the Citizenship School and the volunteer Citizen Groups) are receiving less attention than recent big projects such as the multi-million dollar modernization of the *Alameda Central* park.

Nonetheless, given *Centro Histórico's* history of sporadic and mostly contentious interaction vis-à-vis the authorities[45], it is noteworthy that so many current residents have attained a higher and more consequential involvement in policies shaping the area than their more affluent counterparts in *Roma Condesa*. I argue that this difference can only be understood by looking at the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*'s role as an institutional catalyst in the last ten years. By institutional catalyst I mean any "institution that serves as *the focal point to make or force desired*

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[45] The main exception to this rule is that of merchants and residents in the famous *Tepito* neighborhood and street vendors in other parts of the center. In both cases, the relationship has been one of explicit conflict. In *Tepito*, the conflict with federal and city government reaches violent tones during occasional raids the military conducts to stop illegal activities in the neighborhood whereas the ongoing conflict with street vendors was mostly neutralized when mayor Marcelo Ebrard's administration (2006-2012) expelled them from *Centro Histórico's* first perimeter *(Perímetro A)* in 2007.

change. The institution could be a select committee, a governmental ministry, or any other party.

An institutional catalyst has, or is perceived to have, an appropriate mandate to play such a role" (Bhatta 2006: 291; my emphasis). I argue that, particularly in contexts shaped by high levels of mistrust in the state such as Mexico City (Houtzager et al 2005), the *Fideicomiso* has served as an institutional catalyst fostering change through, not only the big ticket projects and beautifying initiatives included in many urban renewal processes, but also by paying attention to the intangible side of residents' involvement in those and related programs while coordinating with other state institutions. Notably, those interventions are contributing to reverse the depopulation trend the area had had for decades: 5,000 people have moved to *Centro Histórico* as a result of the *Fideicomiso*'s and other institutions' work increasing population in the area from 36,000 to 41,000 residents (Gómez 2013).

The history of low neighbors' participation in *Centro Histórico* goes back several decades. In her study of the area in the 1970s, Eckstein (1977) found approximately three-dozen formal groups active in *Centro Histórico*. Notably, territory based organizations were relatively weak compared to "occupation-based groups" (1977: 80). In Eckstein's view, the "constraints on the residents' organizational effectiveness stem[ed] mainly from the impact of informal, institutionalized processes rooted in the national class and power structure." As a result, "most of them ha[d] become politically apathetic" (Eckstein 1977: 86). However, this was a common trend in central city areas up until the 1980s[46]. This vicious cycle of demobilization would be briefly broken with the impressive levels of self-organization *Centro Histórico* residents demonstrated after the 1985 earthquakes. As several Mexican public intellectuals showed in their chronicles (e.g. Poniatowska 2005 [1988], and Monsiváis 2005), the days and months after the quakes led to

[46] The city's periphery, on the other hand, was bursting with newcomers from the 1950s to the 1970s who were actively engaging the state on a regular basis as representatives from the "*colonias populares*" or working-class neighborhoods discussed in Chapter 3. Even though the channels defined for such representation were mostly controlled or coopted by the State, there was a high degree of conflict involved that often forced the latter to make important concessions (Sánchez Mejorada 2005).

a very special kind of effervescence in what would later be labeled as “the awakening” of Mexican civil society. Thousands of displaced residents organizing themselves to demand the reconstruction of their houses and the reestablishment of urban services increased associational density in *Centro Histórico* over night. Moreover, Mexican authorities ended up exposing their own failures in addressing the disaster by rejecting international assistance which, in turn, further alienated the population while contradicting the over-publicized myth of the Mexican corporatist state’s effectiveness (Ortiz 1997).

The main legacy of the year long confrontation between organized neighbors and the Mexican authorities was, on the one hand, the fact that most of the former managed to come back to live in the center (Ortiz 1997). On the other, this impressive and unexpected victory gave a quasi-mythological aura to the neighborhood groups involved in the fight. Many poor residents still see them in this light because of the active role those groups played in defending their interests after the 1985 earthquakes. This first wave of associations includes the famous *Asamblea de Barrios* (Neighborhoods Assembly) which has led many of the land invasions done in the city since then, and the disappeared *Unión Popular Nueva Tenochtitlán* (Popular Association New Tenochtitlan) which, according to several informants, catapulted an important part of the PRD grassroots leadership in the city. There is a second layer of long-standing NGOs and cultural institutions such as *Casa Talavera* that have helped to maintain a certain level of continuity of the area’s social fabric. Their efforts have been expanded through a more recent wave of social and cultural interventions done by the Spanish Cultural Center and organizations linked to Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim: *Fundación del Centro Histórico, Casa Vecina* and *Casa Mesones.* Finally, there is a third layer of a few territory-based organizations in specific parts of the center.

In order to analyze the impact the *Fideicomiso* has had in this context, let us remember that for the purposes of this project, concrete results include: (1) the urban interventions implemented in each area that have been favored by and/or explicitly asked for by citizens and

the associations representing them; and (2) the level of participation those citizens and associations had in defining the policies leading to those interventions. I argue that *Centro Histórico* has better results because it scores higher than *Roma Condesa* on both accounts. First, the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*, working jointly with the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico*, other city government institutions, businesses, and residents has been able to implement an increasing number of urban interventions both favored by and asked for by residents and businesses in the area; even though those actors were not behind the creation of the *Fideicomiso* itself. Second, the methodology used by this institution has also generated a high level of involvement of both residents and merchants from the area in the definition of the policies at hand in an area that had been highly demobilized in the last 10-15 years (with the exception of street vendors and their representatives).

As we will see in Chapter 5, residents from *Roma Condesa* have seen their level of influence decrease and there has been a relative involution in the kind of concrete results they achieve in terms of urban policies and interventions. On the contrary, residents from *Centro Histórico* have lived an opposite trend. After having had a short-lived but high level of involvement in recovering the center from the tragic effects of the 1985 earthquakes, citizen interaction with city government receded to the point of virtual demobilization. Street vendors and, to a lesser extent, formal businesses (not *Centro Histórico* residents) are the collective actors that have had a regular interaction with the authorities, mostly on a confrontational basis. The citywide network of displaced residents created after the earthquakes *Asamblea de Barrios* was occasionally mentioned as an important channel for citizen interaction with the government in the past. However, all my interviewees saw its influence and presence in *Centro Histórico* as inconsequential by the mid-2000s. Another exception was citizen involvement in formulating the Urban Development Partial Plan for *Centro Histórico* in 1999/2000. Nonetheless, none of the

residents I interviewed had participated in that process and only a few vaguely remembered it even though they lived in the area at the time.[47]

In contrast, most interviewees analyzed recent residents' involvement with the *Fideicomiso* and the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* (Authority of the Historic Center) as a process that represents the highest point of influence citizens have had in shaping urban interventions. The scope and importance of projects implemented has gone in crescendo resulting in the formulation of the *Comprehensive Management Plan for Centro Histórico 2011-2016* (GDF 2011). The broad nature of the Plan stands in stark contrast with the limited scope of the public parking debates *Roma Condesa* residents have been consulted about. At the event where the Management Plan was introduced to the general public, government, civil society, business and UNESCO representatives defined it as "a future vision of Mexico City's *Centro Histórico* for the next 10, 20, and 50 years encompassing improvements in livability, mobility, urban and economic renewal and city life".[48]

The *Fideicomiso* and the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* have explicitly and deliberately worked as allies with a clear division of labor. Leaders from both institutions (as well as some of their closest collaborators) come from professional cadres formed at UNAM, the national public university where many leftist and other ideologically progressive leaders started their public lives in various student movements. The collaborative formula both institutions use since the creation of the *Autoridad* in 2007 places the former as the "coordinating body" of *Centro Histórico*'s transformation while the *Fideicomiso* works as the "implementing body" of such process. As recent op-ed pieces on *Fideicomiso's* newspaper *Km0* highlight, UNESCO is now recommending this method for interventions in other historical sites (Km0 Staff 2012) and the formula was

[47] Part of the reason for this might be that the authorities delegated the organization of citizens' involvement in the Plan to a local NGO, which, in turn, concentrated its efforts in some subsections of *Centro Histórico.* On the contrary, neighborhood representatives were the very active protagonists of *Roma Condesa's* Urban Development Partial Plan a couple of years later.

[48] http://www.carlosslim.com/preg_resp_unesco.html (accessed on December 29th, 2012).

adopted in Xochimilco in December 2012[49] with the creation of an *Autoridad* and a *Fideicomiso* of *Xochimilco (*Km0 Staff 2013).

The *Fideicomiso* and the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* have followed a cumulative or bottom-up approach in two ways: (1) in the sense that leaders from both institutions devised a process of change including small yet very noticeable results at the very beginning instead of starting by defining a macro blueprint of transformations for the area; and (2) in the sense that both institutions agreed on the need to involve residents early on as a way to guarantee future success in "keeping the center alive" as the historian in charge of the *Autoridad* put it. According to my interviews with leaders from both organizations, they saw both sides of this strategy as crucial in order to gain the trust of a highly demobilized population and, at the same time, to be able to break the usual inertia of highly bureaucratic government institutions.

The *Fideicomiso* has explicitly based this strategy on Jaime Lerner's "urban acupuncture" methodology. Lerner, a renowned Brazilian architect and former mayor of the Brazilian city of Curitiba, proposes to focus on crucial "points" of the urban landscape (in a manner similar to what acupuncturists do with the human body) where interventions will yield the maximum and more visible results in the shortest period of time. The *Fideicomiso*'s work with Citizen Groups and cultural associations is a paramount example of the urban acupuncture approach. In fact, the very process of helping to establish and working with Citizen Groups started with a pilot project on previously abandoned Regina St, the first street to be converted into a pedestrian-only boulevard (*Kilometer 0 Magazine* webpage, various dates).

The *Fideicomiso*'s success in redeveloping the area along with the neighbors served as a catalyst for reestablishing trust between residents and city government. The pedestrian walkways

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[49] Xochimilco is the other Mexico City's historical area declared as a World Heritage Site jointly with Mexico City's historic center 25 years ago. Mexico is the country with the highest number of World Heritage sites in the Americas with 32 (UNESCO website, "Statistics on State Parties" at http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/stat/ accessed on June 29th, 2013).

started by the institution in coordination with the Authority for *Centro Histórico* in 2005 have had an impressive multiplying effect; both in terms of publicity and in generating interest on the part of the neighbors. Other examples of recent and ongoing visible urban interventions include renovating the iconic *Plaza Garibaldi* where traditional Mariachi groups congregate; revamping the famous *Reforma* Avenue where the Juárez monument, the Fine Arts Center and the modern Ministry of Foreign Affairs building are located; or the establishment of 31 "*ecobicis*" (ecological bicycles) stations established in the area up until the end of 2012 (http://www.guiadelcentrohistorico.mx/ accessed on several dates).

The Management Plan for *Centro Histórico* itself is one of the outcomes of the invited spaces the *Fideicomiso* has put in place: a series of workshops and consultations with residents and experts over the years and, more generally, its Citizenship School and Citizen Groups. The Citizenship School, in particular, is a key project for *Fideicomiso*'s progressives who had it in mind years ago while working at Mexico City's Division of Citizen Participation during the first PRD administration and envision it as a way to influence urban governance in favor of *Centro Histórico's* residents so that they are better equipped to resist the trend toward gentrification recent investments have brought. The School opened it on January 12, 2009 with the goal of "promoting… the participation of citizens in public issues [affecting] their environment" (Flores 2009: 3). It offers a structured series of courses on the history of the area, relevant laws and regulations, *Centro Histórico*'s Management Plan, and more general topics such as citizen participation trends around the city. And more than 300 residents and some business owners have graduated from it while creating new projects and initiatives to further their permanence in the center of the city.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows: section 4.2 puts *Centro Histórico* in context summarizing key background factors such as its history, its physical distribution, and the political and symbolic roles it plays in the city and the country as a whole; section 4.3 maps relevant

government interventions and actors before 2007 focusing on the conflicts and differences between new and long-standing residents and between residents, city government and street vendors (for summary of relevant collective actors see Appendix H); section 4.4 analyzes why 2007 is a turning point in the history of *Centro Histórico* with the expulsion of street vendors and a series of institutional changes in city government that allowed the *Fideicomiso* to become a catalyst for positive urban change; section 4.5 examines those changes in more detail analyzing what I call the "learning stage" of *Fideicomiso*'s work in *Centro Histórico* in 2001-2007 whereas section 4.6 shows how lessons from that learning stage became the pillars of an exponential growth stage that extends to the present; section 4.7 analyzes the Comprehensive Management Plan for *Centro Histórico* and how it articulates the logic behind Mexico City's emerging "pragmatic" urban regime; section 4.8 zooms in on the participatory side of this pragmatic urban regime as manifested in the area in Citizen Groups and the Citizenship School as deliberate countervailing mechanisms *Fideicomiso*'s progressives have developed against gentrification; and finally, section 4.9 summarizes the main conclusions from the chapter.

4.2. Background: Mexico City's *Centro Histórico* in Context

After decades of negligence, downtown Mexico City has started to regain some of its traditional grandeur. The vendors who used to cover the streets with their merchandise have been pushed out to other parts of the city or relocated into commercial plazas; parks and buildings have been "rescued" with the addition of public lighting and very needed coats of paint; public safety has improved with the expansion of police presence and surveillance systems; big neon and other colorful business signs have been taken down to show the beautiful architecture hidden behind them; there are cultural events everywhere and everyday. Some have become seasonal free shows offered by city government to all *chilangos* and their families. Those shows and the vibrant economy in the area continue to generate impressive amounts of garbage on a daily basis. But, as

most interviewees tell me, cleaning and collection services now pass by several times a day.

How did all this happen? How is it that street vendors, a force various governments reckoned with for decades, were finally displaced from their most lucrative location in the city? Is it indeed true, as many interviewees and other city dwellers believe, that the power and influence of billionaire Carlos Slim is behind all, if not most, of these changes? On the contrary, are the people who call *Centro Histórico* home the ones taking the initiative and calling the shots? What is the role of city government and how has it dealt with residents, merchants, private investors, and internally with more than 20 federal, city and public-private agencies present in the area? The rest of this chapter addresses these questions and argues that none of the answers are either/or. As I will show below, Slim and other investors initiated the last of a series of urban redevelopment initiatives in *Centro Histórico* in close collaboration with leftist (PRD) city administrations facing limited resources and hostile right-wing (PAN and PRI) national authorities. Regardless of its original goals, this redevelopment process opened spaces for invited citizen participation which many residents are taking advantage of.

Profound changes are taking place in this urban mosaic. Changes both welcomed and feared by residents and business owners. Changes that reinforce and build upon the centrality the area has in Mexican politics, partially due to the symbolism associated with *Plaza de la Constitución*. The Plaza of the Constitution, better known as *el Zócalo*,[50] is the public space per excellence for airing grievances in the Mexican and Mexico City's political systems ever since the famous student-led demonstrations of 1968 and is surrounded by the National Palace, the main city government buildings, and the country's first cathedral. This area of 9.1 square km and 668 blocks also contains 1,436 historical buildings protected by law. As a result, *Centro Histórico* enjoys a privileged status given both by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in 1987 and the

[50] "*Zócalo*" is the term to designate a city's central plaza in the city; the one in Mexico City being the most famous one in the country.

Mexican Federal government through a Presidential Decree declaring the area as a *Zona de Monumentos Históricos* (Area of Historical Monuments) on April 11, 1980.[51] The decree also established two contiguous rings or perimeters: *Perímetro A* and *Perímetro B*. The internal perimeter covers 3.7 square kilometers in what used to be the colonial city whereas the latter includes 5.4 square kilometers forming the outer and poorer ring around *Perímetro A* (Moreno Toscano 2008; Delgadillo 2003; PPCUH 2000). *Perímetro B* is also "a transition area between the old and the modern city" (Delgadillo 2003: 3).

As Mexican and international scholars have extensively documented, the area has been the focal point of power since the era of the Aztec Empire (Cortés Rocha & Cejudo Collera 2010; Moreno Toscano 2008; Coulomb 2000) and it contains the headquarters of more than 20 federal and local government institutions (Coulomb 2000). Maybe more importantly, the center has been claimed as such in the narrative around the figure of the *mestizo* carefully crafted as part of the hegemony-building project of the Mexican national state (von Hau 2007). For example, a *Fideicomiso* public document emphasizes that: "Due to the historical events that took and take place there, due to the fact that it contains monuments and buildings of high historical and architectural value, and because it gives room to important political, economic, cultural and religious activities, this area constitutes a symbol of national values and it contributes to strengthening our roots and our national identity" (*Fideicomiso* 2007a: 3). Picture 1 shows the *Zócalo* including the Cathedral in the middle (to the North), the National Palace on the right (East), city government buildings across the Cathedral (South), and various hotels and stores on the left-hand side (West) of the plaza.

[51] Mexican President López Portillo issued the decree after the discovery of the Aztec monolith representing ancient goddess Coyolxauhqui which, in turn, helped to locate the *Templo mayor* or Master Temple of Tenochtitlan (Escobedo Lastiri 2006).

Picture 1

Panoramic View of Plaza of the Constitution (El Zócalo)

Source: *Tourism Department, Government of the Federal District Webpage* (accessed on February 13th, 2011)

Pictures 2 and 3

Daily Life at *El Zócalo*

Source: Pictures taken by the author. Left: Western side of the Cathedral with some of the few remaining street vendors in the area (June 2010). Right: "Gay Pride" demonstration on the same street, one of the many political demonstrations taking place at *el Zócalo* throughout the year (June 2010).

Centro Histórico had its highest levels of density during the first half of the XX century when it was home to more than 500,000 inhabitants (CENVI 2010). At that time the center, like today, concentrated a vast array of government institutions. But it also fulfilled an important function in terms of housing especially for the country's economic and political elites. However, the latter had started to migrate to other parts of the city like *Roma Condesa* and that trend would only accelerate in the following decades. In 1970, population in the area had gone down to 355,000 people and around 72,000 houses. Thirty years later, 200,000 people had left and more than 36,000 housing units had been lost.

Similarly, housing density in 1970 was 94 houses per hectare compared to only 42 houses per hectare in 2000 (Suárez Pareyón 2010). Loss of population continued to worsen. According to the national statistics agency, *Centro Histórico* had a population of just 150,685 persons in 2005. That is, the area contained less than 2% of the 8.7 million people who live in the Federal District (INEGI 2008). Academic and government sources highlight the gap between high levels of coverage in terms of services and the "over-supply" of educational facilities, on the one hand, and the persistent vulnerability of long-time residents in terms of income and housing. Table 4.1. presents some of these features in comparison with the administrative subdivision (*"delegación")* most of the center belongs to, *Delegación Cuahtémoc*[52] to and the city as a whole.

Table 4.1.

Selected Characteristics Population in *Centro Histórico* compared to *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* and the Federal District (D.F.) -2005

Category	**CH**	*Cuauhtémoc*	**D.F.**
Population	150,685	521,348	8,720,916
Average number of occupants per house	4.4	3.2	3.8
Average years of schooling	9.5	11	10
Percentage of houses connected to electrical grid	97.9%	92%	95%
Percentage of houses connected to public water system	97.9%	92%	94%
Percentage of houses with toilets	97.3%	90.9%	94%

[52] A small section of *Centro Histórico,* mainly the neighborhood of *La Merced*, is located in *Delegación Venustiano Carranza* (see PPDUCH 2000).

Category	CH	*Cuauhtémoc*	D.F.
Percentage of children (0 to 14 yrs.)	23%		27%
Percentage of elderly persons (65 yrs. +)	8%		5.5%

Source: INEGI 2008, 2009

In spite of its density problem, several key informants emphasized that *Centro Histórico*, as other historic centers, has a large "floating" population comprised of tourists, vendors, and other visitors that city government is not compensated for serving. The 2007 Origin Destination Survey estimated that there are 14 people "linked" to the center per each resident living in the area and it put the total of people traveling daily to the center between 600 thousand and a million citizens (INEGI, 2007). However, local authorities are not compensated for the costs associated with this floating population be it with the prerogative of additional taxes or through access to federal funds since the latter are disbursed based on census data; a handicap also addressed in studies about the area (PUEC 2002; Morales Schechinger 2002). The survey also found that of those totals, 536,000 people concentrate in *Perímetro A* and those numbers increase significantly when there are public events taking place (INEGI, 2007). Shoppers, merchants, and street vendors coming from other parts of the city comprised most of the floating population (PUEC 2002) and this distribution has had serious implications for the political correlation of forces in the area as shown later on[53].

4.3. Local Governance and Citizenship in *Centro Histórico* before 2007

This section presents a first glance at some of the main collective actors in *Centro Histórico* before the exponential acceleration of revitalization efforts that started in 2007. Looking at them and their priorities before the turning point of 2007 is essential for understanding their reactions

[53] On the contrary, tourists and employees represent very small proportions of the total: tourists constituted 2.1%, employees working at retail stores represented 7.2%, and employees working at restaurants, hotels, and tourism-oriented stores were just 0.8% (Morales Schlesinger 2002). This population puts a lot of pressure on service provisioning; an important matter since the original infrastructure was put in place at the beginning of the XX century.

before the series of transformations that would start that year and the context progressive public officials at the *Fideicomiso* would have to navigate later on. As we will see in the rest of the chapter, those transformations were cumulative effects of mayor Ebrard's bold moves such as expelling street vendors from the area in October 2007, creating the *Autoridad* or Authority of the Historic Center as a coordinating institution the same year, and appointing "municipal socialist" Inti Muñoz as the new director of the *Fideicomiso* in 2008.

Here I start by looking at three of the traditional collective actors in *Centro Histórico*: national and local authorities, residents, and formal business owners. Street vendors and other informal actors are analyzed in later sections in the light of their removal in October 2007, an event that constitutes a turning point in the history of the city signaling the transition to Mexico City's pragmatic urban regime. Similarly, I analyze the role of private investors like Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim in a later section showing how its importance escalates after 2007; even though Slim started collaborating with city government as early as 2001.

Government Interventions up to 2007

The first thing to keep in mind in order to contextualize the history of government interventions in *Centro Histórico* is that, unlike *Roma Condesa* and other parts of the city, the center is the most visible stage for conflicts between the federal and city governments. In this sense, "the center constitutes an area privileged by public power in which two governments coexist physically, two levels of government which attempt to be in charge of the same territory, sometimes with contradictory logics and directions" (Perlo quoted in Escobedo Lastiri 2006: 85). As I analyzed in Chapter 3, such conflicts continue to permeate urban governance in Mexico City due to the financial constraints the national government dominated either by the PRI or the PAN can impose on city authorities, which have been in the hands of the center-leftist PRD since the

election of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1997 (Davis and Alvarado 2004).[54]

Those limitations can potentially threaten the legitimacy of any PRD administration, particularly in areas like *Centro Histórico* where problems have accumulated for several decades. Indeed, most analysts agree that the center's decline began as a result of rent control regulations made permanent in 1948 (Cortés Rocha & Cejudo Collera 2010). Those measures were successful in curtailing rampant speculation at the time. However, keeping them in place without further qualifications led many landlords to stop taking care of their buildings and contributed to the migration of the most affluent groups and the middle class towards other parts of the city (Coulomb 2000; Delgadillo 2003; Cortés Rocha and Cejudo Collera 2010). After more than three decades of neglect, authorities started paying attention to the area at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s "through the restoration of buildings acknowledged as part of the historical heritage" (Salazar and Paquette 2006: 440). This protectionist perspective manifested in the first massive intervention in the area, which took place between 1978 and 1982: the "*Centro Histórico: rescate de la mexicanidad*" (*Centro Histórico: rescuing Mexican identity*) program. This first intervention entailed officially defining the center as a monumental area through the 1980 decree and establishing a spatial hierarchy by dividing it into two contiguous rings, *Perímetro A* and *Perímetro B* (Cortés Rocha and Cejudo Collera 2010):

> The division of the center into two perimeters… in 1980 can be seen as unifying given that it created a common identity with historical value including what used to be the colonial city and the indigenous neighborhoods surrounding it. But the practical differentiation between both perimeters leads to different public interventions. Although we no longer talk about a poverty belt [*cinturón de tugurios*], it is clear that the priority is to protect *Perímetro A* over *B,* which must host the activities that are incompatible with protecting the [historical] monuments (Escobedo Lastiri 2006: 77).

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[54] For example, Davis and Alvarado refer to the way this conflict played out at the beginning of the Cárdenas administration: "The all-out assault on Cárdenas was clear, first and foremost, in the ways the PRI dominated national executive limited the fiscal resources available for urban policy in the capital. Starting in 1998, on the basis of a legislative decision passed with support from both PRI and PAN parliamentary groups in Congress, the Federal District was excluded from an important provision in the federal budget *(Ramo 33*) that earmarked funds for infrastructure and services at the state and municipal levels. Even as federal funds were eliminated, moreover, the Cárdenas government was forced to make good an immense public debt inherited from the former PRI administration, a pressing fiscal obligation that further restricted his urban policy-making capacities. " (2004: 147).

More importantly, national authorities implemented a massive housing program for populations displaced by the 1985 earthquakes during the second half of that decade. Mexican urban planners estimate that the authorities built or renovated 13,212 housing units in 796 lots of land out of 1,219 expropriated after the 1985 earthquakes (Coulomb 2000)[55] through the renowned "*Renovación Habitacional Popular*" (Renovating Popular Housing) program and the temporary institution created to implement it (Ortiz 1997). According to most of my interviewees, residents' resistance to being displaced to the periphery after the earthquakes represented a turning point in the history of the center and the city as a whole. Enrique Ortiz, the long-standing leader of the influential *International Habitat Coalition* emphasized, that those displaced by the earthquakes mobilized in such a massive and effective way that they managed to go back to their neighborhoods after living with relatives or in special camps for more than a year. They came back to live as "owners of the same property they used to live in and with their same old neighbors, which made it possible to keep in place the family and solidarity networks that are part of each neighborhood's cultural life and that strengthen their capacity to defend themselves against an unjust social structure" (Ortiz 1997: 200). The second wave of public interventions in Centro Histórico started in 1989 with the program *"Echame una manita"*[56] (Cortés Rocha and Cejudo Collera 2010). The 1990s represented a crucial policy shift away from preserving the national heritage in favor of a more holistic approach focused on restoring urban space. As such, this perspective:

> …Not only considered the traditional fields of town planning, but also the social, identity-based, cultural and economic aspects of downtown life, and attempted to include all the social actors involved in the problem (Rojas 2002). In Mexico City, this type of restoration policy was carried out during the 1990s through various programs (such as *Echame una manita*, in the early 1990s)

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[55] For the most part, these figures coincide with the estimates presented in the Urban Development Partial Program for *Centro Histórico*. However, the latter shows a higher number of housing units built or rebuilt in that period: 13,562 plus 1,271 "accessory" units, which combined benefited 67,410 inhabitants (PPDUCH 2000). On the contrary, Ortiz (1997) estimates that authorities expropriated more than 3,000 properties, which contained around 44,000 housing units.

[56] The title means: "Give me a hand." It also refers to helping someone with manual labor.

and culminated with the elaboration, in the year 2000, of a *Program for the Integral Development of the Historic Center* (Historic Center Trust, 2000)" (Salazar and Paquette 2006: 440).

Three institutions led the "regeneration" process in the 1990s: the fiduciary fund created for that purpose in 1990, the city's department of urban development and housing (SEDUVI), and the city's department of social development. Even though the fund or *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* had not yet become a public agency,[57] it was instrumental in creating the "Strategic Program for the Regeneration and Integral Development" of the area between 1998 and 2000. At the same time, SEDUVI charged CENVI, a renowned urban development think tank, with preparing the "Urban Development Partial Program for *Centro Histórico"* mentioned above (Salazar and Paquette 2006; Suárez Pareyón 2010). CENVI was also responsible for conducting a process of "urban participatory planning" within the project "Integral Regeneration of Mexico City's Historic Center" with support from the department of social development and the Dutch aid agency NOVIB (Suárez Pareyón 2010; *CENVI* webpage accessed on 12/20/10). These three sets of efforts led to the final version of the Urban Development Partial Program for *Centro Histórico* approved and published by the city's legislative assembly in September 2000.

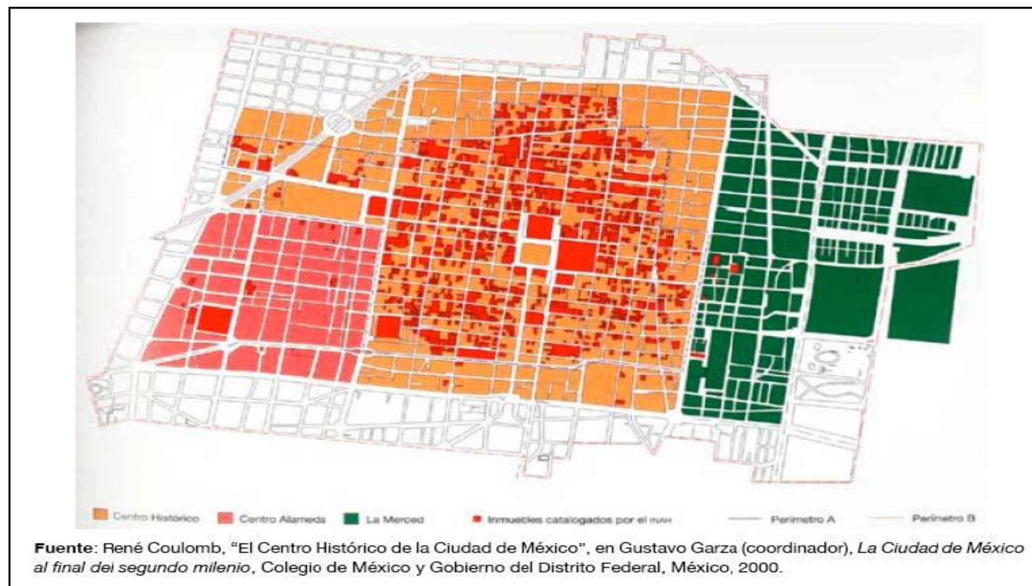
As discussed in Chapter 3, city government started implementing Urban Development Partial Programs under the Cárdenas-Robles administration (1997-2000) and they later became the focal point of López Obrador's (2000-2006) urban policy. The Partial Programs constituted the third level of aggregation within a planning system first structured around the city as a whole, which generates the Urban Development General Plans for the Federal District, followed by the Delegations, which produce their own Urban Development Plans. In practice, the *Delegaciones* and the legislative assembly have had a limited role (Mellado Hernández 2003), which, in turn, has made the Partial Programs even more relevant. Urban planning for *Centro Histórico* is contemplated in three Partial Programs corresponding to *Colonia Centro*; the *Alameda* section

[57] That change would take place in 2002 under mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

located West from *el Zócalo* where the Palace of Fine Arts and the *Alameda Central* are located; and *La Merced*, the popular neighborhood East from *el Zócalo* as shown in Diagram 4.1. below:

Diagram 4.1.

Three Partial Programs of Urban Development in *Centro Histórico* 1997



Source: Suárez Pareyón (2010), Plano 2 on page 39

Unlike Suárez Pareyón (2010) who situates the beginning of urban redevelopment projects in the work of SEDUVI and CENVI at the end of the 1990s, most analysts associate the turning point in the process of re-launching *Centro Histórico* with the government of mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador from 2000 to 2006 (e.g. Morales Schlesinger 2002; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Grayson 2007). For example, Paquette and Salazar (2006) sustain that even urban policies implemented during the 1990s had limited effects given the continued presence of street vendors, the transformation of residential buildings into warehouses, and the consolidation of red light districts in the Northern and Eastern sections of the center. First, in spite of its grassroots oriented agenda, López Obrador established a successful partnership with the private sector (especially with billionaire Carlos Slim), which provided a great deal of resources to "rescue" the center

through new investments. Second, people of all classes living in the center credited the mayor for addressing their security concerns (Davis and Alvarado 2004). Third, López Obrador managed to put in place the controversial "*Bando 2*" (Edict #2), which prohibited new construction in the periphery and promoted the expansion and renovation of housing units in the four centric delegations (Morales Schlesinger 2002; Tamayo 2007). Davis and Alvarado argue that, paradoxically, the latter was a move only someone with his political background could have achieved:

> López Obrador may have been able to sustain this harsh position against new housing construction because he has targeted only certain areas for this ban (and thus it is not a general principle of governance) and because his biggest supporters (including his private secretary and closest political confidant René Bejarano) come directly from those social movement bases built on the struggle for housing. Accordingly, this may be one of those situations where only a PRD leader who is secure and stable with a particular social base could actually repudiate their specific demands (in contrast to Cárdenas, whose political and social distance from the grassroots sector of his party seem to have limited his willingness to reject their claim) (2004: 157).

As we will see in the following sections, both Cárdenas and López Obrador's overall guidelines set the seeds for the exponential transformation that is currently taking place in *Centro Histórico*. However, López Obrador's legacy is more clearly related to it through the impact of Edict #2, and the transformation of the *Fideicomiso* into a key institution within city government. Moreover, his alliance with Slim and other private investors started one of the key pillars of the emerging pragmatic urban regime whereas the extensive social policies described in Chapter 3 are part of this regime's social and participatory side complementing the invited spaces *Fideicomiso*'s progressives have put in place.

Long-time and Elderly Residents vs. Intellectuals and "Center-Lovers"

De Alba González (2010) classifies residents in *Centro Histórico* into four groups: ordinary dwellers, the elderly, "*centrícolas*" (center-lovers) and intellectuals. The first two have been living in *Centro Histórico* for a long time whereas "*centrícolas*" and intellectuals are mostly newcomers. She found that old and new residents' perspectives on the historic center are radically

different. The latter are middle-and upper-middle class tenants and homeowners attracted by the luxury apartment complexes built in the last 15 years. Even though they constitute a minority, their preferences are already leaving an imprint; particularly in the *Alameda* section where "rescue" projects started. "*Centrícolas"* are middle and upper-middle class young singles and childless couples who moved to the area not only because of the housing opportunities tailored to them but also because they wanted to experience social practices long lost in other parts of the city. Like the intellectuals, these young and highly educated newcomers show interest in the historic buildings of the area. But they lack the sophisticated knowledge intellectuals have about the center's history and symbolism. They are more interested in "culture in a double sense: as a culture that is alive, as an expression of popular folklore, and as an artistic activity." They focus on " cultural places such as museums, theaters, art galleries, and concert venues, exotic places such as canteens, traditional and fashionable bars, stores selling rare objects or items they are not familiarized with and, of course, important historic buildings" (de Alba González 2010: 61).

In contrast, long-time ordinary residents have a very practical approach to the center because it is the space where they conduct their daily routines. The maps they drew when asked by the researcher and the references they easily remembered included historical buildings referred to by all the interviewees (the *Zócalo*, the National Palace, and the Cathedral). But their emphasis was on their daily rounds including familiar places and people: the tailor, the bakery, their favorite stores, the schools their kids attend, etc. The only overt manifestation of emotional attachment to the place seemed to be their interest in associational life.[58]

Elderly residents, unlike both new and ordinary residents, feel closely attached to *Centro Histórico* because of both practical and sentimental reasons and their level of vulnerability is higher than that of any other group (de Alba González 2010; Salazar & Paquette 2006). They are particularly vulnerable in terms of financial instability and limited mobility. A study conducted in

[58] In this regard, ordinary residents of today share important similarities with the "nucleus" of very involved and proud residents Eckstein (1977) studied in *Centro Histórico* in the late 1960s.

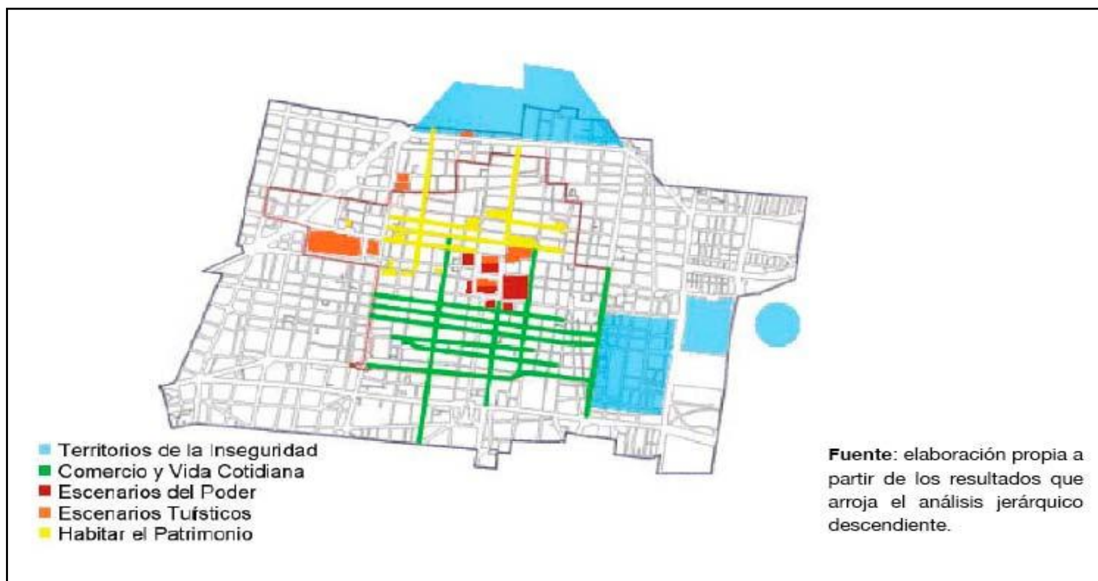
2003 found that staying in the area was a deliberate strategy on their part to reduce costs and keep their autonomy. They achieve their first goal by living in rent-controlled and other cheap housing units and the second by living in an area where they can still walk to conduct their errands and where people know them and protect them (Salazar & Paquette 2006). Additionally, elderly residents' emotional attachment to the center is based on the connections they establish between this geographical space and the time-bound space of their biographies and family histories:

> The *elderly resident*, unlike the *intellectual* or the *new centrícola,* lives more in the past than in the present. His spatial practices, his representations and the images provoked by *Centro Histórico* refer to memories created in a remote past more than a recent one. Their maps reflect the transformations the center has gone through since the 1940s: they refer to buildings according to the functions they had in another period (the former School of Medicine, the former Faculty of Architecture, the former *Sonora* movie theater, etc), to the premises that replaced other spaces ("what is now the Supreme Court of Justice used to be the *Plaza del Volador*", "*Corregidora* street used to be the ancient irrigation channel"), or to radical transformations of public space ("I was still able to see the garden that used to be at *Plaza de Armas*", "the streetcar station was at the plaza", "in my time the Latin-American Tower was the tallest building")… (de Alba González 65).

Despite differences among residents, their social representations were pretty consistent regarding the activities they associate with different parts of the center (de Alba González 2010). The sense of insecurity due to the prevalence of crime shown in previous studies (PUEC 2002) was one of the five social practices identified in the area and it is shown in light blue in Diagram 4.2, which correspond to the popular neighborhoods of *Tepito, Lagunilla* and *La Merced*; residents characterized those in green as the streets of commerce and daily life and the ones in red as the "backgrounds of power", which included the National Palace, the Cathedral, and the Supreme Court of Justice. Finally, sections in orange represented touristic areas like the Palace of Fine Arts, and they associated those in yellow with the idea of "inhabiting the historical heritage", i.e. having access to plazas, streets, and buildings they are able to enjoy directly, not only admire from afar (de Alba González 2010).

Diagram 4.2.

Five Types of Spaces According to Residents in *Centro Histórico*



Source: de Alba González (2010), Map 6 on page 71

Given the changes taking place in *Centro Histórico*, neighborhood organizations reflect the priorities of *"centrícolas"* vs. long-time residents in the area. The former are represented by the *Unidos por el Centro Histórico* association, which defines itself as "a neighborhood association for neighbors." Middle-class newcomers created the group in 2007 with the explicit goal of "improving the quality of life for residents and visitors through the defense, promotion, and vigilance of Mexico City's *Centro Histórico*" (*Unidos* webpage accessed on 2/13/11). Not surprisingly its emphasis is on "quality of life", safety, historical preservation, and services; the very issues recent high-income residents focus on (de Alba González 2010). The group's mission is explicitly associated with "preventing its destruction and deterioration so that it becomes the cultural and housing center its importance requires" (*Unidos* webpage). The main transformation achieved by *Unidos* has been to get the "Authority" or *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* to work with them in issuing an "Access Card" ("*Credencial de Acceso*") for residents and people who

work in the area to be used whenever there is a public event.[59]

In contrast, the *Unión de Vecinos y Comerciantes del Poligonal del Centro Histórico* (Association of Neighbors and Merchants from the *Centro Histórico* Area) is a low-income and low-middle class association. Its representatives are frequently on the news speaking against evictions and increases in the cost of services for long-standing residents and 140 small businesses[60]. For example, in 2006 the association argued that two real estate companies had been coercing residents and business owners to sell their properties by using "ganster-like" tactics such as paying off accumulated debt on the buildings without the owners' knowledge. Other tactics the association advisor, Teresa González, mentioned were closing businesses, getting street vendors to block access to them, and then making buying offers for less than 20% of each property's real value (Gómez Flores 2006). The 2006 complaint the *Unión de Vecinos y Comerciantes* made constitutes an important precedent insofar as the two real estate companies denounced by the association, *Inmobiliaria Centro Histórico* and *Lomelí Collet* belong, respectively, to Carlos Slim and Manuel Arango, two of Mexico's most important private investors and Slim later became a key figure in *Centro Histórico's* urban recovery[61].

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[59] There is a *YouTube* news video posted on the organization's website (posted on February 10, 2010): http://www.youtube.com/user/UnidosCH#p/a/u/0/i5pdq_Uyzr8. Also see Appendix I.

[60] Small businesses represented by the association include restaurants, and stores specialized in electronics, musical instruments, and office supplies.

[61] At the time of making this complaint, Teresa González said that both businessmen engaged into illegal strategies yet got away with it because of "the power of money and connections." The same article reports that the association was asking Slim and Arango to meet with them and lay out what their plans were and how people like their members would be included. Whether Slim and Arango themselves took part of such meetings (instead of their representatives) is unlikely. But it seems that there was some kind of understanding since now González and the association collaborate with *Fundación Centro Histórico*, one of Slim's foundations. This might explain why some regard González as a sold-out or, even worse, a sordid member of the city's political machine. Another explanation might be that the *Unión de Vecinos y Comerciantes del Poligonal del Centro Histórico,* which she now leads, generates this level of rejection among other leaders because it is, by far, the most newsworthy neighborhood association in the area. Something that clearly upsets several of the long-time residents I interviewed at the School for Citizen Participation for *Centro Histórico*. One interviewee went as far as to tell me in confidence that González threatened her in person. This person manifestly disagreed when I included the association in the mapping of actors I presented at the School at the end of my fieldwork trip in June 2010. Nonetheless, it is clear to me based on other interviews and newspaper coverage that the group is a crucial actor in *Centro Histórico*.

Traditional Formal Businesses and their Crusade against Street Vendors

Formal businesses have a long history of conflict and competition with street vendors and other informal economic actors in *Centro Histórico*. Starting with the national commerce chamber's branch for Mexico City (CANACO-DF in Spanish) several business associations studied the prevalence of street vendors in the area for many years to advocate for their removal (Medina 2008). CANACO-DF effusively congratulated city government just four days after the removal of street vendors in October 2007:

> At last, the ongoing demand by the National Chamber of Commerce, Services, and Tourism of Mexico City and thousands of citizens of removing street vendors from the streets of *Centro Histórico* has been paid attention to. Street vending in *Centro Histórico* appeared to be an unstoppable evil, which caused the closing down of hundreds of businesses every year, the laying off thousands of employees, and a loss of opportunities for growth for Mexico City (CANACO, Bulletin 175 -October 16, 2007).

Using similarly dismissive language, well-known business leader Guillermo Gazal has repeatedly referred to street vendors as "an infection" constituted by "invaders." Gazal is president of *Procéntrico*, the association of Merchants and Entrepreneurs United for the Protection of *Centro Histórico* founded in 1980, one of the two most important and vocal merchant associations in the area. *Procéntrico,* unlike CANACO, represents medium-size businesses. Gazal's most famous confrontation with *ambulantes* took place in June 1992 when, after inviting the press to one of several symbolic strikes he led against street vendors, he found himself being attacked with flying tomatoes by several of them (Cross 1997; Escobedo Lastiri 2006). The attack did not temper his frequent public interventions as shown in the multiple articles written about Gazal's and *Procéntrico*'s work and their confrontations with street vending leadership, particularly Alejandra Barrios from whom he claimed to receive death threats (e.g. Notimex 2005; Cedillo Cano 2007a, 2007b; Martínez 2007; Rodríguez Aceves 2007; Reyes Salgado 2010). Some of those articles cover Gazal

congratulating Ebrard's actions. However, by the end of 2009 Gazal was already "warning" Ebrard about the presence of 10 thousand "*toreros*" (street vendors on foot) in *Perímetro A*. This time Gazal was more explicit regarding the complicity of police officers:

> Gazal "denounced that elements in the police and public officials in charge of regulating public space are colluding with informal sector leaders and that the streets where *ambulantes* had been relocated have been occupied by "*toreros*." He alleged that a commander known as "Cobra" supervises patrol cars with plates P80101 to 116, which are the police officers who collect payments of 700 weekly pesos [approximately US$54] per each of the street vendors they allow to work" in the area (*El Universal* 2009: na).

The second business association in the area is the Union of *Centro Histórico* or UDCEN led by its president, Víctor Cisneros Taja. Although more recent, Escobedo Lastiri (2006) argues that UDCEN has displaced *Procéntrico* as the official spokes-organization for the sector. My own research does not seem to support that claim since both organizations have an important presence in the media. If anything, Guillermo Gazal had more coverage especially in 2007. Nonetheless, Cisneros Taja and UDCEN have been very active particularly through their alliance with an organization called "*El Círculo*" (The Circle) as well as collaboration with the city's tourism board. An important point in common between both organizations and CANACO is that they all emphasize the possible connections between street vendors and illegal activities.[62]

More importantly, UDCEN as well as CANACO and *Procéntrico,* did not seem to feel threatened by the possibility of real estate pressures leading to gentrification. Interviewed on this subject, Cisneros Taja acknowledged that such a change would marginalize business owners like himself but dismissed the likelihood of *Centro Histórico* becoming a "Manhattan tenochca" referring to the area's original name of Tenochtitlan (Escobedo Latiri 2006). In sum, big formal businesses and their leaders played an important role in paving the way for creating the pragmatic urban regime. They represent one of the winning sectors behind a new urban pact based on both economic gain and extensive social policies for the poor. As shown, they were not afraid of the

[62] "We have an estimate that a little bit more than 80% of the goods sold in the streets of *Centro Histórico* have an illegal origin…" said Cisneros Taja to a newspaper less than a month before city government's deadline to expel street vendors (Martínez 2007).

possibility of gentrification and were clearly interested in removing street vendors as the main obstacle to positive changes in the area.

Finally, it is important to note that there is another kind of formal businesses in *Centro Histórico.* Unlike associations representing large (CANACO) and medium-sized businesses (*Procéntrico* and UDCEN/*El Círculo*), small business owners have mixed feelings about the urban renovation initiated at the beginning of the 2000s and what they see as lack of coordination with city government. An informant whose family has been involved in retail for five generations explains the importance *Centro Histórico* has for his business:

> I was born at the Sonora Market and grew up in *La Merced*. And when we had the chance, we moved to the Big Leagues, which is here in the center. This is the Big Leagues. Why? Because here you have the great opportunity to see further than what you can see in other places. In other words, people from all over the world come here. The Chinese come, the Americans, the Cubans, Guatemalans. We have clients from Costa Rica. We send merchandise to the United States: New York, Los Angeles… (Carlos, 42, small business owner – December 2009).

This kind of small traditional commerce started to change decades earlier; most notably when the national government moved the central food market ("*central de abastos*") to another part of the city in 1982 (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). Nonetheless, the high accessibility of the area through a subsidized subway and other forms of cheap transportation still makes it the ideal shopping destination for the urban poor. At the beginning of the decade, a study estimated that approximately half of city residents who received a daily average income of $11.7 per house did their shopping in the area (FEECM cited in Morales Schechinger 2002). In contrast with the middle and upper-middle class residents who live and shop in the Southern and Western parts of the city, the typical client in *Centro Histórico* comes from the poorer Northern and Eastern parts of the city and even from outside the Federal District. He or she shops at stores specialized in areas such as clothing, shoes, jewelry, electronics, books, furniture, and others (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). Each of these sectors tends to be geographically clustered in specific parts of the center.

4.4. The (Local) State comes back in: The *Fideicomiso* as a Catalyst of the Pragmatic Urban Regime in Centro Histórico

The Historic Center's Fiduciary Fund or *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* has been playing a critical role in the area's recovery, especially under its current director Inti Muñoz who was appointed in 2008. Muñoz and his closest circle are not only firm believers in "municipal socialism" (Goldfrank and Schrank 2009) but have also been strategic in joining forces with the influential *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* created in 2007. Although formally transformed into a public institution in 2002, the original seed funds for the *Fideicomiso* came from billionaire Carlos Slim and other private investors from the area when they and other city public figures founded it as a public-private partnership in 1990 (Plan de Manejo; Davis and Alvarado 2004; Silva Londoño 2010). That is, the *Fideicomiso* was *not* created in response to neighborhood demands. If anything, its origin and the public legitimacy provided by respected journalists, historians, and other public figures signaled early on that action to revitalize the center was taken from outside rather than inside the area.

Nonetheless, the *Fideicomiso* has become a liaison between the *Autoridad*, the rest of city government, and neighborhood residents as well as an advocate for the later. This has taken place as it has evolved from being a public-private fiduciary fund, which had more of an awareness-raising purpose, to becoming a public fiduciary fund with important operative functions under the socially progressive administration of mayor López Obrador in 2002[63]. As the *Fideicomiso*'s corporate agreement ("*contrato constitutivo*") specifies, its mandate is to "promote, arrange, and coordinate the implementation of actions, public works, and services with individuals and competent authorities, which result in the revitalization, protection, and conservation of Mexico City's Historic Center…" (Fideocomiso 2007a).

The *Fideicomiso*'s transition from a private-public institution to becoming an innovative

[63] At that time, López Obrador appointed Ana Lilia Cepeda de León, a sociologist and political economist trained in Mexico and the former Yugoslavia, as the *Fideicomiso*'s director.

and autonomous public agency has contributed to keeping it outside from the corporatist structure and culture of the Mexican government. This has been possible because of three main reasons: (a) because its very nature as a fiduciary fund gives it a high level of economic and political autonomy rarely enjoyed by Mexican public agencies and officials, (b) because the human resources it operates with are personally and professionally committed to the Mexican version of "municipal socialism" (Goldfrank and Schrank 2009) through their direct affiliation and/or affinity with PRD's progressive social and urban agenda geared towards defending the social, economic, and political rights of poor (and other marginalized) residents; and (c) because its original founders keep a close eye on its activities and continue to be important economic and mediatic allies for its work mainly through the *Consejo Consultivo del Centro Histórico* (the Historic Center's Advisory Board). I will address each of those key dimensions in the following sections.

The Fideicomiso's Mandate and Organizational Structure

Unlike the hyper-specialized focus characteristic of other public institutions in the city, public officials at the *Fideicomiso* see their work as part of a holistic transformation of the area as shown in the overall goal of *Centro Histórico*'s Management Plan: "Achieving a better quality of life for its residents, maintaining its cultural and historic identity and protecting the architectural, urban, and cultural heritage" (GDF/FCH 2011: 12). This holistic approach, however, cannot be taken as a given since it has been the result of a major process of transformation. As a private fiduciary fund created in 1990, the *Fideicomiso* was for many years mainly comprised of finance experts with a focus on providing the financial means for *Centro Histórico*'s reconstruction. However, functioning as a regular fiduciary fund without any regulatory or technical prerogative to intervene directly prevented it from having an impact on the area's recovery despite extensive support from the private sector:

> Starting with the election of the first head of state of the Federal District in 1997 (engineer Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas) the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México* (FCHCM) was reinforced and it formulated a study... the "Program for the Comprehensive Development of Mexico City's Historic Center" (FCHCM, 2000). However, since it did not have direct attributions regarding infrastructure and minor regulations (such as the ones related to commercial licensing, for example) the FCHCM [the *Fideicomiso]* did not have tools to intervene. Therefore the little it was able to accomplish was through intense negotiations, not always with favorable results given the very traditional views of public officials within the same city government who had different opinions about priorities regarding the city and the historic center in particular (Hiernaux and González 2008: 45-46).

All this started to change when mayor López Obrador prioritized *Centro Histórico's* recovery as a flagship of his administration (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Greyson 2007). He integrated the *Fideicomiso* into city government in 2002 and fostered new urban programs that allowed the institution to scale up resources received from the private sector while increasing the amount of resources it acquired from the federal and local governments. Starting in 2008, the *Fideicomiso* went through another key transformation with a new director who formed a multi-disciplinary team, adding forward-looking architects, social scientists and community organizers to the previous mix of finance and accounting experts. This change, plus the collaboration it started with the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* created in 2007, gave the *Fideicomiso* the clear mandate it needed to play a key role in triggering the urban renewal of *Centro Histórico* following a different path to that charted by change agents in other cities. That is, devising strategies to avoid gentrification and move beyond the kind of purist or conservationist approach that had prevented previous urban programs in *Centro Histórico* from being successful (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2007; Hiernaux and González 2008).

At that time of its creation in 1990, the *Fideicomiso* benefited from a close relationship with *Grupo Carso*, billionaire Carlos Slim's conglomerate, which provided funds and other resources that were channeled through the Historic Center's Advisory Council and *Fundación Centro Histórico* (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Silva Londoño 2010). The Foundation for the Historic Center (*Patronato del Centro Histórico A.C.*), the NGO that served as the fund's initial trustee, as well as Mexico City's Department of Finance, which took upon that role in 2002, have

continuously extended the fund's prerogatives through various amendments to its corporate agreement. Some of the original functions established in the 1990 agreement include the responsibility to receive and administer the funds and assets donated to the *Fideicomiso* and ensure their proper reinvestment; coordinate with other institutions and individuals in implementing improvement projects in the area; advise individuals interested in implementing such projects; publicize its activities in the area as well as their results through "any kind of editorial initiatives"; do fundraising and manage the resulting funds in favor of "homeowners, developers, renters, service providers, and/or users of real estate" located in *Centro Histórico* since they are "to receive preferential treatment in accessing the benefits derived from the fiduciary fund's actions" (Fideicomiso 2007b: 7-8).

Most of the changes to the agreement expanding the *Fideicomiso*'s mandate took place in 1993 and 1995 while the Foundation for the Historic Center was still its trustee. Those amendments include but are not limited to giving the *Fideicomiso* authority to transfer, buy or sell real estate in the area in order to fulfill its goals; to request loans for its operations as long as they don't exceed the size of the fund; and to foster the creation of additional fiduciary funds, associations or firms devoted to revitalizing *Centro Histórico.* Additionally, changes made at that time emphasize that all assets and interests accumulated in it can only be used (and therefore must be reinvested) for implementing the fund's mandate. More recent amendments in 2007 also charged the *Fideicomiso* with the temporary task to coordinate Mexico City's festivities celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of Mexico's independence and the hundredth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution.

The *Fideicomiso* was divided into three divisions: a real estate department, an outreach department, and an administrative and financial department. As of early 2013, the former director and other staff from the outreach department formed a new division, the citizen participation department. According to my interviews with the directors of the first two departments as well as

my observations at the *Fideicomiso*, the first one is in charge of collaborating with residents and national and international investors in order to “unfreeze” *Centro Histórico’s* real estate market. That is, in order to overcome the rigidity of the market (manifested in the virtual absence of buys and sells in the area) by creating attractive conditions for investors while also assisting current and potential new residents in their efforts to improve the state of their dwellings or move into the area. For example, the real estate department is in charge of assisting the Citizen Committees in their dealings with the contractors the committees select to renovate their blocks, it created the free real estate website showcasing renting and selling offers in *Centro Histórico* (www.vivirenelcentro.com.mx), and it coordinates renovation efforts of multiple pedestrian-only streets, parks, and other spaces with other public agencies in the area (also see *Km0* website, various dates).

Up until recently, the *Fideicomiso*’s outreach department was in charge of fostering citizen participation in the institution’s projects. People in this division work closely with the real estate department in helping to create and assisting the Citizen Committees, meeting with business owners to persuade them to take down signs that are too big or invasive (and therefore violate current regulations), coordinate with UNESCO, the *Autoridad*, and other public institutions in teaching both residents and business owners about the importance and characteristics of *Centro Histórico’s* architectural and intangible heritage, and so on. Creating and consolidating this division represented an important change in the structure and mandate of the *Fideicomiso*; a transformation that new director Inti Muñoz and his team had to carefully manage when he was appointed in 2008. Initially, this work was done through the institution’s outreach and promotion department where Muñoz appointed Ernesto Alvarado as director. It wasn’t until early 2013 that a separate division was created to work exclusively on citizen participation. Alvarado moved to that new division with part of the staff from the outreach department and they have continued to expand their coordination with *Centro Histórico’s* neighbors. However, this

addition to the structure of the *Fideicomiso* is not yet reflected in official publications and norms due to procedural delays.

The Believers: Fideicomiso's Progressive Practitioners

As a fiduciary fund traditionally dominated by finance experts and accountants, the *Fideicomiso* welcomed urban experts and participation-inclined officials committed to "municipal socialism" (Goldfrank and Schrank 2009) only when mayor Marcelo Ebrard appointed current *Fideicomiso*'s director, Inti Muñoz, in 2008. Muñoz is a young Mexican politician who earned his early political training as a student leader at the legendary public university, UNAM. UNAM was the place where he met the allies who would later work with him in building such innovations as a Citizenship School for *Centro Histórico's* neighbors. In the meantime, Muñoz gained national visibility being elected as a PRD federal representative ("*Diputado Federal*") at age 29. He has also been part of PRD's national council and is known for his work defending indigenous and LGBT minorities as well as promoting new public policies in culture and education. Muñoz has a double major in civil engineering and political science and his collaborators are social science graduates, artists or architects with a strong social sensibility. Conversely, the head of the *Autoridad*, Alejandra Moreno Toscano, is an older and very well known urban historian who had been professor of both Inti Muñoz and mayor Ebrard; a personal relationship that proved crucial for the successful coordination both directors achieved under Ebrard.

This subset of *Fideicomiso* officials belongs to the most progressive PRD groups and other leftist groups. The two interviewees who have been at the forefront of the *Fideicomiso*'s Citizenship School, Ernesto Alvarado and Edgar Castelán, came from such groups, had been Muñoz's fellow student leaders at UNAM, and had also worked at Mexico City's Division of Citizen Participation. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the city's first elected mayor, created that division during his term (1997-2000) and its leaders saw their work fostering citizen participation as a

crucial step for "recovering the city's social fabric", as they put it. Even before working at the *Fideicomiso*, they were focused on promoting large and very visible projects and events in *Centro Histórico* in order to, on the one hand, prove that citizens in Mexico City were capable of organizing themselves and collaborating civilly and, on the other hand, help decriminalize public demonstrations as they had done before as student leaders at the end of the 1980s. The Division of Citizen Participation had more than a thousand young volunteers trained as "citizen participation promoters" and most of their attention was on assisting citizens in learning to re-use the city's (almost always the historic center's) public space.

The work *Fideicomiso*'s believers had previously done at the Division of Citizen Participation and other participatory projects explains their current emphasis on the democratic nature of public space and the role it plays in elevating a city's "self-esteem"; a point they consistently made during our interviews. It also speaks to the enthusiasm with which they adopted Jaime Lerner's "urban acupuncture" strategy. Lerner, a renowned Brazilian architect and former mayor of Curitiba[64], focuses on crucial "points" of the built environment (in a manner similar to what acupuncturists do with the human body) where interventions will yield the maximum and more visible results in the shortest period of time. The idea is to generate a virtuous circle of solutions in which residents are actively involved[65]:

> I see cities not as problems, but as solutions. I would argue that any city, willingly, can be transformed for better in a relatively short period of time, provided that we embrace a more generous approach to them.
>
> This perspective misses the fundamental understanding that the city is a collective dream. To build this dream is vital. Without it, there will not be the essential involvement of its inhabitants. It is crucial *to project successful scenarios that can be desired by the majority of the population, to the*

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[64] Curitiba is a city in Southern Brazil (1.8 million inhabitants) famous for its innovative urban policies, particularly in the field of transportation. Lerner is credited with initiating and implementing the latter and those policies have served as blueprints for similar projects in other Latin American cities. For example, the designated-lane rapid bus system has been implemented in Mexico City (Metrobús) and Bogotá (Transmilenio) to name a few cases (also see Cervero 1995; 2004).

[65] This perspective is similar to Alinsky's (1946, 1971) emphasis on achieving visible and relatively easy wins at the beginning of a confrontation to start undoing the experience of powerlessness and negative precedents the "have-nots" he organized had had up to that point.

> *point that they commit to it*. Building this vision of the future is a process that acknowledges, welcomes and embraces the multiple visions that managers and inhabitants, planners, politicians, businesses, and civil society have of their city and sets up co-responsibility equations to make it happen.
>
> The more generous this vision and the sounder the equations, *the more good practices will multiply and, in a domino effect*, the more rapidly they will constitute a gain in quality of life and solidarity (Harvard Business Review Blog Network, April 2011 accessed on December 22nd, 2012; my emphasis).

Adopting the urban acupuncture logic explains not only why the *Fideicomiso* started most of its interventions in the most visible section of *Centro Histórico* (the inner perimeter or *Perímetro A* where most tourists go) but also why the decision was to focus on sometimes small but very symbolic streets and activities. Having learnt from their experience as student leaders and their role as organizers of public events, the believers are convinced of the importance of using key events and projects as demonstration effects for inducing cultural change. However, while still working at the Division of Citizen Participation, they ran out of time to implement a more systematic approach to good governance at the local level: a citizenship school where popular education methods to foster citizen involvement on a regular basis. As we will see at the end of the chapter, they would achieve that goal years later while working at the *Fideicomiso*. Some of the believers also had experience in implementing the first participatory budget started in Mexico City; that of Delegación Tlalpan in the northern part of the city as analyzed in Chapter 3.

According to my interviewees, bringing a new perspective that goes beyond architectural and financial considerations was a challenge they dealt with by sharing a lot of information and fostering deliberate spaces for debate and exchange among the staff after they entered the *Fideicomiso* with Muñoz in 2008. For example, Ernesto Alvarado, the current director of Citizen Participation at the *Fideicomiso*, and Edgar Castelán, an actor and activist who is Alvarado's main collaborator, elaborated a 3-page document entitled "Reflexions on Community Social Interventions." This document contains what they called the "main conceptual elements to address in this first phase of internal exchange" (Castelán and Alvarado 2008: 1) among team

members at the *Fideicomiso* given the "doubts" and "confusions" the process of working with *Centro Histórico* neighbors had generated at the beginning of the process.

The document differentiates between "authoritarian," "assistantialist" and "participatory" community interventions. After describing the first one as the type of interaction with communities where a unified response responds to special circumstances (such as natural disasters) or is the result of an authoritarian regime, they address the differences between the other two which, in turn, reflect their stance on the existing urban regime in Mexico City vis-à-vis the one they have contributing to create in its place. The assistantialist type "…is the favorite intervention model in neoliberal schemes… That is the case because it promotes individualism, ensures conformism through palliatives and seriously limits the chances for community self-management capabilities" among community groups (Castelán and Alvarado 2008: 2). The participatory type, in contrast, is "an intervention model privileged in the initiatives promoted by [social and political] forces identified with the left. It seeks to adhere to social justice and equal opportunity criteria" (Castelán and Alvarado 2008: 2). Along similar lines, the believers explain the need to develop a methodology for participation consistent with their goals and their vision of democracy:

> It is not advisable to have goals related to democracy and social justice while utilizing imposing or unjust work methods, a mistake frequently made… sometimes deliberately and sometimes unconsciously…
>
> In colloquial terms, we can refer to a beautiful phrase by a Canadian neighborhood leader at an exchange between the government of Mexico City and NGOs from Quebec at Ottawa's Parliament in 2000: democracy and participation are like doing the dishes, the moment you stop doing it (or promoting it), in that precise instant they start to reappear and the gaps start to accumulate." That means that participation **must be promoted always and in every opportunity** (Castelán and Alvarado 2008: 2; emphasis in the original).

The Supporters: the Fideicomiso's Advisory Council

A third reason that explains why the *Fideicomiso* has succeeded in staying outside the corporatist structure of the Mexican government is the fact that its founders have kept giving it their support while continuing to monitor its actions. An example of this was when Carlos Slim and the rest of

the Advisory Board's Executive Council for *Centro Histórico* were guests of honor at the formal event presenting the area's Comprehensive Plan on August 16th, 2011 and celebrating the 10-year anniversary of the Advisory Board. Slim gave a speech recapitulating their involvement in *Centro Histórico's* revitalization during the last 20 years[66] and referred to the creation of the *Fideicomiso* as a key moment in that history.

More generally, the Advisory Board, constitued in August 2001, is credited with jump starting the process of colaboration and learning that preceded the current period of rapid multiplier effects started in 2008. The Board includes 130 representatives from academia, city government, the federal government, the private sector, and civil society. The Board's Executive Committee has ten members: three (3) members from the national (federal) government, three (3) from city government, and four (4) from the private sector and civil society (*GDF 2011*). As we will see in the following section, the Executive Committee benefited from its members' long history of involvement with the area as well as their reputational and material resources. Its civil society and private sector members included writer and historian José E. Iturriaga as its Honorary President for-life, billionaire Carlos Slim, historian Guillermo Tovar, cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, and journalist Jacobo Zabludovsky[67].

4.5. The *Fideicomiso* as a Catalyst: The Learning Stage (2001-2007)

An important reason that explains the success of *Centro Histórico's* current transformation after so many failed attempts in the past has to do with the fact that the actors behind it went through an intense learning phase from which they drew important lessons that inform their actions today. That phase started in 2001 with the creation of the *Centro Histórico's* Advisory Board described in the previous section. Several interviewees refer to that instituion as a site for practicing real

[66] See http://www.carlosslim.com/preg_resp_unesco.html accessed on January 4th, 2013.

[67] http://www.fundacioncentrohistorico.com.mx/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=6 accessed on January 7th, 2013.

multi-sector collaboration after years of mistrut in both national and city government. Once again, several informants and *Centro Histórico's* Management Plan (GDF 2011) mentioned the leadership provided by the likes of Carlos Slim, Jacobo Zabludovsky and cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera as fundamental in finally being able to implement actions to renovate buildings and public spaces as well as social projects "that gave the initial push for the sustained revitalization of the area in the last 10 years" (GDF 2011). Moreover, the Management Plan explicitly states that it represents a continuation of the work initiated with the Advisory Board and that the Board "is also incorporated as a mechanism for following up and evaluating" the Plan (GDF 2011).

Working with Slim and others as Pillars of a Pragmatic Urban Regime

Learning the lesson about multi-sector collaboration (one that finally seems to reap the benefits from the intense citizen mobilization the city went through in the aftermath of the 1985 earthquakes) relates to the fact that the Mexican state is seldom successful at doing things by itself; instead it should rely on collaboration between the federal and city governments as well as with the private and the civil society sectors. When mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador incorporated the *Fideicomiso* as part of city government, he announced an initial investment of 500 million pesos (approximately US$45 millions at the time) to start renovating an "urban nucleus" of 34 blocks (*Fideicomiso* webpage accessed on 6/05/10; *Protocolo* 2003). Even though only 325 million pesos had been spent in the area the following year according to an interview with Ana Lilia Cepeda de León, then *Fideicomiso*'s director (*Protocolo* 2003), this first investment had a large multiplier effect. This was the case because López Obrador managed to attract investment by Carlos Slim and other private capitalists but also due to the $50 million contribution the Spanish government made for the establishment of its cultural center. The

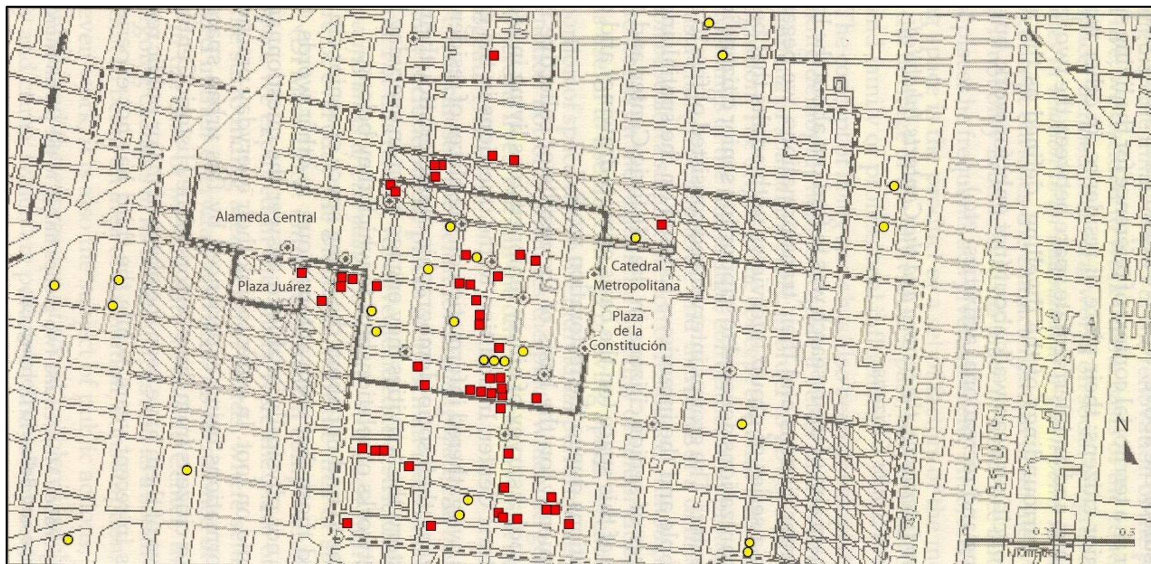
fiduciary fund also works with potential investors and landlords using new strategies to establish innovative partnership business models to funnel new investment in the center*:*

> There are also investors, mainly Spaniards, Chinese, and Italians who are interested in investing in *Centro Histórico.* But the main problem here is that owners want to sell very high. Therefore, what has been proposed is to make investment partnerships in which the owner contributes the land and the investor contributes the capital and the operating mechanism for the hotel. This way, they [the investors] cut their investment by half. In the long run, they have to include this partner, they have to pay him dividends. But this investment modality is faster. It's easier… That is a model that we are trying to implement (Architect Vicente Flores, Real Estate Division Director, *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* -June 2010).

Private investment increased significantly in 2001-2006 thanks, at least in part, to tax incentives Mexico City's government implemented during that period. Official estimates indicate each Mexican peso (approximately US$0.09 at the time) city government invested in projects in *Centro Histórico*, the private sector invested 58 (approximately US$5) (*GDF 2011*). Private sector estimates for period 2001 to date indicate a lower proportion of 20 Mexican pesos invested by the private sector vis-a-vis each Mexican peso city government has invested (*Fundación del Centro Histórico* website, accessed on June 30, 2013). Both private and official sources point to a high concentration of private investment in *Grupo Carso*, Carlos Slim's conglomerate including its real estate arm, *Inmobiliaria Centro Histórico*, S.A. They have renovated more than 60 buildings for mixed use purposes and 55 of them have housing units that old and new residents occupy ever since (HighBeam Research 2009; *GDF 2011*). Other important private actors that bought real estate and have contributed to renovating buildings in *Centro Histórico* are finantial group BANAMEX (now part of Citigroup) and the Spanish Cultural Center. Diagram 4.3 shows Slim's (in red) and other private investors' (in yellow) buildings in *Centro Histórico.*

Diagram 4.3.

Map of Slim's and Other Investors' Properties in *Centro Histórico*



Source: Salazar and Paquette (2006), Map 1 on page 438

Carlos Slim's visibility as the most important private investor in *Centro Histórico* has been extensively documented (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Escobedo Lastiri 2006; Salazar and Paquette 2006; Hiernaux and González 2008; Silva Londoño 2010) and is highly controversial. Slim is one of the richest people in the world and has been the richest Latin American man for years (Mehta 2007; Cárdenas Estandía 2009; Stevenson 2010). Interestingly, several informants said that Slim was "practically unknown" in Mexico up until 1994 when he started to aggressively expand his conglomerates with what several interviewees regarded as special favors granted by then president Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Mexican journalist Gastón Pardo sustains that *Telmex*, the formerly state-owned phone company, was worth 7 billion dollars at the beginning of Salinas de Gortari's administration but it was sold to Slim in just 1,756 million. Pardo estimated the market value of *Telmex* to be 20 billion dollars mainly due to a 360% increase in the price of the service even though "privatization [of *Telmex*] was sold to the public by saying that it would bring price reductions" (Gastón Pardo 2004).

Many informants also consider his role in the renovation of *Centro Histórico* as a self-interested move intended to strengthen the position of *Telmex*. According to this perspective, Slim has taken advantage of the process seeking publicity and real estate gains since his company needed to replace the old telecommunications grid, which would have entailed massive public works anyway. Other interviewees just see him as a savy businessman who has taken advantage of good business opportunities and tax incentives others ignored. Greyson (2007) disagrees and argues that, regardless of the profits resulting from Slim's involvement in *Centro Histórico,* actions such as helping to create the *Fideicomiso* indicate that he is also interested in building his legacy for the future[68].

Greyson has a point since the two objectives are far from being mutually exclusive. To be sure, even Slim's peers in real estate have publicly recognized his work in the center. He received the 2004 ADI annual award for "rescuing *Centro Histórico*" (Association of Real Estate Developers, *ADI webpage* accessed on November 7th, 2010). Certainly, Slim's ubiquity and dominance not only in Mexico City but also in the Mexican economy at large[69] made him the most visible figure among those associated with urban redevelopment in the center besides López Obrador himself (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Salazar and Paquette 2006). Most analysts and interviewees identify Slim's presence as a key factor in the most recent transformation of *Centro Histórico* given that his ventures have served as a significant demonstration effect for other investors. For example, Salazar and Paquette highlight that this significant wave of private

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[68] For example, in an interview for Spanish newspaper *El País Semanal* in 2007, Slim himself declared that he does not put a monetary cap on his philanthropic work and estimated the joint value of his three foundations, *Fundación Telmex, Fundación Centro Histórico,* and *Fundación Carso*, at 5,000 billion dollars (Relea 2007).

[69] The presence of Slim's conglomerates in Mexico has become so pervasive that an Associated Press reporter featured on the Huffington Post described it as follows: "Slim's conglomerate of retail, telecom, manufacturing and construction companies so dominate the Mexican commercial landscape it is often easy for Mexicans to find themselves talking over a Slim-operated cell phone at a Slim-owned shopping center waiting to pay a bill to a Slim-owned company at a Slim-owned bank. If the line is too long, they can catch a quick coffee at a Slim-owned restaurant" (Stevenson 2010). Greyson calls this phenomenon "Slimlandia" (quoted in Mehta 2007).

investment "had failed to be consolidated in the 1990s" (2006: 440-441).

López Obrador's former protégé, mayor Marcelo Ebrard (2006-2012) continued collaborating with the private sector in *Centro Histórico* while also maintaining and expanding López Obrador's extensive social policies in the city. Both administrations have thus helped to "consolidate" private investment in this part of the city in what some view as an integral component of Ebrard's "*distancing strategy from the actions of previous PRD administrations*, by looking after demands from the middle class and the business sector more directly; in this way, Ebrard's administration would show his capacity to undertake projects [jointly] with the private sector" (Silva Londoño 2010: 215; my emphasis).

Ebrard's administration would certainly become closer to the private sector than it was the case with both López Obrador and Cárdenas. Nonetheless, his approach built upon policy changes he made as López Obrador's minister of the interior including controversial moves regarding public security *a la Guiliani* for which López Obrador protected him vis-à-vis attacks from various sectors. In particular, Ebrard implemented a vast "Plan of Public Safety" in 2002-2006 in *Centro Histórico* by significantly increasing police presence and setting up hundreds of cameras in the area (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Silva Londoño 2010). The private sector in *Centro Histórico* had certainly demanded those changes for years and Ebrard would indeed expand on them during his tenure as mayor. However, I argue that they did not imply a rupture with "previous PRD administrations" but rather a pattern of continuity in the construction of a PRD-led pragmatic regime in the city; an urban regime which is precisely built upon the combination of business friendly and poor-friendly urban and social policies. A previous PRD administration, namely López Obrador's, had already put this transformation in motion by taking advantage of incentives at the national level and forming a clear alliance with private actors in *Centro Histórico.* Even though it exaggerates the role played by real estate in the pragmatic urban regime, the following quote by Hiernaux and González illustrates the division of labor between

the private sector and city government:

> It is worth noting that the deregulation of housing credits and the support given to real estate companies during President Vicent Fox's six-year period (2000-2006) were decisive factors for that sector to seize control of the revitalization process of the historic center producing an unprecedented transformation in its physical appearance and an undeniable revaluation of its heritage. In this governance agreement a particular urban regime was established where the State was left, among other attributions, the discursive expression of the renovation –which was left to it so that it could use it as an electoral and advertising instrument- the task of improving the infrastructure (renovating it in 37 blocks of crucial importance on the Zócalo-Fine Arts Palace) and the regulation-repression of street vendors (Hiernaux and González 2008: 46).

Collaborating with other Government Actors

The same spirit and methodology the *Fideicomiso* applied in its relationship with Slim and other private investors, was used in collaborating with the rest of the federal and city government. *Fideicomiso* leaders have learned to navigate the complex institutional web present in the area including a national tier of federal ministries, particularly those involved in social development, and urban planning; city level agencies from the Government of the Federal District ("*Gobierno del Distrito Federal*" or GDF); and a third layer of private and non-governmental organizations exclusively created to deal with problems accumulated over the years in *Centro Histórico*. In terms of inter-institutional coordination, the *Fideicomiso* communicates with other city government institutions on a regular basis through the members of its Technical Committee. This organ is presided by the mayor and it oversees (and if necessary, approves) most of the tasks mentioned above. It includes representatives from the departments of finance, urban development, public works and services, economic development, environment, culture, and tourism, *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* (the city's subdivision both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* belong to), the Mexican Association of Real Estate Professionals (AMPI), the National Chamber of Commerce (CANACO), the Association of Real Estate Developers (ADI), the state-owned real estate firm SERVIMET, the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico,* and the *Fideicomiso*'s general director (*Fideicomiso* 2007b).

As I will show in the following section, the creation of the *Autoridad* made this kind of inter-governmental collaboration much smoother by giving that institution a strong mandate; a lesson derived from *Fideicomiso*'s experience in dealing with highly fragmented federal and national authorities in the area. As Table 4.2 shows below, the *Fideicomiso* itself only provided 20% of the funding invested by national and city authorities from 2002 to 2008. It invested more than 27 million dollars out of the approximately 137 million the city invested in *Centro Histórico*'s redevelopment between 2002 and 2008. Nonetheless, the fund has been able to magnify the impact of the financial resources it pools with other institutions while also multiplying the impact of otherwise fragmented and, in several cases, demobilized or weak social actors such as poor residents on *Centro Histórico*'s revitalization.

Table 4.2.

Public Investment in *Centro Histórico's* Urban Redevelopment 2002-2008

Institution	Investment in Mexican Pesos (milllions)	Investment in US Dollars[70] (milllions)	Percentage
Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico (FCH)	MXN 359.1	USD 27.24	19.9%
Secretaría de Obras y Servicios (Federal District's Department of Public Works and Services)	MXN 1,118.1	USD 84.83	62%
Sistema de Aguas de la Ciudad de México (Mexico City's Water System Office)	MXN 324.1	USD 24.59	18.1%
Total	**MXN 1,801.3**	**USD 136.66**	**100%**

Source: GDF/FCH. 2011. *El Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México. Patrimonio de la Humanidad (Mexico City's Centro Histórico. World Heritage.* PowerPoint Presentation July 2011)

More generally, funding for urban development in *Centro Histórico* from public and private organizations alike confirms that PRD city authorities have been markedly eclectic in their approach to fund raising and inter-institutional collaboration; an important indicator of the

[70] Using an exchange rate of MXN / USD of 13.18 for December 2008.

pragmatic urban regime they have started to establish in the city. A 2011 presentation summarizing key achievements in this process highlights the diversity of funding sources present in the area in comparison with other historic centers. Mexico City's *Centro Histórico* was the only one to receive funding from *all* of the following sources: public banks, government agencies, designated budget lines, autonomous public institutions, public fiduciary funds, tax reliefs, subsidies, private corporations, private individuals, public-private partnerships, international organizations, and others (GDF/FCH 2011) as shown in Appendix J. In other words, PRD's approach to urban development is notably proactive and eclectic even for what is customary regarding historic centers. For instance, data for 2007 and 2008 showed that each Mexican peso given to investors as a tax subsidy returned an average of MXN$61 invested in the area: MXN$42 in 2007 and MXN$79 in 2008 (GDF/FCH 2011).[71]

Moving beyond the "Normative Locks" of Conservationism

Finally, another key lesson from the learning period of 2001-2007 for the *Fideicomiso,* the *Autoridad,* and other actors is that for the urban redevelopment process to be successful in *Centro Histórico* they needed to move beyond purist approaches used in previous interventions. As the new Management Plan states, they needed to avoid the "normative locks" earlier urban development plans represented since they did not allow for mixed uses of buildings and/or ignored the role private investment could play directly in recovering buildings and infrastructure for new real estate uses (*GDF 2011*). Such protectionist perspective manifested in the first massive intervention in the area, which took place between 1978 and 1982: the "*Centro Histórico: rescate de la mexicanidad*" (*Centro Histórico: rescuing Mexican identity*) program

[71] These figures represent approximately US$4.69 of return (US$3.23 for 2007 and US$3.23 for 2008) per Mexican peso (approx. US$0.07) using an exchange rate of MXN / USD of 13 as an average for 2007 and 2008. Tax relief mechanisms and subsidies include Article 292 of Mexico City's Financial Code, which establishes an 80% tax relief for individuals and firms investing in building or renovating real estate for commercial purposes in *Centro Histórico's Perímetro A and B* (GDF/FCH 2011).[71]

and several interventions later on. The first urban renewal program based on a less restrictive approach to land was the 1998 Management Plan the *Fideicomiso* initiated (Hiernaux and González 2008).

This lesson also derives from failures or limited success seen in other cities where city governments privileged such purist trends at the expense of mixed uses and, as a result, were not able to contain trends towards gentrification. *Fideicomiso's* newspaper *Km0* showcases various international experts referring to the pros and cons of urban redevelopment in Barcelona, Santiago de Compostela, Quito, and others, while offering advice to avoid such mistakes in Mexico City in order to avoid gentrification (*Km0* website, various dates). For example, renowned Catalonian architect Jordi Borja explained at an international seminar in *Centro Histórico*:

> What is a sure thing is that the market is going to tend to monopolize the land as much as possible and since this has a lot of visibility, there will be projects for office high rises. And there will be gentrification, there will be mini Manhattans, and so on. This has happened, has been happening in Barcelona and some other places. Therefore, policies implemented in a historic center are never ending. You must always be correcting something (Ortega 2012).

The clearest example of learning this key lesson was the issuing the 2010 Regulatory Program for Commercial Establishments Land Use ("*Programa de Regularización del Uso del Suelo de Establecimientos Mercantiles"*), which allows for a more flexible approach to mixed land use allowing more uses than those established in the previous Partial Urban Development Plan for *Centro Histórico* (GDF 2011). This crucial policy change represents a very explicit departure from urban policies followed in the rest of the city[72] including an area with so many similarities to *Centro Histórico* as *Roma Condesa*. That neighborhood is still bound by the Partial Urban Development Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* where mixed uses are very limited. The new flexible

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[72] An interesting remnant from those earlier urban planning policies has been keeping the differentiation between the *Perímetro A* and *Perímetro B.* Experts such as Escobedo Lastiri (2006) have criticized this categorization for contributing to making the latter too vulnerable as a so-called "transition area."

approach the *Fideicomiso* and others are implementing in *Centro Histórico* is summarized in the new Management Plan:

> So far the conservation doctrine and regulations applied to the center have been based on eminently cultural foundations, putting aside the economic, social, and political dimensions where most of the mayor difficulties to put those regulations into practice lie. Therefore, conservation occupies the place of what is thought but very rarely the place of what is actually realized. Designing more fortunate scenarios for heritage conversation and urban renovation of this area require rethinking the foundations on which the criteria for heritage conservation, attention mechanisms, and usage goals are based. For that, it is required the involvement of all sectors, especially of those that have legal authority over such real estate and of the people who work on preserving those properties (GDF 2011).

It is this last factor, the deliberate combination of both the economic and the social/cultural sides of the urban renewal equation, what constitutes the key lesson learned from urban renewal processes in other cities and from previously failed attempts in *Centro Histórico*. This dimension is also the key manifestation of Mexico City's pragmatic urban regime, which evolves more visibly in the following phase of the *Fideicomiso*'s work in the area as analyzed in the next section.

4.6. The *Fideicomiso* as a Catalyst: The Exponential Growth Stage (2007-Present)

Resources invested through the *Fideicomiso* are having a greater impact than previous renovation attempts in *Centro Histórico*. That is the case, in part, because the *Fideicomiso* is a decentralized or autonomous institution and such status allows for more flexibility than that usually afforded to city government agencies. For example, it has moved away from the legal and contentious policies authorities used in the past in favor of negotiating with and assisting the actors involved.[73] Having started covering less than 40 blocks in the very center of *Perímetro A*, redevelopment projects initiated by the fund can now be found in virtually the entire perimeter and some interventions have tentatively started in *Perímetro B.* By the end of 2012,

[73] Instead of pursuing legal actions against hundreds of business owners who had neon and other big signs advertising their businesses because they were violating the law, people from the *Fideicomiso* visited them repeatedly and covered the costs of taking the signs down. Although incredibly time-consuming, most interviewees agreed that this has been one of the most successful interventions in *Centro Histórico* to date.

Fideicomiso's director, Inti Muñoz, highlighted that more than 120 blocks had gone through "material, comprehensive, and urban recovery" since 2001. He added that those blocks represented a total of 200,000 square meters of rebuilt streets including new sidewalks, lighting, 2,000 recovered building fronts or *"fachadas",* as well as the recovery of more than 25 previously abandoned public plazas and parks (Sin embargo Staff 2012).

I argue that 2007 is a turning point that separates the initial learning stage in which the *Fideicomiso* and its allies started to experience a moderate yet important level of success regarding its goal of "recovering" the historic center from what I call a stage of exponential growth where the lessons drawn from the learning period are explicitly transformed into policies that accelerated the rate of positive change in the area. This new stage begins as the result of three main developments which are, at the same time, policies city government implemented based on lessons drawn from the learning period and from previous periods in the history of Mexico City: (a) the Authority or *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* is created in January 2007 in order to "coordinate multiple agents and actions to achieve a more all-inclusive development" in the area (*GDF 2011*); (b) Marcelo Ebrard's administration managed to finally relocate street vendors into commercial plazas starting in October 2007, a feat that several administrations had fruitlessly attempted before his; and (c) Inti Muñoz is appointed as the *Fideicomiso*'s new director. The rest of the section addresses each of those developments whereas the following section analyzes the 2011-2016 Management Plan as the most recent and holistic planning instrument for the area. The Management Plan reflects the lessons derived from the learning stage insofar as it attempts to seek complementarity between the various kinds of interests present in *Centro Histórico* instead of considering each of them as mutually exclusive dimensions of urban redevelopment; a common mistake previous administrations had made.

The Autoridad del Centro Histórico: the Normative Arm of Urban Redevelopment

An important lesson PRD's city administrations drew from the learning stage between 2001 and 2007, as well as previous government interventions in *Centro Histórico*, was that urban redevelopment in the area would not be possible without addressing the fragmentation of authority in it. That is, the historic center concentrates most of the federal, and local government authorities and, as it is customary in most Mexican (and Latin American) government bureaucracies, they were not efficient and agile enough in working with one another. In fact, this is one of the reasons why I argue that successful and inclusive urban redevelopment must have been next to impossible in *Centro Histórico* and much easier to accomplish in *Roma Condesa* where government authorities are less in number and functionally and more geographically concentrated. Nonetheless, the opposite has been true. City government actors were able to find a solution to their protracted coordination problem in *Centro Histórico* and, by so doing, have partially compensated for the relative lack of organized citizens that can serve as their counterparts in steering the urban redevelopment. N contrast, *Roma Condesa* has the opposite problem. It has a less serious coordination problem on the government side and a healthy associational life but the lack of an institutional catalyst such as the *Fideicomiso* has made it impossible to capitalize on the work of its long-standing citizen associations.

López Obrador started to address *Centro Histórico's* government coordination problem by converting the *Fideicomiso* into a public agency in 2002. But mayor Marcelo Ebrard and his collaborators decided a strong normative arm was needed to complement and support the efficient implementation machinery the *Fideicomiso* was starting to become. Using his prerogatives as Head of Government of the Federal District, Ebrard created on January 22, 2007, a government "Body to Support the Activities of the Head of Government, called *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* [Authority of the Historic Center], concentrating by delegation, all the responsibilities of the Offices of the Federal District's Central Public Administration which have material spheres

of activities in that zone" (GDF 2011). This new "support Administrative Entity shall act with [the following] criteria of unity, autonomy, functionality, efficacy, coordination and impartiality for planning and managing *Centro Histórico's* urban, economic, and social development" (GDF 2011).

In what constitutes a remarkable case of government expediency and efficiency, the *Autoridad* has become the normative arm of an all-encompassing transformation process in the center. Its vast and clear mandate combined with the close relationship the head of the *Autoridad,* historian Alejandra Moreno Toscano, had with mayor Ebrard has allowed the institution to mediate and solve conflicts among government institutions and between those and private and civil society actors in areas as diverse as housing and urban development, economic development, the environment, public infrastructure, social development, transportation, tourism, culture, and public safety (*GDF 2011*). The concentration of these normative functions in the *Autoridad*, in turn, gives the *Fideicomiso* a sort of political and institutional support that has helped to accelerate and significantly expand its own actions and the way it can coordinate its work with both public and private actors. Moreover, the division of labor between the *Fideicomiso* and the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* has become an explicit collaborative formula, which places the former as the "coordinating body" of *Centro Histórico*'s transformation while the *Fideicomiso* works as the "implementing body" of such process. As recent op-ed pieces on *Fideicomiso's* newspaper *Km0* highlight, UNESCO is now recommending this method for interventions in other historical sites (Km0 Staff 2012). For instance, *Km0* quotes Nuria Sanz, Director for Latin America of the UNESCO World Heritage Center, congratulating Mexican authorities for the implementation of this formula on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the area's declaration as a World Heritage Site (Km0 Staff 2013).

Moreno Toscano's reputation as a capable and impartial academic has been key in this regard as well as what several interviewees perceived as her high level of influence on her former

student, mayor Ebrard. Even though it is difficult to know whether she saw citizen participation as a priority at the beginning of her tenure, Muñoz and her team were able to convince her and she seemed to be a convert by the time I interviewed her at the end of 2009. In her view, the involvement of those who live and work in *Centro Histórico* was essential to maintain the area as a "living center"; something she emphasized had been already lost in many historic centers in the region as a result of developing them exclusively as tourism sites. Her interest in avoiding such empty beautification seems to be the reason behind the *Autoridad*'s direct involvement in some areas beyond its normative role. That is the case of economic and urban development initiatives such as a issuing the mixed land use certificates that building owners can use for tax deduction purposes and a program for small entrepreneurs targeted to the street vendors relocated through the initiative analyzed in the following section[74].

Relocating Street Vendors: Achieving an "Impossible" Task

Several key informants emphasized that for policies for *Centro Histórico* to be sustainable they would have to take into account the "floating" population that visits, works or studies in the area. At the time of my first visit to Mexico City in October 2007, street vendors were still the most visible and controversial group comprising this floating population. On the morning of October 12, however, they were ostensibly missing from the center's inner ring or *Perímetro A* as a result of their negotiated displacement from the area following mayor Marcelo Ebrard's instructions. As I will show in this section, although most *chilangos* doubted the measure would last, it has so far and it has altered the way both citizens and visitors relate to the area. Unlike other groups from the center's floating population, street vendors have been targeted as a "problematic" sector for decades. Multiple studies address the history of conflicts between street vendors ("*ambulantes*")

[74] See Zamorano, Regina. 2011. "Créditos para el comercio popular" [Loans for popular merchants] *Km0* No. 34, Mayo 2011 (http://guiadelcentrohistorico.mx/kmcero/acciones-de-gobierno/cr-ditos-para-el-comercio-popular accessed on May 30, 2013).

and city authorities (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996; Cross 1997; Escobedo Lastiri 2006; Crossa 2009; Silva Londoño 2010). The main reason behind such interest is that, in contrast with informal sector actors in other Latin American cities, *ambulantes* in Mexico City constitute an impressively organized force. Historically linked to the PRI, street vendors emerged as a relevant collective actor in the 1950s and eventually became part of the city's urban regime albeit in a subordinate role.

Cross and Pineda Camacho's (1996) historical analysis shows that, even though attempting to contain street vendors in formal markets had been a frequent maneuver since colonial times, famous city administrator Ernesto Peralta Uruchurtu took this policy to a new level in the 1950s[75]. By so doing Uruchurtu created the intermediation model that all authorities after him would follow in their dealings with street vendors; a model that Ebrard's intervention in 2007 interrupted (if not changed for good). Uruchurtu's model became the blueprint for future street vendors associations. Not only did they grow accustomed to supporting a political patron in exchange for gaining the "right" to occupy public spaces but also, their leaders' training derived from resisting the harsh repression suffered by those without access to the new markets. Cross and Pineda Camacho (1996) argue that this is why so many leaders are women since they or their mothers constituted the majority of the street vendors excluded from relocation to the new markets during Uruchurtu's administrations (see Appendix K). In contrast with other collective actors co-opted into the PRI's corporatist machinery though, the informal sector became a crucial

[75] President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines designated Uruchurtu as city administrator ("regent") in 1952. Called, Mexico City's "Iron Regent", he lasted 14 years in the post and unsuccessfully tried to become PRI's presidential candidate based on his popularity in the city. Uruchurtu used a repressive but efficient managerial style to gain the favors of the upper and middle classes while manipulating popular sectors. His administration focused on preventing illegal invasions of land and "cleaning" the city center of street vendors. Nonetheless, the very mechanisms he used to control the latter set the foundations for the high levels of articulation and influence they have to this day. His administration would only relocate street vendors in the new markets built for them once they organized in associations of, at least, 100 members each (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996). This gave leaders a stable source of loyalties since vendors needed their recognition as association members to survive. Leaders then would bargain with the PRI in exchange for their followers' support (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996; Cross 1997; Crossa 2009; Silva Londoño 2010). Uruchurtu's tactics in the 1950s and 1960s were so extreme that markets built during his tenure still represented 78% of the 67,066 existing markets in 1993 (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996).

component of the party's social base when land reform and industrialization slowed down (De la Peña in Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996).

The so-called "popular sector" (mainly comprised of government employees and urban movements such as the *ambulantes*) became more important as the ruling party ran out of resources to distribute to farmers and unions. Uruchurtu's strategies became ineffectual as the urban sector, and particularly street vendors, became more powerful even though he had created the conditions for their rise (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996). However, city administrators continued to follow Uruchurtu's carrot-and-stick policies even when they no longer rendered any political gains. The PRI only reversed this strategy after the 1991 elections when several wins at the local level made President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and Regent Camacho Solís (1988-1993) focus instead on their need to "leave their imprints in Mexico City's history" (Crossa 1997: 98). This explains the government's surprising attempt to eliminate the presence of *ambulantes* through a 1993 decree issued by the legislative assembly banning them from the center's *Perímetro A,* where 10,000 of them concentrated. Once again, expelling street vendors from the center was a temporary success. Even though there was a protracted "*guerra de las banquetas*" ("war of the sidewalks") with various showdowns between street vendors and the police, the ensuing economic crisis undercut the measure (Silva Londoño 2010). By 1995, 4,000 street vendors had already returned to the center as a survival strategy against the inflationary crisis started the year before (Cross 1997; Silva Londoño 2010).

It is against this backdrop that Ebrard declared his intent to get street vendors out of the historic center almost fifteen years later, and his collaborators started to negotiate with representatives from the most important street vendors associations. In fact, some saw his intentions as a continuation of his previous work as the city's public security chief under López

Obrador and the way he adopted Rudolph Guiliani's "broken windows" policy[76] (Davis 2007; Silva Londoño 2010). Ebrard rescued the 1993 edict the city's Legislative Assembly had issued as part of Regent Camacho Solís' policy (Silva Londoño 2010). At the time of their expulsion in 2007, journalists estimated the total number of vendors in both *Perímetro A* and *Perímetro B* to be around 30,000 (Llanos et al 2007). Ebrard's Minister of the Interior, José Angel Avila Pérez, explained city government actions in terms similar to those used by Uruchurtu and Camacho Solís in the 1950s and 1990s:

> City government "managed to clear 192 blocks of informal commerce thanks to negotiations and agreements [conducted] with various organizations [of street vendors]. This work implies the acquiescence of 66 organizations, which represent 98 per cent of merchants who sell in public spaces in *Centro Histórico's Perímetro A*. Traders accepted to be relocated into 36 properties that city government has set aside for this purpose with a total extension of approximately 30 thousand square meters. The goal is not –said the public official-to terminate street vendors' economic activity but rather to relocate them into places that are suitable to conduct it while making it compatible with the desire of all city dwellers and city government for streets to be for the circulation of people and cars and for [people's] enjoyment" (Rodríguez Aceves 2007: na).

Despite the negotiations Avila Pérez mentioned, several associations forcefully rejected the measure. In what can be interpreted as actions based on her political affiliation, Alejandra Barrios, a legendary street vendors leader closely linked to the PRI, headed a demonstration with thousands of street vendors on October 11, a day before the date announced for their expulsion (*ProcesoFoto* 2007). Various public officials and a famous business leader claimed to receive threats from street vendors including Barrios in the previous months (Cedillo Cano 2007; Cuenca and Martínez 2007) while some leaders of street vendors' organizations tried to take advantage of the situation to expand their influence.

Additionally, the associations opposed to the relocation started using creative tactics to

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[76] Guiliani's policy, in turn, was based on James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling's (1982) controversial "Broken Windows" theory, which focuses on recovering the link between order-maintenance and crime-prevention by preventing order-breaking activities (such as breaking windows or littering) before they accumulate or lead to more important infractions.

circumvent it "weapons of the weak" style (Scott 2008). According to Crossa (2009) those associations decided to "resist the entrepreneurial city" based on a sense of solidarity and shared fate with their comrades that goes beyond having the same economic activity[77]. Crossa found that the biggest and strongest of the two associations she studied, Alejandra Barrios' *"Asociación Legítima Cívica Comercial"* (Legitimate Civic and Commercial Association), was able to use both formal and informal forms of resistance. On the formal side, Barrios, her family, and her followers have used their political connections in city government for decades (Brayman 2003). More recently, they regained access to permits issued by *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* even though those were supposed to be discontinued (Crossa 2009). On the informal side, the organization has developed a sophisticated communication system using special signals and walkie-talkies to alert street vendors when the police enter their surroundings. In contrast, smaller associations use spontaneous tactics such as "*torear*"[78] as their weapon (Crossa 2009; *El Universal* 2009).

Unlike previous attempts to relocate street vendors out of the center's sidewalks, and in spite of the creativity Barrios and others have shown in resisting it, Ebrard's measure has been successful to date (see pictures 4 and 5). The presence of street vendors continues to be virtually non-existent at least in the center's inner ring or *Perímetro A*. Moreover, the measure increased Ebrard's approval in Mexico City as early as December 2007 and it is still seen as one of the main accomplishments of his administration, which ended in December 2012. According to a survey published on the renowned Mexican journal *Reforma*, the population considered that measure as city government's most important achievement with an approval

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[77] Crossa highlights that for many of them, "…the street is the place that provides them with an honorable and respectable means of making a living. At the same time, the street is a place where they construct and strengthen ties with friends and family members" (2009: 52).

[78] "*Torear*" is the Spanish verb for bullfighting. "Rather than erecting a wooden or metal stall on the street and staying there all day, *torear* entails selling goods while remaining mobile; toreros are Mexico City's nomadic vendors. Some do so by walking around the streets carrying their products or attaching them to their body. Others place their products on a blanket or piece of long plastic sheet on the ground. If police officers enter the area, *toreros* grab the four corners of their blanket or sheet, pick up their products, and run to a safe area" (Crossa 2009: 56). Strictly speaking, both associations used this tactic but the former did it in an organized manner using the communication system mentioned above.

rate of 37%, followed by the expropriation of land used by organized crime in Tepito and Iztapalapa (22%), and the extension of Metrobús lines (19%) (Silva Londoño 2010).

Pictures 4 and 5

Correo Mayor St before and after the Removal of Street Vendors in October 2007

Source: *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* webpage accessed on February 17, 2011, "Reclama Ebrard mayor inversión en Centro Histórico" ("Mayor Ebrard calls for more investment in *Centro Histórico")*

Additionally, it is important to note that many other street vendors associations, including those closer to ruling PRD, peacefully complied with the measure and were relocated into new plazas city government had built or renovated. When I interviewed Clara Franco, one of the most important association leaders from a younger generation after Barrios (see Appendix K), she shared that she and her peers had understood the illegality of their presence on the streets. Franco, who was also a student at the *Fideicomiso*'s Citizenship School where I met her, saw the whole ordeal as part of a series of positive changes taking place in *Centro Histórico* given that "…for the first time in a long time, city government is paying attention to the center." Nonetheless, she also shared her concern about the fact that the majority of her

"*compañeros*" (comrades) had not been relocated into plazas. She also questioned only enforcing the 1993 decree without further changes because "conditions have changed a lot" after its inception.

Pictures 6 and 7

Street Vendors relocated to Commercial Plaza in *Centro Histórico*

Source: The author. Left: Interior of the plaza. Right: a former street vendor in front of her stall (December 2009).

The Fideicomiso's new Director: a Bet for Comprehensive Change

As mentioned earlier, Inti Muñoz, the *Fideicomiso*'s new director Ebrard appointed in 2008, is a young yet seasoned Mexican politician with a strong organizing background as a student leader at UNAM. Muñoz has been key to expanding the scope of *Fideicomiso*'s activities due to his varied interests in culture and education as well as his double professional training as a civil engineer and a political scientist. He and his collaborators have been able to expand the agenda for *Centro Histórico's* urban renewal by transforming the *Fideicomiso*'s organizational culture *and* by being very strategic in their relationships with other city government agencies, especially with the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* whose influential leader enjoyed Marcelo Ebrard's trust as a close ally.

Not surprisingly, Muñoz refers to the goals for *Centro Histórico* and the city as a whole using language similar to that of Moreno Toscano. For instance, he is quoted in an October 2012 interview saying that *Centro Histórico* has already overcome its "urban crisis" while emphasizing that the goal of city government was to build a vision of sustainability "seeing Mexico City as a living city, and not as a museum, betting for its repopulation and livability" and conserving its heritage "not to be an untouchable totem but for people to use it, enjoy it and know it" (Sin embargo Staff 2012). Muñoz has used his ideological closeness and collaboration with both Moreno Toscano and former mayor Ebrard to advance the *Fideicomiso*'s influence and implement its agenda of inclusive urban redevelopment. From his and his collaborators' point of view, avoiding gentrification and getting both new and long-standing residents involved in urban redevelopment would be the only way to attain the goal of having a "living historic center."

4.7. The Comprehensive Management Plan: a Pragmatic Urban Regime in Action

Centro Histórico's 2011-2016 Management Plan is the most explicit manifestation of Mexico City's pragmatic urban regime to date even though the key elements of this new regime had been forming at least since 2001. The Plan combines an emphasis on the progressive social and urban agenda of *Fideicomiso*'s believers in citizenship participation with the conservationist view of cultural interests dedicated to protecting the historic heritage in the area, and the pragmatic view of focusing on economic recovery held by others in city government (most notably former mayor Marcelo Ebrard), private investors, and traditional business associations.

That is the case, in part, because city government attempted to include all relevant perspectives making this urban planning tool for *Centro Histórico* a "hybrid" document, as one informant put it, which reflects the contradictory and, at the same time, complementary agendas of different groups as shown in Table 4.3. The Plan attempts to establish "cross-cutting links

between urban management and social participation" (GDF 2011: 8) combining the economic, cultural, and social dimensions each of these groups privileges. Additionally, the Plan focuses explicitly on "creating synergy among the actors involved": city residents, visitors, businesses, and public and private institutions.

Those agendas are revealed in six strategic dimensions included in the Management Plan: (1) urban and economic recovery, (2) livability, (3) heritage protection, (4) mobility, (5) risk prevention, and (6) citizenship. Programs to achieve those strategies include projects as diverse as the establishment of pedestrian-only corridors, street improvement projects, recovery of buildings of historical and social value, building and "urban image" improvement activities, public safety, housing, support to education, culture and tourism, as well as economic activities (GDF 2011). The rest of this section focuses on strategic dimensions 1 (urban and economic recovery) and 2 (livability) as they are the ones most clearly aligned with creating a pragmatic urban regime along with strategic dimension 6 (citizenship), which will be analyzed in the following section. I will also address some aspects of the other strategies insofar as they are relevant to the double emphasis on economic recovery vs. rescuing public space characteristic of the plan. Table 4.3 summarizes the Management Plan's strategic dimensions and main programs included in the Management Plan and the collective actors associated with them:

Table 4.3.

***Centro Histórico's* 2011-2016 Management Plan**

Strategic Dimension	Sub-dimensions	Main actors/promoters
1. Urban and economic recovery	1.1. Urban recovery 1.2. Economic recovery	Real estate developers Traditional businesses *Fideicomiso*'s real estate division Consultive Council
2. Livability	2.1. Public space 2.2. Recovery of housing units	*Fideicomiso*'s participation division *Fideicomiso*'s real estate division
3. Heritage protection	3.1. Information about architectural heritage 3.2. Protection of buildings/real estate 3.3. Renovation of unused or at risk buildings/real estate	UNESCO National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) *Fideicomiso*'s real estate division

Strategic Dimension	Sub-dimensions	Main actors/promoters
	3.4. Protection of personal property 3.5. Building restoration	*Fideicomiso*'s participation division
4. Mobility	4.1. Pedestrian-only corridors 4.2. Reordering mobility 4.3. Public transportation	*Fideicomiso*'s real estate division *Fideicomiso*'s participation division Federal District's Department of Transportation
5. Risk prevention	5.1. Multi-sector coordination 5.2. Prevention measures	Federal District's Department of Civil Protection
6. Citizenship	6.1. School for Citizen Education and Heritage Conservation (Citizenship School) 6.2. Civic culture 6.3. Participatory planning workshops for heritage protection 6.4. Promoting community life and cultural values 6.5. Connection with academia	*Fideicomiso*'s participation division UNESCO University of Sor Juana Intellectuals and other universities

Source: The author based on *GDF* 2011

Urban and Economic Recovery: Cultural, Housing and Commercial Interests over Land Use

The *Fideicomiso* has been playing a crucial role in detangling or, in the words of an informant, "unfreezing" a dormant real estate market in *Centro Histórico*. In order to understand the real impact of this role we need to go back to the beginning of the last decade. A study about real estate activity found that offers registered in 2000 in *Colonia Centro,* one of the three colonies *Centro Histórico* includes, represented only 0.33% of the stock in the area. That is, only 81 out of 23,827 properties were offered for sale (Observatorio Inmobiliario/PUEC 2002). Similarly, a 2002 academic seminar concluded that the real estate market dynamic in Centro Histórico was characterized by the accumulation and layering of multiple problems: a frozen real estate market, land invasions, the heterogeneity of hidden "sub-markets", the prevalence of intestate properties (where ownership is not clear given the absence of a proper will), among others (PUEC 2002). The director of the real estate division at the *Fideicomiso* and other informants echoed those conclusions in my interviews with them more than 8 years later. The root of this problem is found

in the clashes between groups with different stakes regarding land use in the area. This diversity of land use interests is reflected in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4.

Land Use Distribution in *Centro Histórico* -2000

Type of Use	Percentage
Public facilities (schools, hospitals, etc.)	28.47%
Commerce	13.73%
Housing	12.60%
Housing and commerce on first floor	23.75%
Government offices	8.02%
Others	13.43%
Total	100%

Source: DEMET 2002

The coexistence and long-standing clashing between the differing land use interests described above existed throughout several decades and led to an unsustainable situation in an area deeply affected by problematic land use patterns to begin with. In addition, the 1985 earthquakes worsened already distorted patterns of land use in both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa*, the oldest parts of Mexico City. Most notably, the disaster decreased the already low incentive owners had to invest in or take care of their buildings. In the words of a resident born and raised in the center, the 1980s and 1990s were periods of acute decline:

> [In the past, buildings] were of the Modernist type. What I remember is the *Hotel del Prado*. There was another one called *Hotel Regis* that was also demolished. It was in pretty bad shape… There were many sections where buildings remained because of budgetary problems so they wouldn't demolish them and they wouldn't build [anything new] either. They wouldn't do anything because of lack of money. I mean, demolishing [a building] costs money and building a new one costs money as well (Benito, 58, business owner – December 2009).

Cultural institutions and activists focus on preserving the 1,681 historical structures in *Centro Histórico*, which constitute an important 37.6% of the area's total number of buildings and include the largest ones such as the National Palace, the Cathedral, the Palace of Justice, among others. Groups and institutions representing cultural interests have historically included the

National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA),[79] and UNESCO. They are often able to shape public policy on paper as evidenced in previous planning attempts in the area (Morales and Schlesinger 2002). However, an exclusive focus on heritage protection hurt previous initiatives because it unintendedly jeopardized business opportunities associated with the exchange value of historical buildings. A partial solution has been to finance the maintenance of historical properties through tourism since *Centro Histórico* received 28.8% of tourists visiting the city at the beginning of the decade (Morales and Schlesinger 2002). The 2011-2014 Management Plan, in turn, includes heritage protection initiatives (see point 3 in Table 4.3) continuing previous work the *Fideicomiso* has been leading since 2002 but it also gives room to other kinds of interests dealing with economic needs for housing and business creation.

Housing-oriented interests emphasize the need to repopulate the center of the city in part to deal with the sub-utilization of existing infrastructure. The real estate market is complex including a large numbers of abandoned properties, intestates, and invasions. In terms of housing, this also translates into serious social problems associated with overcrowding; a problem suffered by poor and indigent residents, mainly comprised of elderly people, indigenous groups, street kids, the homeless, and persons with disabilities (Eckstein 1977; PPDUCH 2000).[80] Groups and institutions representing housing-oriented interests have historically included city government, real estate developers, *Centro Histórico's* Consultative Council, and more recently, the *Fideicomiso*'s real estate division. As we will see in the following section, the *Fideicomiso*'s

[79] Both INAH and INBA are federal institutes originally linked to the national education ministry and devoted to cultural heritage protection. However, INAH concentrates on protecting properties built between the 16th and 19th centuries whereas INBA focuses on properties based on their aesthetic value, especially those built in the 20th century. Additionally, there is the Urban Cultural Heritage division at Mexico City's Department for Urban Development and Housing or SEDUVI (*GDF* 2011). A common complaint among my interviewees referred to the insufficient level of coordination among those three institutions as well as the normative confusion it generated.

[80] According to the 2000 Urban Development Plan for *Centro Histórico*, there were 38 NGOs assisting and working with these vulnerable populations at the time (PPDUCH 2000).

citizen participation division is also invested in housing-oriented projects and programs in part because they have served as conduits for eliciting neighbors' interest in recovering their blocks through the Citizen Committees described in section 4.8.

The *Fideicomiso's* citizen participation and real estate divisions have worked as allies among themselves and with other public institutions to accelerate the rate of building renovation in the area: "Between 2007 and 2010 1,677 buildings were renovated in 21 streets with an investment exceeding 54 million pesos [approximately US$4.32 million], doubling the results from period 2002-2006 in which 548 buildings were renovated" (GDF 2011: 78). Their work responds to a long-term strategy divided in three phases, according to the *Fideicomiso*'s real estate director. Short-term goals for the first 1-2 years focus on remodeling and renovating deteriorated buildings and infrastructure. Medium-term goals for the following 10 years emphasize investment for new hotels and new housing units for rent. The idea with the latter is to offer affordable rented housing to attract middle class families, young people and workers to start repopulating the center[81]. Finally, long-term goals for the next 15-20 years revolve around the idea of sustainability, emphasizing green forms of transportation[82] and the addition of more streets only for pedestrians (Interviews June 2010; *Fideicomiso* 2011).

The work the *Fideicomiso* has done has been paying off. According to the 2010 Mexican census, *Centro Histórico*'s population increased for the first time in 60 years; a rise that occurred between 2005 and 2010 and accounted to an 8%. The number of inhabited housing units grew by 18% in those five years (GDF 2011; census). By 2010, public perceptions about housing in *Centro Histórico* had also started to change as evidenced in a survey among public employees

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[81] *Fideicomiso*'s director, Inti Muñoz, explained in a recent interview that the institution was repairing 20 buildings with 250 housing units in order to rent them between 2,000 to 5,000 Mexican pesos (between US$157 and US$394 using the February 2013 exchange rate of 12.69 MXN per US dollar). He added that with the program "Living in the Center" there has been a 14% increase in the area's population for the first time since the 1990s (Gómez 2013, *La Jornada webpage*, February 4, 2013 accessed on February 6, 2013).

[82] The *Fideicomiso,* the *Autoridad* and their allies (e.g. business associations like *Procéntrico*) had been pushing for the establishment and expansion of "ciclotaxis" (bike cabs) and bikes for rent following similar models in cities like Barcelona. Both types of transportation were adopted less than 2 years ago.

working in the area. The *Fideicomiso* conducted the study to generate an initial estimate of the potential demand for housing in the area. Survey results indicated that many public employees were interested in moving to the center to reduce their daily commute: 66% of respondents said they wanted to live in *Centro Histórico* and 89% of them would rather buy than rent (GDF 2011). A majority of respondents (62%) said they were able to afford properties worth at least 500,000 Mexican pesos (approximately US$39,904), which is a good threshold considering that the property values of 3,000 properties listed in a similar study was between $162,000 (US$12,960) and $651,000 Mexican pesos (US$52,080). In fact, 23% could afford to buy apartments with prices between $800,000 (US$64,000) and $1,200,000 Mexican pesos (US$96,000) while 15% could afford locations worth more than $1,200,000.

Additionally, 93% preferred apartments of 60 square meters or more and more than 65% of the properties identified in the second study were of that size (GDF 2011). In other words, the real estate stock in *Centro Histórico* was starting to appeal to, at least, one of the groups the *Fideicomiso* and the *Autoridad* targeted to help repopulate the area: middle class professionals. Similarly, the Management Plan states that only 3 months after the *Fideicomiso* created the free real estate website for *Centro Histórico* (www.vivirenelcentro.com.mx) in March 2011 the portal had received 10,000 visits, a housing unit was sold and 10 more were rented by people using it (GDF 2011).

Finally, commercial interests are represented by a thriving yet vulnerable retail sector plus a smaller but important specialized service sector. Commerce continues to be the primary occupant of structures in the area including 64.7% of historic buildings, mainly on the first floor (PPDUCH 2000: 68-69). There are also some remnants of manufacturing (mainly textiles) connected with a network of warehouses in *Perímetro B*. Three informants in separate interviews shared that Korean investors have been reactivating manufacturing activities by buying and operating small factories and warehouses in the Northern part of *Perímetro B*. On the contrary,

the service sector tends to be concentrated in *Perímetro A*. Tourism-oriented functions such as hotels and restaurants are particularly visible around the *Zócalo*. But they only provided 10.9% of the jobs generated in *Centro Histórico* at the beginning of the decade. Services provided by accountants, lawyers, notary publics, and the like represented 51.6% of the jobs generated in the area (PPDUCH 2000). *Centro Histórico* continues to be an important economic engine in the city mainly by serving the poorer populations. Nonetheless, the successful urban renovation taking place since 2002 is clearly benefiting big and medium-size businesses and new investors.

Livability and Public Space: Key Components of Urban Equity and Livability

The Management Plan for *Centro Histórico* clearly reflects the believers' view that public space is "the basic component of equity in cities" (GDF 2011: 87). The Plan repeatedly refers to the ways in which public space is supposed to reflect "advanced political ideas" regarding no discrimination, accessibility, and citizen rights going beyond the traditional or purist vision focused exclusively on cultural and architectural urban components. Creating and maintaining public space is a key component of both the livability and mobility strategies in the Plan:

> These pedestrian-only corridors have been fundamental for re-taking the street as the scenario for community life and the encounter between residents and visitors; a sort of urban oasis within the area's dynamism, which lead to ratifying and forming new identities, discovering the most human face of the center, and entering into direct contact with the social and cultural values of *Centro Histórico* (GDF 2011: 47).

> The mobility strategy consists of discouraging the use of automobiles, establishing pedestrian-only streets and shared and preferential streets privileging the use of bikes as well as installing urban furniture for parking [the bikes], ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, reinforce sign posting of the place, keep public space free of obstacles and reconfigure public transportation (GDF 2011: 79).

Pedestrian-only corridors are a visible example of the believers' use of Lerner's "urban acupuncture", which the Management Plan, as well as several of my interviewees, call "trigger projects." Renovation of Regina Street, in particular, represented a turning point in the history of *Fideicomiso*'s collaboration with neighbors in the area. *Fideicomiso* and *Autoridad* officials

referred to it as often as neighbors and activists from civil society associations working in the area; most notably *Casa Vecina*, a cultural NGO located on Regina St. linked to Carlos Slim's foundations. Just as Regina's corridor represented a turning point in gaining neighbors' trust and collaboration, the creation of Madero's boulevard served as a crucial demonstration effect for regaining public space and involving others in the private sector. The "corredor peatonal Madero" (Madero pedestrian-only corridor) has become a huge success in the context of *Centro Histórico's* renovation. Important national and international retail chains such as Zara and Bershka as well as legendary places such as the *Estanquillo* Museum, the Latin American Tower or the Palace of Fine Arts have seen their visibility increased through a skyrocketing flow of visitors. Now tourists and Mexicans alike visit Madero St. averaging 300,000 people a day whereas less than 10,000 used to do so before its transformation.

4.8. The Citizenship School and Citizen Groups: the Participatory Side of the Pragmatic Urban Regime

Invited spaces exist when "institutions of the participatory sphere are framed by those who create them, and infused with power relations and cultures of interaction carried into them from other spaces" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007: 11). I argue that the *Fideicomiso* helped to create an invited space to foster neighbors' participation in *Centro Histórico*'s urban renewal process even though its creators intended it to become a more radical participatory space over time. Invited spaces, unlike more developed channels for participation, manifest an inherent asymmetry of power between those being "invited" to take part of them (in this case, neighbors/citizens) and those in charge of them (city government). Invited spaces such as the Citizenship School and the Citizen Committees represent the participatory side of the pragmatic urban regime taking form in Mexico City as also shown in the 6th strategic component (Citizenship) of the Management Plan for *Centro Histórico*. They represent a move forward compared to the exclusionary or cooptation

practices Mexican authorities had used on a regular basis in the past but they are not the fully-fledged collaborative spaces found in other Latin American cities that *Fideicomiso* believers would have liked to implement in the first place.

The Citizenship School was a project Inti Muñoz and his collaborators, particularly Ernesto Alvarado, had in mind since they were in charge of city government's Division of Citizen Participation during the first PRD administration led by Mayor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (1997-2000). As the document quoted in section 4.4 showed, this group had a very clear vision of how they conceived citizen participation and they intended to use all the resources at their disposal to realize it. However, they ran out of time before they could do so at the Division of Citizen Participation. When Muñoz was appointed as director at the *Fideicomiso* they finally seized the opportunity to implement changes clearly aligned with municipal socialism (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). Their commitment manifests, for example, in the Habermasian way in which Inti Muñoz referred to their work at the First Citizens Conference (*Encuentro Ciudadano*) convened in *Centro Histórico* with neighbors from all over the city in September 2011. Muñoz, a civil engineer, political scientist and former student leader at UNAM, emphasized that citizen participation is a crucial tactic to fight against the loss of solidarity and communal ties in declining urban areas…

> as it happened in *Centro Histórico* in this prolonged urban crisis lived during the second half of the 20th century where, of course, the social fabric was diluted and destroyed. Citizen participation is one of the keys to having hope and looking at the future and then I'm talking about this collective endeavor where we say no to this political culture. Because many of us in Mexico have been educated in a political culture that is vertical, paternalistic, opaque, authoritarian. From a citizen participation perspective [we can move towards] a horizontal, democratic, and transparent space where we support a political culture based on dialogue. We are used to the idea that solving a problem means defeating the other, defeating the other to win and impose ourselves on them. Let's support a space for *dialogue among equals where we convince the other and are willing to be convinced by the other*. Then it is also important to look at citizen participation from a new perspective and [based on] the idea of building a new political culture, a new citizen culture, a new culture of democratic participation (*Fideicomiso* 2011: 10; my emphasis).

The fact that the participatory channel they created constitutes an invited space does not mean, however, that *Fideicomiso*'s "believers" have been naively used against their knowledge. The believers see themselves as part of a Mexican generation marked by continuous crises unlike previous generations that were able to live though both crises and periods of stability. As a result, they are highly politicized and were the protagonists of important early victories at a young age including the "irruption of civil society" in Mexico after the 1985 earthquakes, the victory the student movement had against UNAM's privatization at the end of the 1980s, and the first mayoral election since 1928 when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was elected in 1997. This combination of circumstances have made *Fideicomiso*'s believers both fearless and practical as they were when Mayor López Obrador weakened Mexico City's Division of Citizen Participation and they decided to lower their profile and work on similar initiatives (as Ernesto Alvarado did helping to create the Participatory Budget in *Delegación Tlalpan)*. They have shown a high level of adaptability (even pragmatism) in understanding the political and economic contexts they operate in. In particular, they see themselves and their backgrounds as community and student organizers as assets to collaborate with ordinary citizens so that they have a better chance at "resisting" economic forces shaping their environment. For instance, Ernesto Alvarado argued that:

> What people say that gentrification can engulf everything else is true and that has been seen in other places. But this is precisely why we are betting on people's participation generating more resistance. If you don't work on it, gentrification is going to take place faster… If you can't avoid it (because gentrification is the result of the free market) then we have to have people mobilized and aware, ready to fight for their permanence. We want to favor those who have lived [here] for a long time and have the right to stay (Ernesto Alvarado, Fideicomiso's Participation Director, September 2013).

The higher levels of flexibility and innovation *Fideicomiso*'s believers have shown explain why the Department of Citizen Participation at *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* had nothing to do with the creation of these invited spaces, especially the Citizenship School for *Centro Histórico,* even though it would have been part of its responsibilities. On the contrary, it was the *Fideicomiso* that created the School jointly with the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* as a space for education and

exchange among community leaders that have been members of the Citizen Committees and, therefore, partners in renovating streets, houses, and services in the area. More specifically, the Citizenship School was conceived as a mechanism for invited participation following the rationale of the *Fideicomiso*'s outreach department where Ernesto Alvarado was first appointed.[83]

The Citizenship School originates from the work *Fideicomiso* believers have done collaborating with neighbors in the "fachadas" (building renovation) program. Citizen Groups are ad hoc committees of 3 to 7 neighbors elected among their peers in a given block or street where renovation projects are taking place. They have been instrumental in working with *Fideicomiso* officials in recovering more than 1,500 buildings and 16.24 kilometers (approximately 10 miles) up to November 2013. The process started with a pilot project on the "Regina Cultural Corridor" in 2008; the first street to be converted into a pedestrian-only boulevard. The Citizen Group of Regina Street, as dozens of other Citizen Groups after them, coordinated efforts with the *Fideicomiso* following the methodology summarized below (Flores 2008):

- The Mayor publishes a resolution instructing the *Fideicomiso*'s director to implement the program for *Centro Histórico*'s Development and Urban Image on a specific block/street.
- A survey is conducted including all the buildings in the identified area.
- *Fideicomiso* representatives meet with residents and explain the content of the program. Neighbors then elect a "Citizen Group" to represent them throughout the process.
- Opening of a joint account between the group and the *Fideicomiso.* Deposits in the account are made as the project advances. The amount of funds varies depending on the project's complexity (minor renovations vs. more structural changes) and the stage it is at (design,

[83] This department focuses on "…all those actions aimed at getting society's consensus on the need to rescue the Historic Center as well as the benefits to be achieved through concrete projects implemented to that effect, [and] to obtain the active participation of public and private institutions, of social organizations, business owners, homeowners and/or dwellers and society in general, in the execution, financing, conservation, and maintenance of such projects as well as securing all kinds of fiscal, legal, and administrative incentives and terms needed for such purposes" (*Fideicomiso* 2007b: 17).

implementation or supervision)[84].

- With assistance from city government, the group chooses and directly hires the firms that will implement the project and the public works included in it. They jointly choose three firms: one to design the project, another one to implement it, and a third one to supervise the works.
- The firm elaborates the project and gets corresponding permits from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INHA) and the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA).
- Drafting and signing of the collaboration agreements, one per homeowner. City government commits to provide the resources, the neighbors to provide the necessary conditions.
- Beginning of the project. As the project moves forward, the Citizen Group signs the corresponding checks along with the *Fideicomiso* to pay subcontractors in charge of the project as they finish each stage of the project.

Citizen Groups partnering with the *Fideicomiso* are now students at the Citizenship School, which opened on January 12, 2009. The School's goal is "promoting… the participation of citizens in public issues [affecting] their environment" (Flores 2009: 3). The *"Escuela de Formación Ciudadana y Conservación del Patrimonio"* (School for Citizenship Education and Heritage Conservation, usually known as the Citizenship School) offers a structured program with courses with both academics and practitioners on the history of the area, relevant laws and regulations, *Centro Histórico*'s Management Plan, as well as more general topics such as citizen participation trends around the city. Since opening in 2009 up to November 2013, eight (8) cohorts of students have graduated from the School including a total of 342 neighbors and some small business owners. Women predominate among graduates since they represent the majority (56%) of them with a total of 192 whereas 150 men have graduated during that period (44%).

[84] For example, some design projects to transform selected streets into pedestrian-only boulevards cost between 275,000 and 430,000.00 Mexican pesos (between US$21,670 and US$33,992) whereas the cost of the implementation phase itself could be much higher at 3,700,000 Mexican pesos (US$292,490). Finally, the cost of the supervision phase is 10% of implementation. In the former example the supervision phase would total 370,000 Mexican pesos (US$29,249).

The School's methodology is based on Paulo Freire's ideas about popular education combining theory and practice in and outside the classroom, as I was able to observe at the last session of the second graduating cohort in December 2009 and at several regular sessions in June 2010. For instance, at the last session of the second cohort each group presented the final project they would be working on. Projects addressed common collective consumption problems for poor residents including noise pollution, garbage accumulation, lack of economic opportunities, and traffic. The debate was very lively and extended for more than 2 hours. There were more than 30 people in attendance and, to my surprise, young adults represented almost a third of them.

By the time I went back in June 2010, that cohort had also begun to work on a radio station devoted to airing their problems and plans for the future. The radio station is now in operation under the name *Radio Comunitaria Voces Vivas del Centro "La VVC de México"* (www.vocesvivasdelcentro.org) or Community Radio Life Voices from the Center, humorously nicknamed "The VVC from Mexico" paraphrasing the BBC from London. In interviews with those residents at their classroom at the *Universidad del Recinto de Sor Juana* (Sor Juana's University) and the radio station itself, they made it clear that they wanted to broadcast educational content similar to what they learned at the School and channel residents' demands in order to help organize neighbors in different parts of *Centro Histórico*. According to several residents, attending the Citizenship School had helped them to build alliances with neighbors in other parts of the center, learn "how city government works" and strategize about which institutions to work with in order to solve their problems.

Through this kind of bridging, Citizenship School students have created a sort of "counterpublic" (Fraser 1992) where they meet to exchange information and strategies to further their goals to improve theirs and their neighbors' quality of life in *Centro Histórico*. While observing regular sessions and other events at the School I was able to witness the kind of fluid interaction between neighbors and facilitators I had witnessed with *Casa Vecina*'s outreach

coordinator. That is, the neighbors/students see the people from the *Fideicomiso* (in particular those in charge of the Citizenship School) as close allies in the process of making the process of "re-appropiating public space" sustainable and beneficial to those who live in the center. In yet another form of bridging, students and organizers at the Citizenship School also collaborate with other institutions with similar goals such as UNESCO in projects to promote citizen participation "in the processes of valuing, rescuing, and conserving heritage spaces" (Ruvalcaba 2010: 10). In June 2010, I was able to observe one of the workshops UNESCO and the *Fideicomiso* organized along with Citizenship School students and other neighbors as shown in pictures 8 and 9. At this particular workshop, there was a significant presence of book vendors who represent an important part of the economic and cultural life of this part of *Centro Histórico* called "*La Ciudadela*" (The Citadel). The importance and vulnerability of small book vending shops emerged over and over in various group presentations as people made an inventory of the tangible and intangible kinds of heritage present in the area following UNESCO's methodology; which Ernesto Alvarado, his team and UNESCO representatives had collaborated on adapting for *Centro Histórico*'s context.

Pictures 8 and 9

Participants at UNESCO/Citizenship School's Workshops on

Tangible and Intangible Heritage in *Centro Histórico*

Source: The author at *Biblioteca México* (Mexico Library). June 2010.

At a more strategic level, *Fideicomiso* believers have persistently attempted to link the Citizenship School to wider processes of citizen participation in the city. For example, the School collaborated in the election of the new Neighborhood Committees, the city government's main mechanism for citizen participation, which took place in October 2010 after several years of standstill. At that time more than 44 thousand residents ran for 15,044 3-year spots around the city (Bolaños 2010). The first elected Neighborhood Committees after nearly a decade convened precisely in *Centro Histórico* in January 2011 were former mayor Ebrard welcomed elected members at a special ceremony. Eight (8) Citizenship School graduates (5 women and 3 men) were elected to Neighborhood Committees in the last election in September 2013; something *Fideicomiso* believers are very proud of.

But it is still unclear what will be the relationship between the Neighborhood Committees and the Citizen Groups the *Fideicomiso* partners with, especially now that the former will also

have direct access to resources. The recently approved Law of Citizen Participation establishes that the Neighborhood Committees will be in charge of 3% of their delegation's budget; amount that will be used for the projects they deem necessary in their respective communities (*City Government's Communications Department* webpage accessed on December 6th, 2012).

In another attempt to start influencing city wide urban governance, *Fideicomiso*'s believers co-organized the First Citizens Conference (*Encuentro Ciudadano*) in *Centro Histórico* convened on September 9th and 10th, 2011. The 2-day event was organized and co-sponsored by the *Fideicomiso*, its Citizenship School, UNESCO, two universities including UNAM, and the members of a theatre group, which acted as facilitators. Hundreds of residents attended three keynote speeches and debated proposals for *Centro Histórico* in five work groups: (1) livability, (2) urban planning, (3) mobility, (4) risks, and (4) community life. During the first day of the conference Alicia Ziccardi, one of the foremost experts in citizen participation in Mexico City and director of UNAM's Program for City Studies, referred to the role the Citizenship School has played as an institutional catalyst or "intermediaries" setting up the conditions for successful participation and collaboration:

> On the one hand, I believe we have a series of spaces for open citizen participation. On the other hand, I believe that sometimes we don't know how to use them. In other words, I think the failure is in the instruments for citizen participation. That is why I think the School is so important, this school for citizenship training because if we don't know what to do, we won't be able to take advantage of that space for participation regardless of how much of it we have. If we don't know how to work with clear rules of the game, with respect, *if we don't understand what pluralism and co-responsibility between government and citizens mean, then we will hardly be able to take advantage of those spaces*… I believe that all the conditions are set in this area. There is even a detonator that is the School, which can really allow citizens to own everything there is in terms of laws, rules, even regarding doors opening in different public policy spheres. *You are good intermediaries*. That is how I would call you because I don't see you much as public officials, but rather as intermediaries and I think that is precisely the key (*Fideicomiso* 2011: 8; my emphasis).

More recently, *Fideicomiso* believers have been able to increase the resources at their disposal for working with the Citizenship School, the Citizen Committees and beyond. Inti Muñoz designated

Ernesto Alvarado at the beginning of 2013 as the leader of a new division temporarily called "*Enlace Institucional*" (Institutional Liaisons) totally devoted to fostering citizen participation while one of Alvarado's disciples was left in charge of the outreach department Alvarado directed until now. This way, the believers are now directly in charge of two (instead of one) divisions at the *Fideicomiso* while they continue to influence and collaborate with other areas, particularly the real estate division. Additionally, they have more human resources since the new division has 17 new people, which allows them to do "more systematic work" as one of them recently put it. For instance, one of the new initiatives under way started in 2013 is the construction of a "Heritage Preservation Index" from the point of view of citizen participation. That is, an index that will show to what extent neighbors are participating in preserving the heritage in *Centro Histórico* focusing on 5 dimensions: (1) urban landscape through building conservation (the "fachadas" program); (2) public space use; (3) visual pollution; (4) noise pollution; and (5) solid waste management.

4.9. Conclusion

This chapter argues for taking inclusive urban policies in developing countries seriously even when they have moderate levels of success. Not all cities can become the new Porto Alegre but we can still learn from the achievements and errors their governments and residents make. By looking at Mexico City and the process of urban redevelopment taking place in its historic center, I argue, we can distinguish a new urban regime taking form: a "pragmatic" or hybrid one where both capitalists and (some) ordinary residents are part of the governing coalition (Stone 1989) along with city authorities although with differing degrees of influence and involvement. This is a pragmatic urban regime where left-to-center PRD administrations have been balancing the economic needs of the Mexican mega-city with the social and political progressive policies that have made their party famous in Mexico and Latin America.

The involvement of national and international capital is clear through real estate investment in *Centro Histórico* as shown in Diagram 4.3. One capitalist in particular, billionaire Carlos Slim, is also heavily and explicitly involved as a member of the center's Advisory Council, a founder of the fiduciary fund that has become the key institutional catalyst for changes in the area, and through the cultural and social work his foundations have been doing in *Centro Histórico*. Moreover, Slim and former mayor López Obrador's strategic alliance at the beginning of the previous decade has been, without any doubt, a crucial facilitating factor for initiating the process of transformation analyzed herein. Additionally, formal traditional businesses are also benefiting from urban redevelopment and have been successful in having city government expel street vendors from *Centro Histórico;* a measure that sustained much of former mayor Marcelo Ebrard's city-wide popularity during his tenure (Silva Londoño 2010).

The counterintuitive part of this story is the fact that ordinary residents have some (if limited) level of influence and involvement in the changes under way in *Centro Histórico.* Going back to the two kinds of concrete results defined as parameters in this dissertation, (1) the existence of urban interventions favored by and/or explicitly asked for by citizens and the associations representing them and (2) that they have some degree of participation in defining the policies leading to those interventions, it is clear that long-time residents from the area have been favored in both fronts. Those who have been part of the dozens of Citizen Groups formed to oversee the renovation of more than 2,000 buildings in 18 streets in the area and those among the 342 students graduated from the Citizenship School certainly have had their voices heard in matters as varied as taking decisions about budgets for building renovations on their block, defining new community projects from scratch or seeking support for being elected in the Neighborhood Committees reactivated in 2010 (and analyzed in Chapter 3).

None of this would have been possible without the direct and deliberate intervention of what I have called the *Fideicomiso*'s "believers" in citizen participation: a subset of officials at

the fiduciary fund, including its director, who have led the reconversion through which the *Fideicomiso* became an institutional catalyst for these changes in an alliance with the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico*. They are socially and politically progressive as many of their leftist counterparts in other Latin American countries (Chavez and Goldfrank 2004) and, as such, gravitate towards municipal socialism (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). In ideal conditions they would have preferred implementing more radical approaches to participation and urban governance such as those put in place in Porto Alegre, Montevideo and other Latin American cities. Instead they took advantage of the opportunities available to them to create invited spaces for participation (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) such as the Citizen Groups and the Citizenship School in the context of the urban redevelopment process in *Centro Histórico.*

Invited spaces in Mexico City's center represent a move forward compared to the exclusionary or cooptation practices Mexican authorities had used on a regular basis in the past. The flexibility *Fideicomiso*'s believers and their allies (mainly the *Fideicomiso*'s real estate division and the *Autoridad*) have exhibited has allowed them to avoid mistakes previous administrations had made as shown in the composite nature of the 2011-2016 Comprehensive Management Plan. In particular, they have avoided following a purist approach to heritage protection, excluding the private sector from the process or ignoring the deficiencies of the real estate market in the center. By so doing, *Fideicomiso*'s believers have been playing a key role needed for starting to reverse the depopulation and extreme commodification trends in the area while opening the city's political structure to regular citizens. In contrast, the lack of such a coherent city government counterpart in *Roma Condesa* has prevented inclusive urban redevelopment initiatives from surviving as analyzed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

ROMA CONDESA: THE (LOCAL) STATE THAT NEVER CAME BACK AND THE "IRONY OF ORGANIZATION"

5.1. Overview

In this chapter I argue that the differences between the upper-class turned bohemian neighborhood of *Roma Condesa* and *Centro Histórico* in Mexico City's central area illustrate the ways in which the "pragmatic" urban regime is emerging in the city as well as the place different kind of citizens have in it. The comparison shows how, in spite of the fact that most residents in *Condesa* (or *Roma Condesa*, people use both names interchangeably) seem better equipped to influence city government, the fact that they do not fit the bill of either being significant private investors to partner with in recovering the area or poor residents to engage against gentrification leaves them in a no-person land. This conundrum could be solved if they had an intermediary institution (what I've been calling an institutional catalyst) led by a group of participation converts playing a similar role to the one the *Fideicomiso* has been playing in *Centro Histórico.*

This chapter shows that, in an opposite trend to what has occurred in *Centro Histórico*, residents from *Roma Condesa* have not been able to recover the level of influence they briefly gained first from 1995 to 1997 before Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' historic election as mayor and second, at the beginning of the 2000s with the López Obrador administration. The authorities had abandoned the area during the second half of the XX century (as it was also the case with *Centro Histórico)* but the short-lived figure of Citizen Councilors (1995-1997) the Legislative Assembly approved in the early 1990s gave residents a lot of say in urban planning whereas López Obrador's focus on the territory brought attention back to *Roma Condesa* through the Partial Urban Development Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* in 2000.

Having many autonomous associations working without a counterpart or intermediary in city government is precisely the blessing and the curse of *Roma Condesa*. If anything, the area often gives the impression of having too many representatives, too many spirited individuals and organizations that not only know each other but also believe *they* have *the* solution to the area's growing pains. However, after having relatively high levels of participation and influence on urban policies in the mid-1990s and then in 1999-2000, many residents and business owners are now struggling with the authorities' lack of responsiveness to their needs. To be sure, those living in *Roma Condesa* enjoy an incredibly high quality of life compared not only to people in *Centro Histórico* but also to Mexico City as a whole. In fact, the vast majority of them exhibit the characteristics many scholars associate with effective and sustained participation in public affairs: high levels of education and income (Almond and Verba 1963; Walsh et al 2004).

The residents, business owners, and community activists I interviewed are aware of their relative advantages and the fact that they are not able to achieve their goals in spite of them is, precisely, a key reason of their frustration. As several respondents explained, despite all their advantages, apathy has become increasingly pervasive and now, as an active leader put it, "people only mobilize when there is a problem, not when there is a proposal." The same is true of their relationship with the authorities. With some notable exceptions, people from *Roma Condesa* perceive their interaction with city government, and especially with *Delegación Cuauhtémoc,* to be unproductive at best and plainly "disastrous" at worst. Furthermore, the more they negotiate with the authorities, the more time they spend in getting to know each new incumbent, the more meetings and planning sessions they attend, the less results they seem to achieve. Eckstein (1977) found a similar problem, which affected the neighborhood associations she studied in the Mexico City of the late 1960s. This she called the "irony of organization," i.e. the way the PRI-corporatist regime neutralized neighborhood associations (even those not affiliated with the party) by offering them and their competitors a token of inclusiveness through limited participation.

The "irony of organization", I argue, is also the main reason behind the failure of *Roma Condesa*'s residents and business owners to significantly influence policies affecting their area today. On the one hand, the potentially beneficial richness of efforts and ideas tend to fragment, rather than bring together those involved; except in times of severe crisis. On the other, middle- and upper class residents have a harder time engaging in the types of direct confrontations more frequently used by poor communities with nothing to lose. On top of all this complexity, *Roma Condesa*, just as *Centro Histórico*, is going through major economic changes closely associated with Mexico City's transformation into a global city (Parentneir 2002). Even though such changes are reflected in land use patterns in the area, they have not brought with them a window of opportunity similar to the one the *Fideicomiso* has opened in *Centro Histórico*.

An alternative explanation might argue instead that residents and businesses in *Roma Condesa* just do not need the state as much as their counterparts (and investors) in *Centro Histórico* do. This is an idea I entertained at some points during my research as quality of services and infrastructure in the former is much higher, on average, when compared to the latter. Similarly, investment in *Roma Condesa* is more spontaneous and diversified and the fact that there is proportionally more land free of legal prohibitions or conditionalities (as it is often the case in *Centro Histórico* with its higher percentage of historical and/or landmarked buildings) is important in this regard. Nonetheless, interviews with key informants, residents, and business owners in *Roma Condesa* clearly signaled to me that they are aware of the risks associated with the fragmented nature of their efforts and the deleterious effect the lack of decisive government intervention has had. In particular, several interviewees used the example of the formerly celebrated area of *Zona Rosa* (Pink Zone) in Mexico City to explain the negative end result they wanted to prevent *Roma Condesa* from becoming. They insisted that the lack of enforcement of government regulations in *Zona Rosa* (for instance, regarding the number of establishments

present in it) was a key factor in its deterioration and that was the situation *Roma Condesa* is heading towards if city authorities are not more deliberate in collaborating with them.

This chapter argues that the lack of an institutional catalyst partnering with residents and businesses and other private actors is what explains the paradoxical outcome we see in *Roma Condesa* today: a highly mobilized and educated constituency unable to coalesce its efforts into effective collaboration with city government. Such failure is related to the fact that *Roma Condesa* is not as vital for the PRD-led new "pragmatic" urban regime as *Centro Histórico* is in part because the PRD is now competing with right-wing PAN for political control of the former. *Roma Condesa* is part of a PRD-controlled delegation, *Delegación Cuauhtémoc,* the administrative subdivision of the city *Centro Histórico* also belongs to. Nonetheless, after the electoral redistricting done in the mid-2000s, the *"Territorial Roma Condesa"* (*Roma Condesa* Territory or Section) is considered part of adjacent *Delegación Miguel Hidalgo* when it comes to electing its representatives to the city's Legislative Assembly who now belong to the PAN. Additionally, after going through so many defeats in its struggle for controlling the expansion of commercial establishments and trying to collaborate with city government about this and other issues, neighbors' participation in *Roma Condesa* has subsided.

A core of committed activists remains and there are some new and innovative groups among a new generation of residents and business owners. But their impact is still limited since they do not have a governmental ally with the mandate and political will to give direction to and multiply the impact of their efforts as neighbors and formal business owners do have in *Centro Histórico* with the *Fideicomiso.* For instance, many of the architects who live and work in the area have initiated various projects to study, revalorize and reorganize *Roma Condesa's* urban planning and heritage. Some of them advise and are active members of existing associations and/or have created organizations of their own. Similarly, businesses and residents have collaborated since 2009 in organizing the "Cultural Corridor *Roma Condesa*" convened twice a

year to invite visitors from the rest of the city, the country and abroad to enjoy food and art in their neighborhoods. This important event, and the more recent proposal of rebranding *Roma Condesa* as Mexico City's "Latin Quarter" have attracted a lot of mediatic attention as well as economic benefits for the businesses and artists involved.

Nonetheless, businesses' involvement has not been enough to scale the Corridor and similar initiatives up in ways that contribute to solve the long lasting issues the area still faces; particularly traffic congestion, subsiding and deterioration of buildings and parks, the risk for inundations, and the uncontrolled privatization of public space. City authorities' presence and collaboration is usually limited to sending public officials to be part of those events (for example, the Director of Cultural Heritage as a guide at the Corridor). But there is a lack of response regarding concrete policies and programs. The only exception is the parking meters project started in 2013 after resident associations "forced" the authorities to convene consultations on the matter at the end of 2012. This project, although very successful and highly demanded in other parts of the city, is also an indicator of the great level of fragmentation present in *Roma Condesa*. Less than half of the areas in which *Roma Condesa* is administratively divided agreed to install the meters even though traffic congestion is one of residents' main concerns. Complaints about the top-down nature of the project abound and at the time of writing it was not clear whether the project would expand to other parts of *Roma Condesa*.

The chapter proceeds as follows: the next section (5.2.) provides the historical background to understand *Roma Condesa* today including its significance as the second chronological location for Mexico City's elites; section 5.3 examines the most important government interventions and collective actors in the area (see Appendix L) before 2000 (a year equivalent to 2007 in *Centro Histórico* in its significance as a milestone); section 5.4 analyzes in more detail two government interventions, the Citizen Councilors that were in place between 1995 and 1997 and the 2000 Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* showing why their

initial success has become the standard for (the lack of) successful interactions with city government ever since; section 5.5 looks at the Neighborhood Committees city authorities established to replace the "excessively" empowered Citizen Councils while examining the persistence with which some residents remained in the Committees for 10 years in spite of PRD's lack of interest in making them functional; section 5.6 analyzes the intense process of spontaneous urban revitalization that has been taking place in *Roma Condesa* since the 1990s through both national and international private investment; section 5.7 elaborates why I argue that the local state never quite "came back in" to collaborate with residents and businesses in the area and how the lack of an institutional catalyst similar to the *Fideicomiso* in the historic center has prevented innovative urban planning from being sustainable. Finally, the conclusion in section 5.8 brings these elements together.

5.2. Background: *Roma Condesa* in Context

A tourism site called "Luxury Latin America" depicts the location of a famous boutique hotel as follows: "described as Mexico City's own SoHo, *Condesa*, the neighborhood, is a gentrified magnet for the bohemian chic community".[85] When I mentioned this comparison with New York City's SoHo to one of my first interviewees from the area, he scoffed at the idea. As an architect actively involved with the neighborhood restoration movement, he felt that such perception only compounds a distorted understanding of the place. In his view, such comparison distracts people from focusing on the problems current residents face including their fight to restore the artistic and architectural heritage in *Roma Condesa*. For me, that conversation at a nice unassuming café in front of *Roma Condesa*'s most beautiful park symbolizes the complicated relationship between insiders and outsiders that now defines much of what is going on in this part of the city. This section contextualizes such relationship by looking at the area's history and distribution.

[85] www.luxurylatinamerica.com/mexico/condesa.html accessed on February 25, 2011.

Although not as diverse as *Centro Histórico, Roma Condesa* shows similar characteristics to those exhibited by the historic center: a long-standing pattern of mixed land use, extensive public spaces, and the presence of historic and architectural gems protected by law. Indeed, as Mexico City's elites moved to and called *Condesa* home since the 1900s to the 1960s, the area replaced *Centro Histórico* as the main residential location for the upper- and upper-middle class (Porras Padilla 2011). The area most people today refer to as *Condesa* or *Roma Condesa* actually includes five adjacent and relatively small colonies: *Colonia Roma* (founded in 1902) currently divided into *Colonias Roma Norte* and *Roma Sur*, *Colonia Hipódromo* (1925), *Colonia Hipódromo-Condesa* (1926), and *Colonia Condesa* proper (1927). All five colonies are located in the southern side of *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*, one of the four *delegaciones* that constitute the central city or *Ciudad Central*. These communities were all conceived as residential neighborhoods for the Mexican upper class. Their design explicitly incorporated a mixed use of the land to offer neighbors the possibility of "find[ing] everything they needed in their daily round within a walking distance so that they didn't need to use a car" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 7). This, in turn, reflected the influence of the "garden city" movement in Mexico as several historians and residents from the area explained. Similarly to *Centro Histórico*, *Roma Condesa* has been a:

> …development designed with high quality public spaces and a wide urban structure have given the colony the *capabilities to adapt to conditions imposed by an accelerated urban growth and the different cycles it has gone through in the last century*. Over the years, such cycles have been reflected in the loss of residents due to the 1985 seismic events, the evolution of building patterns that changed from big single-family houses for upper-class sectors to apartment buildings during the 1940s, the intensification of land use, and the beginning of tertiarization of [economic] activities, which transformed land use patterns from residential use to [the presence of] important commercial establishments, brokers, and specialized services (Benítez Ortega 2008: 24; emphasis added).

Colonia Roma is recognized as the first formal urban development the private sector initiated in the city (Benítez Ortega 2008). Initially bought by real estate firm *Flores Hermanos* (Flores Brothers) founded in 1827, urbanization in the *Hacienda de la Condesa* estate started much later

in 1902. As it was the case with many other real estate firms at the time *Flores Hermanos* was created by businessmen close to or working for the Porfirio Díaz regime (known as *Porfiriato*), which dominated Mexican politics from 1876 to 1911. The four colonies that resulted from its division are widely considered "the *porfirista* administration's last attempt to transform the capital into a modern city on a par with other important major cities around the world" (Benítez Ortega 2008: 23). The creation of colonies around and beyond the colonial center (now *Centro Histórico*) was part of the rapid expansion Mexico City went through under the *Porfiriato* including 28 colonies created between 1900 and 1910 (Porras Padilla 2001).

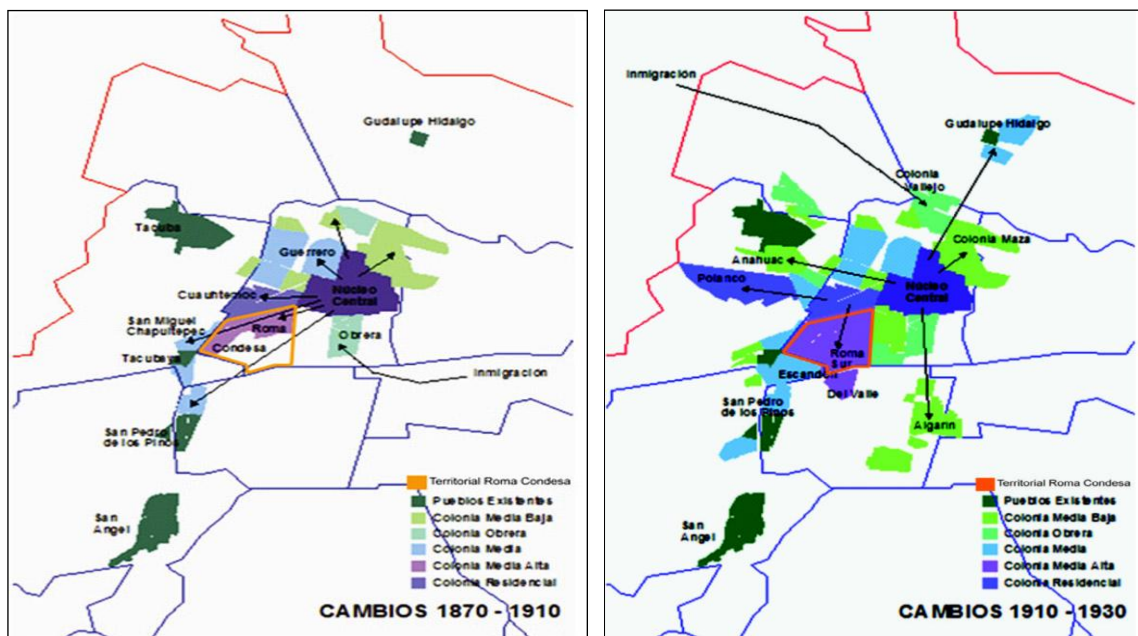
After being sold and resold several times, the company *Colonia de la Condesa S.A.* started dividing the estate up and selling lots for new projects after obtaining authorization from city government, which was still autonomous at that time[86] (Ortiz Guitart 2006). Private developers planning to build new colonies had to sign agreements with city government beforehand and follow special regulations specified in a 1903 decree as follows: (1) obtain approval for the project's design which had to include streets with a minimum width of 20 meters, a 10% of the plot ceded for public parks, asphalted streets, access to running water, and culverts; (2) the location of each house had to be approved by the city's security council; and (3) city government had to reimburse the developers' expenses in minimum infrastructure ("*obras de cabeza*") (Benítez Ortega 2008; Porras Padilla 2001).

Condesa incorporated various waves of foreign migrants and people moving from other parts of the city, notably from *Centro Histórico* (Porras Padilla 2001; Programa Delegación Cuauthémoc 1997). By the 1930s, this pattern accelerated as Jewish families that had been living in the historical center moved into the area. The Jewish community, which had originally arrived from Eastern Europe after World War I, created synagogues, kosher food stores, schools, and other institutions. Later on, the area was also populated with Spanish Republicans seeking refuge

[86] Mexico City residents lost their right to vote for elected officials in 1928. As we saw in chapters 3 and 4, they recovered that right in 1997 with the election of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

after Spain's 1937 civil war (Ortiz Guitart 2006). Spanish immigrants as well as several waves of their Jewish counterparts usually moved to *Condesa* after living in *Centro Histórico* upon their arrival. Diagrams 5.1 and 5.2 below show the creation of what is today's *Condesa (Territorial Roma Condesa)* during the first expansion of Mexico City around the historic center at two points in time.

Diagrams 5.1 and 5.2
Changes from 1870 to 1910 and from 1910 to 1930



Source: Vargas (2011)

In both Diagram 5.1 and Diagram 5.2, the orange enclosed line West from the center represents today's *Territorial Roma Condesa* and the areas in dark green represent the autonomous towns of *Tacuba, Tacubaya, San Pedro de los Pinos, Guadalupe Hidalgo,* and *San Angel.*[87] The other shapes refer to the nature and economic class of the first neighborhoods built around the center:

[87] The famous village of *Coyoacán*, home to painter Frida Kahlo, was also one of these separate towns although it's not included in the map. Each of those villages became part of Mexico City proper as the city expanded further out, especially during the 1950s and 1960s.

low-middle class colonies (light green), working class colonies (lighter green), middle-class (sky blue), upper-middle class (light purple), and residential or upper-class (darker purple in the first map and darker blue in the second).

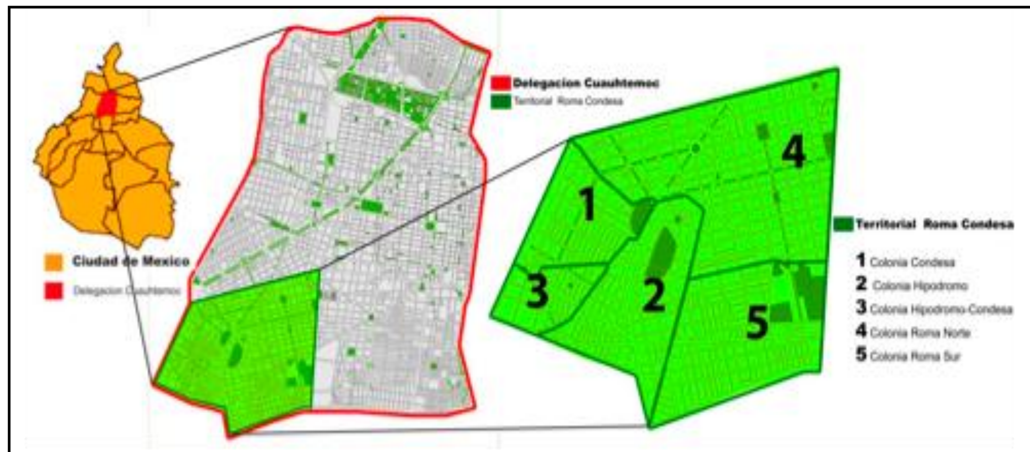
As the maps show, *Roma Condesa* has been a predominantly upper-middle class area since its creation in the early 1900s. Diagram 5.1 shows how *Roma Condesa* became one of the two main destinations for the richest families who migrated from the central nucleus of the city, the other one being the colony of *Cuauhtémoc* (not to be confused with today's *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*). The same trend led to the formation of middle and low-middle class areas such as *San Miguel Chapultepec* and *Guerrero,* whereas rural migrants coming into the city were the ones responsible for creating *Colonia Obrera* (which literally means "colony of workers"). Diagram 5.2 shows that this trend had already changed by 1910 when *Condesa* completed its development with migration flows not only from *Centro Histórico* proper but also from the adjacent *Cuauhtémoc.*

The area continued to grow during the first half of the XX century with the influx of upper- and middle-class residents moving away from the historic center of the city. This trend accelerated in the 1950s when apartment buildings became more generalized and land use diversified with the creation of many family businesses in the 1960s (Ortiz Guitart 2006). Nonetheless, the most affluent families, including most of the Jewish community that had moved from *Centro Histórico* to *Condesa* in the 1920s and 1930s, migrated to the new upper-class enclaves in the city like *Polanco, Santa Fe*, and *Lomas de Chapultepec* in the 1960s and 1970s, as they continued to improve their economic situation. This depopulation trend was further reinforced as a result of the 1985 earthquakes twenty years later, which scared many residents away and significantly reduced the price of land in the area (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). In fact, some interviewees reported that the level of destruction and price dropping was so extreme that homeowners in *Colonia Roma*, for example, were hoping and expecting the

authorities to expropriate them as they did in the historic center. Diagram 5.3 below shows the current composition and location of *Territorial Roma Condesa*, an administrative subdivision of *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc*, which encompasses the five colonies:

Diagram 5.3

Territorial Roma Condesa Today



Source: Vargas (2011)

As we can see on Diagram 5.3, the orange shape on the left represents Mexico City whereas the surface in red is *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*, one of the four delegations that comprise the city's central nucleus or *Ciudad Central*. The green area on the bottom left of *Delegación Cuahtemoc* represents *Colonias Condesa* (#1), *Hipódromo* (#2), *Hipódromo-Condesa* (#3), *Roma Norte* (#4), and *Roma Sur* (#5). Historians and architects alike believe that the area has kept the name of *"Condesa"* or *"La Condesa"* (The Countess) because in colonial times a countess owned the real estate it is part of it (Taváres López 2008; Romo 2008); although there are different accounts of which countess the name refers to. Others contend that it refers to the fact that the land had belonged to one of Moctezuma's daughters who received it as her dowry from her father (Taváres López 2008). The name *Condesa* has become customary both among residents and among tourists; a fact that some scholars, architects and residents from the other three colonies are not happy about. According to an architect and historian I interviewed, the habit of calling all five

colonies by the name of *Condesa* is problematic because it leads ordinary citizens and even urban planners to downplay the distinctiveness each of them has.

Despite those differences, it still makes sense to consider these five colonies as an interdependent unit. First, the colonies complement each other in terms of service provisioning and infrastructure. The Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* emphasizes that: "It is because of this reason that public markets, schools, clinics and hospitals located in the colonies *Roma* and *Hipódromo-Condesa* also serve *Colonia Hipódromo*… [And] the movie theatres located in *Colonia Hipódromo* serve the surrounding colonies" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 8). The same document states that *Colonia Hipódromo* lacks any kind of religious institutions. However, "there are various churches and temples of various religions in the other colonies to satisfy this need" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 8).[88] Second, given their history all five colonies show very similar land use patterns, which, in turn, attract similar types of residents mainly those "linked to the city's intellectual life" (Benítez Ortega 2008: 24). Finally, neighbors from all the colonies share a deep sense of belonging to the area; something I witnessed repeatedly at the public events they organized and in their interaction with city government.

Census data for 1990 showed that residents in *Colonia Hipódromo* are wealthier than those of *Delegación Cuauthémoc* as a whole. The difference is particularly pronounced when it comes to the income brackets of those who receive between 1 and 2 minimum wages (40.4% of people in the delegation vs. 25.8% of those in the colony) and those who receive the equivalent to 5 minimum wages or more (only 11.1% in the delegation vs. 27.8% in the colony). On the contrary, the proportions of people in the remaining income brackets are very similar.[89] The same

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[88] Not surprisingly, given the widespread influence of Catholicism in Mexico, the authors did not feel the need to specify the churches' denomination as Catholic. Similarly, the document fails to clarify that most of (if not all) the temples belonging to other "various religions" are Jewish.

[89] When looking at *Delegación Cuauthémoc* as a whole, 19.2% of people received less than 1 minimum wage compared to 17.3% of people in *Colonia Hipódromo* whereas 29.4% of people in the delegation receive between 2 and 5 times the minimum wage compared to 29.4% in the colony (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000: 14).

source indicates that population in *Roma Condesa* is older and more educated than the average in *Delegación Cuauthémoc* as a whole and the rest of Mexico City if we take *Colonia Hipódromo* as a reasonable proxy (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 14-16).

Research by urban planners for the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* estimated the "floating" population that worked at or used services offered in that neighborhood to be more than 26,300 people during weekday rush hour in 2000 (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b; Ortiz Guitart 2006). Not surprisingly, 78.3% of the labor force in the same colony was employed in the service sector in 1990. The daily influx of people (office employees, tourists, restaurant and hotel patrons, street vendors) from outside has exacerbated conflicts over land use and public services. In fact, many long-time residents still perceive the floating population as a set of "invaders" foreign to the traditions and tranquility they associate with *Condesa*. Unlike *Centro Histórico* where most long-time residents are used to the constant influx of people from other parts of the city (and those who oppose it are middle or upper-middle class new residents), older neighbors in *Condesa* attempt to recreate a past based on class homogeneity. A past that, according to other interviewees, is problematic because of the exclusionary practices it can lead to in the present as well as the implementation of non-sustainable policies. Regarding the latter, several architects argued that many long-time residents oppose mixed land use claiming that the area has always been exclusively residential, but that is not the case.

A more forceful form of rejection of the floating population took place at the beginning of the 1990s against the so-called *"giros negros"* or *"giros de alto impacto social"* (red light establishments, also defined as "establishments of high social impact") that flourished in *Condesa* between 1993 and 1995. At that time, even authorities at *Delegación Cuahtémoc* reported receiving threats for fighting against the proliferation of such establishments. They estimated the total number of stripping clubs, table dances, betting places, and the like to be around eight thousand in the delegation (Ramírez Cuevas 2001). One of my interviewees, the long-time leader

of a neighborhood association referred to how important the Law for Commercial Establishments approved in 2001 was in controlling the expansion of these businesses in *Condesa*. Nonetheless, she highlighted that residents still had problems with mainstream businesses (mainly restaurants and clubs) due to their clients' inappropriate usage of parking spaces and sidewalks. Pictures 10 and 11 show one of the many "no parking" signs neighbors have in front of their houses and cars parked on a sidewalk in front of a traditional Art Deco building.

Pictures 10 and 11

"No Parking" Sign and Cars in front of *"Edificio Rosa"* (The Pink Building)

Source: the author. Left: one of many signs on residents' garages warning that "We puncture tires for free." Right: The Art Deco Pink Building. November 2009

5.3. Local Governance and Citizenship before 2000

This section presents some of the relevant collective actors in *Roma Condesa* and the main differences and conflicts among them up until 2000. Just as the process of economic and urban recovery started earlier in *Roma Condesa* (during the 1990s) than in *Centro Histórico* (during the 2000s) PRD's Urban Programming for the area had a more positive effect on *Roma Condesa* earlier on. In 1999-2000 city government, through its Department of Urban Development and

Housing, elaborated the Partial Urban Development Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo,* one of the first Partial Plans the López Obrador administration put in place following the mandate of the city's Law for Urban Development. As we will see in this chapter, the process of elaborating the Plan along with the short-lived tenure of the area's Citizen Councilors (1995-1997) represented the highest points of influence *Roma Condesa* residents have had in urban planning in the context of the PRD-led emerging pragmatic urban regime. After that, in an opposite trend to what has happened in *Centro Histórico,* there has been an involution in which city authorities have grown less rather than more responsive to their needs.

In this section, just as I did in Chapter 4, I will examine three of the more traditional collective actors in *Roma Condesa*: local authorities, old and new residents, and formal business owners. Additionally, I assess the contrast between the welcomed visibility of foreigners vis-à-vis the invisibility and marginalization of indigenous residents in the area. I will analyze resident associations in later sections while looking at their connection with the two key government interventions mentioned above. I will be looking at those two instances separately from the overview of government interventions up to 2000 developed below because they jointly represent what many *Roma Condesa* residents view as the "golden era" of urban governance in their neighborhoods. As such, the significance of this Partial Urban Program and the Citizen Councils is much higher than other government interventions in *Roma Condesa* and they are the closest this area gets to *Centro Histórico* regarding mechanisms similar to the institutional catalyst the *Fideicomiso* has been.

Government Interventions up to 2000

In contrast with what happened in *Centro Histórico*, government authorities had a secondary role in the creation of what is now *Roma Condesa*. As shown in the previous section, private developers were the ones in charge of buying the land and building what would later become the

new favorite residential location of Mexico City's upper class. However, they did so under close supervision from city government[90] following special regulations in this regard and city government was supposed to reimburse the expenses they had made in minimum infrastructure or "*obras de cabeza*" (Benítez Ortega 2008; Porras Padilla 2001). Residents in *Roma Condesa*, as those in other privileged areas in the city, related to authorities through the clientelistic structure of the "*Jefes de Manzana"* (Block Chiefs) the PRI put in place in the 1950s. Unlike people in the low-income *"colonias populares"* (working-class neighborhoods) in the outskirts of the city, upper- and upper-middle class residents in *Roma Condesa* did not have the need to confront the authorities in order to keep their access to public services. In fact, as most elderly residents recalled in my interviews, the area enjoyed a particularly high quality of live up until the 1970s and there were not serious service provisioning problems to speak of. Similarly, it was too early for the traffic-related conflicts that would plague *Roma Condesa* later on since most families had only one car (if at all) and the area was too exclusive to receive significant amounts of visitors from other parts of the city (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b).

However, Mexico City did start to grow exponentially during the 1940s and 1950s (Sánchez Mejorada 2005) and such growth would account for the desire of many and middle-class families to put distance between themselves and the waves of rural immigrants coming into the city at the time. Many *Roma Condesa* residents left during the 1960s and 1970s and moved to the new richest and more exclusive neighborhoods of *Polanco, Lomas de Chapultepec,* and the like. This outmigration accelerated after the 1985 earthquakes, leaving behind only those who were too poor or too attached to the area to move out. By then *Roma Condesa* was showing important signs of deterioration and the earthquakes made such decline markedly visible as several interviewees remarked.

[90] The colonies comprising *Roma Condesa* were created before 1928, the year when Mexico City lost its autonomy to the national government. That is why sources on the matter refer to city (instead of national) authorities at that time.

The structure of the "*Jefes de Manzana*" (Block Chiefs) was still the main channel to relate to the authorities and the PRI had managed to keep residents under control throughout that time despite the zone's increasing decay. As a result, it was not until the early 1990s when *Roma Condesa* started to show signs of a more neighborhood-based and strategic form of interacting with the government. Some community activists started mobilizing their fellow residents and managed to "infiltrate" the PRI-dominated Block Chiefs structure. For instance, during our extended conversation at a small European-like café in *Condesa*, two close friends proudly recounted the tactics they used at that time to overcome their neighbors' apathy towards politics. According to these two vivacious middle-aged men, they used their extensive work experience in journalism and literature in a campaign centered on the need to "defend the neighborhood" against its increasing deterioration. One of them volunteered as campaign chief of staff for the other who became the first non-partisan *Jefe de Manzana* in *Roma Condesa*.

The 1990s was also the decade when residents created some of the most important neighborhood associations to date as analyzed in the following section. This civil society awakening in *Roma Condesa* was reinforced when national and then city authorities experimented with different versions of two mechanisms for citizen participation between 1995 and 1998: the *Comités Vecinales (Neighborhood Committees)* and the *Consejos Ciudadanos* (Citizen Councils). The *Comités Vecinales* were elected after the passing and subsequent reform of the Law of Citizen Participation in 1995 and 1998. Originally, the law passed in 1995 contemplated the election of s, which had a relatively high level of influence. I will analyze the experience of the Citizen Councils in the following section as they are heralded as part of the "golden era" of urban governance in *Roma Condesa*. Several interviewees argued that the Neighborhood Committees were deliberately established to replace Citizen Councils because the latter had "too much" autonomy and power since the 1998 Law for Citizen Participation, unlike

the 1995 one, established the *Comités Vecinales* (Neighborhood Committees), which only had an advisory role without any kind of voting power.

In sum, urban governance and citizenship in Roma Condesa before 2000 was marked by a process of involution from being the second residential location Mexico City's upper and middle-class favored after moving out from Centro Histórico in the 1920s and 1930s, to being forsaken in the 1950s and 1960s for new exclusive areas such as Polanco and Lomas de Chapultepec (Moreno et al 2011; Neri Flores 2009). Although the involution was not as marked as it was in Centro Histórico, the causes were similar: besides the exodus of many privileged residents, progressive decline was also the result of a cumulative mismatch between conservationist regulations for land use and an increase in mixed land uses (Moreno et al 2011). Another similarity between both areas is that *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* were the two sections of the city most negatively affected by the 1985 earthquakes (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000a and 2000b; Ortiz 1997). The disaster only accelerated the rate of the exodus while, at the same time, making the area affordable to artists and intellectuals in a manner very similar to what happened in the East Village in New York City (1993 [1961]).

As it was the case with the Village, these new residents helped revitalize and increase the value of land in *"La Condesa"* as we will see later on. This, in turn, contributed to start a new investment flow towards *Roma Condesa* during the 1990s that has dramatically reshaped these neighborhoods. The arrival of the leftist PRD to city government in 1997 and the new laws for citizen participation the city's Legislative Assembly approved in 1995 and 1997, respectively, brought new possibilities for activists to voice their discontent with the rapid deterioration the area was going through. As we will see in sections 5.4 and 5.5, this was followed by a brief but intense period at the beginning of the 2000s when residents worked jointly with city government devising urban policies to halt the decline, while later on the most resilient among them clung to the structure of the Neighborhood Committees until 2010.

Residents in Roma Condesa: Elderly Neighbors and Bohemians competing for the "Garden City"

People who have stayed in or moved to *Roma Condesa* have done so looking for the remnants of what the "garden city" movement longed to create (Fainstein and Campbell 2003): extensive green areas, quite surroundings, a sense of community, and the privilege to access everything one needs within walking distance from one's home. For example, a survey conducted for the Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* showed that 31% of the 300 people interviewed worked in the colony (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). Similarly, despite ongoing changes in the composition of *Roma Condesa*'s population, data from a survey conducted in *Colonia Hipódromo* in 1998 indicated that 71% of residents did not intend to move elsewhere. An additional 15% was planning to do so whereas the remaining 14% did not respond the question (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). Residents interviewed by Ortiz Guitart (2006) highlighted six reasons for their decisions to move to or to stay in the area: (1) *Condesa*'s central location in the city, which allows for shorter commutes to work; (2) the presence of multiple pleasant and accessible public areas; (3) the availability of various kinds of services including schools, bookstores, and restaurants accessible on foot; (4) the frequent social interactions among neighbors; (5) the presence of an important architectural legacy including various styles from the first half of the XX century (Art Deco, neocolonial, Californian); and, (6) the open-minded and diverse nature of the population.

As Ortiz Guitart (2006) argues and I was able to confirm during my interviews, residents talk about the area based on a frame of reference where the features of *Condesa* starkly contrast with the negative characteristics of Mexico City as a whole: accessibility by foot vs. pronounced dependence on driving; anonymity vs. long-term relationships; or the intimidating size of the mega-city vs. the manageable size of "a village." For instance, Ortiz Guitart emphasized the contrast between neighbors' attitudes about social interactions in *Condesa* with those from a

similar study she conducted in Barcelona (Ortiz 2004)[91]. Along similar lines, one of my interviewees, a young restaurant owner who had lived abroad for several years, shared how moving to *Condesa* was the only way in which he could make the transition back to the city:

> *La Condesa* still has a small town feel to it. I think this is the only place where I could live in the city… I mean, I'm from Mexico City but I left to live abroad and also lived in another part of the country for a while. The city is too difficult to come back to. You become an X [meaning, another number], you don't leave your house, you drive everywhere, you don't know anybody. When I came back to live here [and moved to *Condesa*] I reconnected with this small town atmosphere where you say hi to everybody, where everybody knows you [at that exact moment, someone passes by in front of us and says hello to him, we both smile]… People knows you and you know them… That is something that *la Condesa* gives you that is rare because here everybody distrusts everybody else… Even if you live in one of the most beautiful parts of the city like *Lomas de Chapultepec*, people drive back home and stay there because of lack of safety and because of other problems… If you do go out, you go out feeling fear. Not here. Here you have that freedom to work out, jog at the park, take a walk,.. On Sundays, we have cultural events at the park… You are not as much of an X as you are in other colonies (Alvaro, business owner, 33 years old).

Long-term residents, business owners, and key informants alike view the area's tradition of cultural diversity as an important part of *Roma Condesa*'s character as well as one of the main causes of its revitalization during the last decade. Interviewees and acquaintances alike often referred to the presence of artists, politicians, and intellectuals living in *Condesa* as a distinctive part of its charm.[92] Similarly, *Roma Condesa*'s traditional features as a "garden city" enclave enabled the last cycle of urban recycling in the area by attracting the new waves of younger residents and artists that started to repopulate the area in the 1990s. Pictures 12 and 13 below show a typical scene of Sunday recreation at one of many parks in *Roma Condesa*:

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[91] In Barcelona, only women who stayed at home valued the possibility of interacting with neighbors whereas women and men of different ages valued this practice in *Condesa*. According to the author, this happened because many male residents also live *and* work in the area either at home or at their own practices. Therefore, both women and men are able to note and value the relaxed and frequent pattern of interactions among neighbors.

[92] For example, while having dinner with a couple of friends at one of *Colonia Condesa*'s upscale restaurants, one of them (a foreign diplomat who lived in Mexico for 5 years), explained his fascination with the area saying that it is probably the only neighborhood in the world "with two recipients of the Cervantes Award", the Spanish equivalent of the Nobel Literature Prize. The two Cervantes Award recipients were poets Juan Gelman and José Emilio Pacheco. Both died in January 2014.

Pictures 12 and 13

Mexican boy and girl scouts playing and train at *Parque España*

Source: Pictures taken by the author. June 2010.

Architect José Luis Cuevas had designed *Colonia Hipódromo*, built on the terrains formerly used for the city's racecourse ("*hipódromo*" in Spanish), to include multiple green areas, which are still important landmarks today. That is the case of the Spain and Mexico parks and the *camellones* or traffic islands built on central streets such as Amsterdam Avenue (Taváres 1999). Extensive green areas combined with the central location of *Roma Condesa* in the city made the area attractive once again. So much so that several interviewees emphasized how *Roma Condesa* has replaced Mexico City's famous *Zona Rosa* (Pink Zone) as the new "cool" area for clubbing, hanging out and dining out.

The strong sense of belonging many residents show, especially those who have lived in *Roma Condesa* for a long time, does not negate the fact that the area continues to lose population. This trend was also evident in *Colonia Hipódromo* at the beginning of the last decade: the colony had 15,065 residents in 1990 compared to only 12,762 in 1995. That is, *Hipódromo* lost 15.4% of its population in just 5 years. Moreover, most of the loss took place in the age bracket of people between 17 and 34 years of age. According to several interviewees and other sources, the depopulation trend continues because young people who move to *Condesa* tend to leave once

they start their own families. This trend overlaps with and reinforces the effects of outmigration by young people who were born and raised there but leave while their parents continue to reside in the area (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b[93]; Ortiz Guitart 2006). In the words of a long-standing activist from one of the surviving Neighborhood Committees, constant demographic change has contributed to the area's diversity but it also has its disadvantages:

> People have moved a lot. We arrived here in 1983. There were the seniors who had arrived at the beginning of the colonies in the 30s and 40s, and [whose] kids left to [upper-class neighborhood of] *Polanco* while they stayed here. Those seniors are dying out and there are new people coming so no one is really put down roots. Young people, young couples arrive, people with good incomes and as soon as they have children they leave because if you have the restaurant across the street, the bar downstairs, do they let you rest? Of course not. But as long as you're young and you don't have kids you think it's fantastic that you can walk to the restaurant, to get drinks, to stay up all night, to do whatever you want.
>
> But when you have kids, you change your point of view and look for another area with enough peace so that your kids can rest. Therefore, there is a lot of change. It's people with good economic resources. They are professionals. Here there are many architects, painters, writers, what they call (a term I personally don't like) "intellectuals" (as if the rest didn't use their intellect)… But now there is a great number of couples and when I say couples I'm talking about man-man, woman-man and woman-woman. There is a strong niche here, and I don't mean that pejoratively, of freedom for homosexuals and lesbians (Rocío, retired schoolteacher, 60+ years old).

Formal Business Owners: Roma Condesa's "Gastronomic Corridor" and the 1996 Conflict

Roma Condesa exhibits a thriving and diverse formal commerce sector including some of the businesses Jewish and Spanish immigrants founded such as bakeries, stores, private schools, markets, butcher shops, among others (Porras Padilla 2001; Rendón 2013). Restaurants, in particular, have a long trajectory in the area going back more than 50 years. Restaurants were also the economic sector where most Mexican investors got involved when the area started to recover in the 1990s. Indeed, several interviewees referred to *Roma Condesa* first and foremost as a significant "gastronomic corridor" in Mexico City. The persistence of restaurants over time is

[93] For instance, the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo found* that between 1990 and 1995 the population from 0 to 17 years old had declined from 25.9% to 21.7% (from 3,872 to 2,765 kids and adolescents) and the cohort from 18 to 34 years old had descended from 31.5% to 22.1% (from 4,745 to 2,815 persons) whereas people between 35 and 64 increased from 31.4% to 45.3% (from 4,730 to 5,772 persons) (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000).

interesting because this subsector has survived pronounced changes in land use. While the small businesses mentioned above were created to serve residents in *Roma Condesa* starting in the 1950s, the new businesses that started to emerge in the 1990s are mainly devoted to visitors from other parts of the city, the country and international tourists. This second change in land use patterns has led to a decrease in smaller family-based establishments in favor of bigger and more sophisticated ones for an upper-class clientele coming from outside the area (Rendón 2013).

This perception is consistent with the data shared by a representative from the National Chamber of the Restaurant Industry (CANIRAC) I interviewed in 2009. This representative who also owns *Restaurante El Litoral* (The Coastline) one of the most prestigious in *Roma Condesa* and started in 2000, estimated that 40% of his clientele came from the area and 60% of other upper- and middle-class neighborhoods like *Polanco, Doctores,* and *Colonia del Valle*. According CANIRAC data the neighborhood is now the most dynamic economic center in *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* as far as the restaurant sector is concerned whereas *Centro Histórico* is starting to show signs of recovery. He argued that the great advantage of *Roma Condesa,* compared to more exclusive areas like Polanco that were already showing signs of saturation, was that "there are businesses coming here but it is still peaceful."

Not surprisingly, most of my interviewees identified the restaurant association in the area, the *Asociación de Restaurantes del Corazón de la Condesa* (Restaurant Association from the Heart of *Condesa* or ARCCO), as the most important business association in *Roma Condesa*. ARCCO, which was founded in the 1990s, seems to have gained respect among the residents, which is remarkable given the multiple precedents of conflicts between neighbors and businesses. The Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* also describes the association as a group attempting "to legitimize their activities, not only before the authorities but also before other social actors in the colony and, in some areas, their position converges with that of the residents" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 17). However, a young owner of a smaller establishment I interviewed

argued that even though most restaurants and bars belong to the association, the group only mobilizes to deal with problems that affect the biggest and most established among them such as the business the president of the association owns.

To be sure, recent private investment in *Roma Condesa* is going to several other economic sectors, especially those related to culture and art, showing a diversification pattern similar to what is taking place in *Centro Histórico*. Nonetheless, the hospitality industry is proportionally more dominant in *Roma Condesa* and its revival precedes the revitalization of the historic center by, at least, a decade. Restaurants, bars and similar establishments led the way in *Roma Condesa's* urban renaissance based, in great part, on a strong gastronomic tradition in the area and most residents acknowledge the important economic role restaurants play. However, many of my interviewees tend to associate the problems they face with those businesses and especially with restaurants. That is the case, in great part, because of the conflict neighborhood residents and restaurant owners had back in 1996. Almost all my interviewees referred to this conflict in our conversations and for many, especially the more seasoned activists among them, that clash constituted a crucial moment in their work as neighborhood organizations.

At that time, many restaurants (especially newer ones whose owners had less of a connection to the neighborhood) had tables installed on the sidewalks near them thus interfering with pedestrian circulation. Neighbors protested to *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc* and to restaurant owners to no avail. Delegate Jesús Dávila, who ended up in jail due to corruption charges related to another case, would issue permits for restaurants to do so through an environmental office at the delegation (Neri Flores 2009) making a lax interpretation of the Federal District's Law for Commercial Establishments *("Ley de Establecimientos Mercantiles").* A new Delegate, Alejandro Carrillo, famously instructed city employees to forcibly move the tables out of the sidewalks in September 1996, which led to a confrontation among residents, restaurant owners and employees, and city officials. *Delegación Cuauthémoc* sent more than 300 workers to destroy

“with saws, soldering irons, picks and shovels the outdoor structures [and awnings] of 46 restaurants in colonies *Condesa, Hipódromo, Hipódromo Condesa, Roma* and *Roma Sur*” (Pastrana 1996 cited in Ortiz Guitart 2006). This very public intervention by city government received a high level of publicity in the media as shown by the quote above taken from leftist newspaper *La Jornada*. The conflict was so belligerent that it not only ended up being on the news for several weeks but it also required mediation from the Human Rights Commission, several journalists, and other public figures (also see Neri Flores 2009).

More importantly, the incident signaled the formation of two very distinct sides, i.e. the two sides that are still the faces of the conflict to this day. On the one hand, long-time residents who saw new restaurants as “invaders” in their neighborhood and, on the other, restaurant owners who emphasized the benefits their businesses brought to *Roma Condesa*. *Asociación de Amigos de los Parques México y España* (Association of Friends of Parks Mexico and Spain) represented the first side at a time where it clearly had a high level of influence on city government. Restaurant owners were not as organized at the time but they received support from some neighbors who advocated for a model of co-existence (“*convivencia*”) between both sectors. Moreover, residents, business owners, and employees in this group thought of the process of urban recycling taking place in *Condesa* as a model for other parts of the city in need of economic revalorization. Accordingly, they publicized their views in the media, collected signatures of support for the restaurants, and public demonstrations. From their perspective, this new model of co-existence suggested the type of mixed land use and sociability patterns needed in Mexico City as a whole. The following quote from an op-ed piece published in newspaper *Reforma*, echoes the reasons the young business owner gave for moving to and establishing a bar in the area:

> The restaurant renaissance in *Colonia Condesa* has offered –with all its contrasts- an unusual example of coexistence. Due to historical reasons, Mexico City has been, regarding recreation and free time, a city given to confinement, dispersed, fragmented, foreign to walks. [The fact that] Restaurants and bars have won over the sidewalks has contributed to opening spaces for coexistence (González 1996 cited in Ortiz Guitart 2006).

Finally, the Citizen Councilors ("*Consejeros Ciudadanos*") residents had elected as their representatives in 1995 took a more balanced position in the conflict. A manifesto they published in *La Jornada* newspaper that year said: "We the Citizen Councilors ask our neighbors from our colonies to stay united and alert against any attempt to revert the law. The restaurants that fulfill their obligations can continue to enjoy the profits generated by their businesses. Those who seek to obtain extraordinary gains from using public space must reflect on the fact that they cannot act with a double standard: what is mine is mine and what is public is also mine." However, a journalist from *La Jornada* argued that Citizen Councilors took the side of the neighbors and heavily criticized them for allegedly not seeing that Delegate Carrillo was himself allied to new economic groups pushing to change land use regulations in *Roma Condesa* in order to expand their presence in it (Rascón 1996).

At the end of the day, the conflict was resolved through an agreement between Citizen Councilors from colonies *Condesa* and *Hipódromo-Condesa*, the President of the Association of Residents from colony *Hipódromo-Condesa,* and the Association Friends of the Parks Spain and Mexico, on the side of the neighbors, and ARCCO in representation of the restaurants. According to the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* the agreement "was elaborated following a principle of impartiality and restitution of what is just for each side. That is, it took into account the legitimate interest of the neighbors and pedestrians to freely use the street as well as that of restaurant owners to preserve their source of income" (*Asamblea Legislativa* del DF 2000b: 62).

The agreement established that each restaurant would leave a free corridor of 1.5 meters wide on each sidewalk, that they would pick up all their furniture on the street at the end of each day, that all restaurants without their own parking area would hire a valet parking service, and that the percentage of tables and chairs on the street would never exceed the percentage of tables and chairs inside each establishment (*Asamblea Legislativa* del DF 2000b). The same document states that the impact of the agreement was limited since ARCCO did not represent all the

restaurants in the area and the agreement itself was not legally binding. However, it is important to note that most of the residents I interviewed respected ARCCO's role in the negotiation and emphasized that their relationship had markedly improved ever since.

Foreigners and Cultural Diversity in Roma Condesa

My conversation with the architect mentioned at the beginning of the chapter took place during a neighborhood event at the famous *Parque España* (Park Spain). This fact is telling, on the one hand, because the event was part of cultural activities various neighborhood associations organized to "foster identity-building" as one leader explained to me that day. On the other hand, the location itself is important because the park was named to commemorate the arrival of the Spanish refugees taken in after the Republican side lost the Civil War. The focal point is a monument built by the Spanish community as a thank-you gesture to Lázaro Cárdenas, the President who welcomed them in the country. Pictures 14 and 15 present glimpses of the park:

Pictures 14 and 15

Monument to Cárdenas and Neighborhood Event at *Parque España*

Source: The author. Left: Lázaro Cárdenas monument.
Right: neighbors at a cultural event. November 2009

Several interviewees highlighted the fact that both Spanish and Jewish immigration to *Condesa* inaugurated a tradition of cultural diversity that continues to this day. In their view, contrary to popular opinion, young foreigners' preference for *Condesa* while living in or visiting Mexico City is not a new phenomenon. Their presence in *Roma Condesa,* which usually lasts several months at a time, is just part of that tradition. That tradition includes not only the active presence of Spanish refugees in the 1930s but also that of different waves of Jewish immigration[94]. Most Spanish refugees first lived in *Centro Histórico* and later moved to more "upscale" residential areas like *Condesa*. Jewish immigrants included Sephardic Jews from the Mediterranean and from the Middle East who arrived to Mexico at the end of the XIX century, Ashkenazi Jews from Russia, Poland, Lithuania, and the Balkans who arrived at the beginning of the XX century (Porras Padilla 2001). The following excerpt is an account of the advantages Jewish families enjoyed in the area and the way in which they (and others) valued Parks Mexico and Spain:

> Around the 1940s, most of these families were already established in *Colonia Hipódromo*, in buildings… designed in accordance with modernity. Rooms were larger and more practical and had more access to light and ventilation. Household appliances would also be modern: electric stoves –which would later be gas-based- refrigerators, record players, washing machines, and dryers. On top of being a modern residential area, the colony offered Jewish families a recreation center: Mexico Park. While their kids went to school at the *Colegio Israelita* (Israelite School) or at the Yavne, the mothers would get together to knit, exchange pieces of advice, and catch up on what was going on in the community. They would go out again in the afternoon but then they would share the place with their kids (Porras Padilla 2001: 147).

Foreigners also played an important role in the creation of *Roma Condesa* as either investors or a valued target for investors. The new legal framework put in place during *La Reforma*, the reformist period after the Mexican independence, suppressed the Catholic Church's right to own

[94] "Those [Jews] who had opened businesses in the center –glassware shops, clothing and fabric stores, grocery stores, and butcher's shops- were able to change their precarious way of life with the money they had saved. They moved from there to *Colonia Roma* where they enjoyed [living in] larger spaces" (Porras Padilla 2001: 145). However, most Jewish families moved to *Colonia Condesa* proper, and others moved to *Colonia Hipódromo* (Porras Padilla 2001). Several authors describe the presence of Spanish refugees in the center and their eventual migration to *Roma Condesa* and other areas in similar terms.

property and gave tax breaks to foreigners who invested in "importing inputs for the formation and functioning of the colonies" created at that time (Porras Padilla 2001: 31). Expropriating the Church's patrimony made a lot of cheap pieces of land available for both Mexicans and foreigners while tax breaks motivated many non-native investors to take part in the city's expansion. At the same time, other laws authorized owners of farms and plots of lands around the (colonial) city to divide them up for selling purposes. Similarly, the *Ley de Terrenos Baldíos* (Vacant Lots Law) established tax breaks for Mexican developers who included foreigners in the new populations (Porras Padilla 2001).

Foreigners are, once again, key protagonists of *Condesa*'s revival as shown in the expansion in the number and diversity of hotels and guesthouses in the area. Their publicity, similarly to the marketing strategies used by developers building new housing for Mexican clients, includes catchy descriptions focusing on the neighborhood's safety, vitality, and diversity. For instance, a boutique hotel suggestively called *"Condesa Haus"* is described as: "a new concept of hosting in mexico through a blend of art, comfort, and technology, all at the condesa, the most famous and trendy neighborhood in mexico city (sic)" (http://www.condesahaus.com/ accessed on April 17, 2011). Similarly, those renting rooms for international youngsters emphasize the diversity of entertainment options in the neighborhood. The following ad posted on the website mexicocity.cityapt.org on March 9th, 2011 is a representative example:

> A great opportunity to be part of an amazing house in *Condesa*. We live on a quite, beautiful street just 2 blks from nice restaurants of Michocan and 2 blks from the crazy barlandia of Tampulipas and Nuevo Leon. The house is a large 4 bedroom house with 1 full bath and two half baths, living room and dining room and large rooftop. The house has cool features like large floor to ceiling mirrors, a huge mural covering 3 walls… We are an international house of doers, thinkers, professionals, and students. Currently we are all women, French, Mexican, German and American. We like to cultivate the buena onda in the house and we hope you can fit in with our great energy.

The Invisibility of the Indigenous Population in Roma Condesa

In contrast with the visibility of foreigners, a group of residents my interviewees rarely mentioned let alone acknowledged as contributing to diversity in *Roma Condesa* was that of indigenous residents living in abandoned buildings in the area. Interviewees might be less inclined to talk about this group because the widespread practice of grassroots organizations occupying abandoned plots or structures is much more common in the periphery or in *Centro Histórico*. Nonetheless, poor indigenous residents tend to stand out much more in middle- and upper-middle class areas like the *Territorial Roma Condesa* than it is the case in the historic center. Therefore, such omission in itself is an indicator of the invisibility of indigenous residents in the area.

Part of their invisibility stems from the fact that indigenous residents do not have much of an organizational presence in *Roma Condesa*. An important exception is the *Alianza Mexicana de Organizaciones Residentes* (Mexican Alliance of Resident Organizations or AMOR). AMOR is the only neighborhood organization devoted to defending the indigenous population in *Condesa*. The organization, whose acronym also means "love" in Spanish, is part of the very combative and visible *Asamblea de Barrios*, a network of grassroots organizations famous for defending the interests of poor residents after the 1985 earthquakes. Just as *Asamblea de Barrios* has a negative image among many city residents because of their frequent use of confrontational tactics, AMOR is looked down upon because of their joint work with *Asamblea de Barrios*.

On top of the class-based conflict behind being associated with *Asamblea de Barrios*, organizations like AMOR face the hostility of those residents and authorities who deem their constituencies unfit to live in middle- and upper-middle class areas. In an interview with Vargas (2011), the young woman who leads the association shared that this type of unspoken prejudice violates the rights of their constituents even by putting them in danger when city authorities take a long time making decisions regarding buildings at risk, unhealthy living conditions, or properties in the process of being expropriated:

> Since we are focusing on processes of expropriation and we have realized that the lacunae are a result of the interpretation criteria used by the officials in charge, now they give us a hard time and tragedies can take place in the meantime… Here in Mérida [Street], there was sewage flooding where the comrades were swimming in excrements and getting sick with Amoebiasis, Salmonella, skin problems… We had the death of one comrade's daughter because she wasn't eating well, gastroenteritis. Because these are diseases associated with poverty they also generate social disdain and this is why we're interested in changing those perceptions. It's not only about what it costs economically, there are also social costs (Interview in Vargas 2010).

In her view, elitism in government priorities explains the existing asymmetry regarding time periods and outcomes: "An expropriation process can take us up to 8 years, however, with the *'Supervía'* [an expressway project] the process only takes a few months and they [property owners] are already getting paid" (Vargas 2010). Moreover, processes of expropriation are even more complicated in *Colonia Roma* since the 1985 earthquakes led to the abandonment of many properties, which are still in a legal limbo. On the one hand, poor indigenous immigrants from rural areas have taken advantage of the high rate of absentee ownership and created living spaces for them and their families. On the other hand, many individuals have taken advantage of the legal and regulatory gaps to extort them by pretending to be the rightful owners of those properties. The role of networks such as AMOR is to provide the expertise marginalized residents need in order to fight back the extortionists and coordinate actions with housing authorities.

AMOR encompasses several associations working together to "promote low-income housing [*vivienda de interés social*] for marginalized groups, especially indigenous people and fundamental human rights such as education, recreation, and sports" (Vargas 2010). Although formally founded in 2007, AMOR includes groups that have been working on these problems since 2000. The Alliance is present both in *Colonia Roma* and in *Centro Histórico*. Nevertheless, most of their work takes place in the former due to the concentration of indigenous *Otomí* families in the colony. The groups represented in the Alliance include the association *Grupo Promotor Mujeres Indígenas Otomíes* (Indigenous Otomí Women Advocacy Group) in charge of the project on 125 Guanajuato Street mentioned above, the *Movimiento Otomí Nacional* (National

Otomí Movement) based on 74 Zacatecas Street, the *Frente Otomí Machei* (Otomí Front Machei) on 119 Durango Street, *Grupo Restauración Roma* (Restoring Roma Group), *Movimiento Pro-Vivienda de Solicitantes* (Movement of Housing Applicants), among others. The Alliance follows up on the expropriations each group is seeking since the process itself constitutes "a very long road with unclear procedures that respond to political and economic interests" (Vargas 2010). They even hired a professional from public university UNAM to help with the decision-making process about expropriated lots and properties.

Despite the distinctiveness of indigenous residents in *Condesa*, it would be a mistake to assume that AMOR does not share at least some of the concerns expressed by middle- and upper-middle class neighbors in the area. The Alliance's spokeswoman highlighted several problems mentioned by members from other associations: those related to land use patterns and regulation, high levels of deterioration of many buildings leading to subsidence and collapse, garbage accumulation, etc. She even referred to the dangers associated with the proliferation of commercial establishments in the area and the risk of *Condesa* resembling the now highly deteriorated "Zona Rosa" (Pink Zone). However, this leader was the only neighborhood representative to emphasize the importance of *Condesa* becoming a model of diversity across class and race lines, not only regarding land use. In her view, such a mix would provide poorer residents with options in terms of "dignified work" as construction workers or maids. Absorbing this kind of unqualified yet necessary labor would also contribute to expanding the area's "internal economy": "I think that in these colonies we should promote having people from different social levels. That way, you don't exclude less privileged groups and it is easier for them to work and live in the same area while avoiding unnecessary travels, which cost both time and money" (Vargas 2010).

5.4. A Short-lived Golden Era: the Citizen Councilors (1995-1997), the Partial Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* (1999-2000), and the Genesis of Neighborhood Associations

In this section I analyze two planning mechanisms the city's Legislative Assembly and city government put in place in *Roma Condesa* during the second half of the 1990s and the very beginning of the 2000s. They represent important precedents of inclusive urban governance in the area and the closest it has been to ensuring that some degree of residents' inputs informs the process of urban redevelopment, as it has been the case with the *Fideicomiso's* work with neighbors and others in *Centro Histórico*. The first one was that of the Citizen Councilors defined through the 1995 Law for Citizen Participation and later replaced with the Neighborhood Committees in the 1998 version of the law. The second is the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* including the active role residents had in it, a process that had a much narrower scope in *Centro Histórico*. The rest of the section addresses the most important neighborhood associations in the area and the way they benefited from both planning mechanisms.

Citizen Councilors: the Downfall of Being "the Kings of the Planet"

As analyzed in Chapter 3, Mexico City's Legislative Assembly approved "Citizen Councils" in the Federal District Citizen Participation Law of 1995 as "neighborhood representation and citizen participation bodies [charged with] paying attention to community interests in the delegation, regarding the needs and quality of public services" in the area where they reside. The 1995 Law emphasizes that the Citizen Councils are autonomous from city authorities and their mandate includes "intervening" in issues regarding "the management, supervision, evaluation and, in other cases, consultation about or approval of public programs" defined for the delegations in the city's governing statute and legislation. Such broad mandate, although successful at first, proved fatal for the figure of Citizen Councils when PRD representatives in the city's Legislative Assembly started debating whether they had given away too much power to

those elected and replaced the Councils with the more limited Neighborhood Committees three years later.

The key difference between Citizen Councils and other channels for interacting with authorities is that the Councils produced binding decisions and had a high level of influence on city government. One of their main functions was to evaluate and approve their delegation's annual programs in public safety, sanitation, community and social services, water provision, parks, sports and recreation, as well as infrastructure for education and sports. Likewise, they were charged with receiving complaints about the behavior of their delegation's public enforcement officials and public officials in general, and they could request the presence of any official from the delegation at their meetings. Additionally, the Councils had a relatively high level of representation since residents elected one Citizen Council per delegation and each council had at least 15 members. The law established that there would be 15 councilors per 100,000 inhabitants in the delegation and then an added councilor per each additional group of 15,000 people. Candidates would present themselves grouped in electoral tickets for their district and needed to reserve support from at least 4% of those registered in such district for their ticket to be accepted.

Once elected, Citizen Councilors had not only plenty of responsibilities but also some logistical support to perform them. In fact, according to an interviewee, many residents considered presenting themselves as candidates because Citizen Councilors were allegedly going to be paid as much as representatives at the Legislative Assembly. She jokingly added that the many potential candidates' "interest to serve" went down dramatically when a much lower salary was revealed. In any event, councilors were paid and also had offices equipped with various kinds of logistical support including the services of a secretary. A distinguished Citizen Councilor from *Roma Condesa* used his stipend to publish a neighborhood newspaper with the help of his entire family as his wife, another long-standing neighborhood activist shared with me. The newspaper

would showcase the main problems in *Roma Condesa* and would also share information about potential solutions the neighbors were proposing or devising to solve them. My informant also shared, however, that some councilors around the city were allegedly involved in shady businesses by misusing the influence associated with their role.

Despite how short-lived the Citizen Councils were, they left an imprint in *Roma Condesa*, something that never occurred in *Centro Histórico*. They still represent to those who have lived the longest in the area, part of the "golden era" of ideal mechanisms to recover the "garden city" *Roma Condesa* has always been meant to become. Citizen Councilors were highly influential as shown in their very visible participation in the conflict between residents and restaurants in 1996. In fact, Citizen Councilors from colonies *Condesa* and *Hipódromo-Condesa* were among the representatives who signed the agreement that put an end to the incident as the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* documents (Asamblea Legislativa del DF 2000b).

According to my interviewees, their very disappearance confirmed how threatening they had become for politicians in the city. The fact that the Neighborhood Committees, which replaced the Citizen Councils, only have an advisory role to city authorities serves as further evidence in that direction. Several interviewees, including both key informants and *Roma Condesa* residents, argued that many representatives at the city's Legislative Assembly feared the power the Citizen Councilors accumulated and did not appreciate the fact that they could "affect them politically" and behave like "the kings of the planet." More generally, Citizen Councils were part of PRD's experimentation with the participatory side of the pragmatic urban regime the party has led since the late 1990s. Their presence confirmed for various PRD factions (with the exception of "believers" in citizen participation such as the ones at the *Fideicomiso* in the historic center) that they needed a more limited approach to engaging city residents; one where there is some degree of participation but citizens are still kept in line. Mayors López Obrador and Ebrard experimented with such new approaches as they sought to further control the rules of engagement

with Mexico City residents. López Obrador's emphasis on the territory through the partial urban development programs is an example of such an approach. However, the one started in *Colonia Hipódromo* is also considered as part of *Roma Condesa's* "golden era" of urban planning because of the inclusive process that led to it.

The Partial Urban Development Program for Colonia Hipódromo: "Reestablishing Balance"

The second most important precedent regarding the interaction between city authorities and residents in *Roma Condesa* was the Partial Urban Development Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* elaborated in 1999-2000, which represents the highest level of influence residents have had in their relationship with city government regarding urban planning to date. As analyzed in Chapter 3, the Partial Programs for Urban Development became the hallmark of López Obrador's administration in the early 2000s and they were established as the third component of Mexico City's planning system in the Federal District's Law for Urban Development (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF 2014 [2010a]*). In the case of *Roma Condesa*, several long-time neighborhood leaders still look back at the one for *Colonia Hipódromo* as part of a "golden era" they have not been able to get back to.

Having participated in the elaboration of that program still frames residents' expectations to the point that they were highly disappointed with López Obrador's successor, mayor Marcelo Ebrard (2006-2012) when it was evident that his administration decided to sideline the Partial Programs. Therefore, Partial Programs for the other four colonies in *Roma Condesa* were not put in place. Almost all the historically active neighborhood leaders I interviewed referred to this lack of continuity in the city's urban planning system and expressed their frustration about it. According to them, the Partial Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* constituted a "pilot project" (as one of them put it) for *Roma Condesa* since Partial Programs for the colonies *Roma Norte, Roma Sur, Condesa,* and *Condesa-Hipódromo* were supposed to follow.

The *Hipódromo* Partial Urban Development Plan, as other Partial Programs in the city, was called to become a "normative document" establishing "the policies, criteria, and guidelines [needed] in order to protect and reorder *Colonia Hipódromo*'s *harmonious and sustainable* development" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 5; my emphasis). As mandated by the Law for Urban Development, Mexico City's Department of Urban Development and Housing (SEDUVI) was in charge of its elaboration, then submitted it to the city's Chief of Government (Mayor) who, in turn, presented it to the Legislative Assembly, which approved it in 2000. The Partial Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* was one of five programs designed to reverse out-migration from the central city or *"Ciudad Central"* analyzed in Chapter 3. As the document states: "5 Partial Programs seek to halt depopulation and they are located in areas with [urban] recycling potential" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 4).

Another reason why the Partial Program still constitutes such an important reference for long-standing activists in *Roma Condesa* is that it strongly reflects their vision for their neighborhoods. The main theme that permeates the document is the idea of "reestablishing the balance" lost through the profound changes *Colonia Hipódromo* (and the rest of the *Roma Condesa* area) had gone through during the 1990s. This is especially evident in the "vision for the future" *("imagen objetivo")* section of the document, which echoes the list of problems residents emphasized in their interviews with me and with other researchers (Ortiz Guitart's 2006; Vargas 2010). In this sense, there is a strong nostalgic element of going back to a glorious and more "harmonious" past when things were, indeed, in balance. The vision of both residents and urban development city planners then attempts to reestablish the balance "between the resident population and the floating population", between "age cohorts", and between "different types of land use" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 68). This nostalgic take also manifests in various goals destined to "recover" previous features of the colony, such as "recovering land plots used by restaurants, businesses, and offices for residential purposes" even though the previous line on

the same page is about balancing different types of land use (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 68). Along similar lines, the overall goals of the Partial Plan were:

1. To generate an environment favorable for healthy coexistence among residents in the colony, establishing clear mechanisms to regulate it.
2. To establish criteria to halt and revert the process of deterioration of public space.
3. To define policies, criteria and guidelines to protect the natural and cultural heritage.
4. To establish clear and realistic rules to favor desirable land uses and discourage undesired ones.
5. To regulate an adequate and efficient utilization of streets.
6. To give legal and tax related support to regulations and guidelines (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 5).

In contrast with the more ambiguous goals listed above, the "vision for the future" section indicates that the overall objective is to "achieve an area [that is] predominantly *residential* with compatible complementary services" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 69; my emphasis). For instance, part of the demographic vision for the future is to recover the resident population originally projected for the colony, which puts the ideal number of residents for *Colonia Hipódromo* in 16,337 in 2018. This, in turn, would correspond to an urban density of 150 people per hectare.[95] They also projected the number of houses with an ideal target of "5,300 (950 more than in 1995) with an average of 3.13 residents per house" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 68). Unfortunately, residents and planners have not been able to achieve these goals as shown on Table 5.2 with data for 2010.

Similarly, the Program calls for rehabilitating key landmarks such as Mexico Park, replacing exposed electric, phone and cable lines with underground ones, improving the water and sewage systems, and expanding the supply of educational institutions to welcome the "return of young population" to the colony. The emphasis on housing needs and residents' interests also manifests on the naïve assumption of devoting more water supply to residents after having displaced the floating population and replaced non-housing types of land use for housing ones

[95] A hectare is equivalent to approximately 10,000 square meters.

(*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 69). Additionally, the document calls for "allowing various degrees of intervention" in historically or artistically landmarked houses and buildings so that their "livability" can be improved (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 69).

Although none of the goals included in the Partial Program have been achieved, its formulation is still considered an essential model for *Colonia Hipódromo* and *Roma Con*desa as a whole. A final reason for this is the fact that, according to my interviewees, its elaboration entailed a high level of involvement on the part of the neighbors, which managed to include many of their views in the resulting document as shown above. Additionally, public officials from Mexico City's Department of Urban Development and Housing conducted two surveys as additional sources of information. The first one, with a sample of 100 people, focused on office buildings in *Colonia Hipódromo* whereas the second one, with a sample of 300 persons, addressed more general questions such as people's preferred areas to live. Results of the latter indicated that 71% of those living in the colony did not intend to move elsewhere whereas that was the case for 15% of them, and the rest did not respond (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b).

Traditional Neighborhood Associations: Defending the Neighborhood

Both the Citizen Councils and the Partial Program contributed to strengthen the work of the neighborhood associations that residents had created during the first half of that decade. In fact, as it is understood to be the case with upper- and upper-middle class areas in the city, *Roma Condesa* has a remarkably high associational density. The most important neighborhood association in *Roma Condesa* is *Amigos de los Parques México y España* (Friends of Parks Mexico and Spain), which was created in 1992. All interviewees from this area, several key informants and most recent documents about *Roma Condesa* mentioned Friends of the Parks as a

key reference among groups in the area.[96] The other two associations most interviewees refer to are the *Movimiento Pro-Dignificación de la Colonia Roma* (Movement Pro-Dignifying *Colonia Roma*) created in 1995, and *Nuevo Parque España* (New Park Spain), which started in 2003.

As I was able to witness firsthand, membership in all three associations is comprised of mainly middle-aged long-time residents and the participation of younger residents is very limited. Another study in *Roma Condesa* by Mexican architect and activist Moisés Vargas (2011) also found this to be a relevant trend among his interviewees: of the 10 association leaders he interviewed, 6 were 50 years old or older and were college educated. The remaining four informants were between 35 and 50 years old. Three of them were also college educated whereas one of them had also finished his master's degree. Additionally, 5 of his 10 informants were women and the remaining 5 were men.

My interviews with members of all neighborhood associations, as well as Vargas' work (2011), indicate a great deal of overlapping interests: promoting community development, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of the area's historic architectural heritage. What usually distinguishes each of these groups is the degree to which it emphasizes those elements and/or the short-term means they privilege to achieve those goals. For example, the *Movimiento Pro-Dignificación de la Colonia Roma* is more interested in preserving the colony's architecture because it has more protected buildings than any of the others whereas *Nuevo Parque España* focuses on creating a business district in *Condesa*. Smaller organizations such as *Mithos del Parque* (Park's Myths), *Movimiento Pro-Rescate Ambiental Glorieta Chilpancingo* (Movement Pro-Environmental Rescue of Chilpancingo Plaza), and the grassroots indigenous

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[96] For example, the Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* states that it is the association "that exercises more pressure on the authorities and over other actors [and] it intervenes as if it were the legitimate representative of residents' interests" (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000: 17). Its long-time coordinator has met and negotiated with city government representatives for the area during that time. At the time of my fieldwork, she continued to do so along with the former members of the *Comités Vecinales* (Neighborhood Committees) from colonies *Roma, Condesa,* and *Hipódromo*.

organization *Alianza Mexicana de Organizaciones Residentes* (Mexican Alliance of Resident Organizations or AMOR) mentioned earlier were all formally constituted in 2007.

Despite the activism of these neighborhood associations, several informants emphasized that the level of participation of ordinary residents is low. In particular, upper- and upper-middle class residents such as those present in *Roma Condesa* show a high aversion to demonstrate. A female middle-aged leader found this phenomenon to be clearly class-based but in an opposite direction to the theories explaining that participation is higher among those with more cultural and material resources (Almond and Verba 1963; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker 2004). In her view, "people don't participate because it's not the same as in the "*colonias populares"* [working class neighborhoods] where corporatist groups [those formed under PRI's corporatist regime] warn you that if you don't go to the demonstration, you won't get access to services. Since here all those needs have been met, [people think] 'what for?' 'I pay my taxes so the government should provide the service.'"

The same interviewee explained that many residents tend rely on virtual platforms and groups to share their complaints with other neighbors. However, when someone suggests a concrete course of action "no one seconds it." In other cases, people start innovative initiatives such as posting signs against opening new commercial establishments and criticizing authorities at *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc* (see picture 16 below) but the rest of the community responds very timidly. In the case of the neighborhood signs she added that "[if there are] so many complaints, there should be a sign on every balcony" and that was not the case.

Picture 16

Neighborhood Poster denouncing *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*

Source: The author. December 2009. The sign reads: "No more permits for restaurants and bars. Stop corruption at *Delegación Cuauhtémoc"*

5.5. Questioning the State: Clinging to the Neighborhood Committees (2001-2010)

In order to understand the context in which *Roma Condesa* neighborhood associations operate, it is necessary to understand the singularity of Neighborhood Committees in that area, the second planning mechanism the city's Legislative Assembly created after the Citizen Councils. As I analyzed in Chapter 3, these committees served as interlocutors with the corresponding territory-based government agencies and, as such, their responsibilities included overseeing, evaluating, informing about, and sharing their opinions about the actions and policies implemented by such agencies. In this case, the staff at the *Territorial Roma-Condesa*, the sub-administrative division of *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* for this area, constituted the city government counterpart for the Neighborhood Committees from colonies *Roma Norte, Roma Sur, Condesa, Hipódromo-Condesa,* and *Hipódromo.* In fact, the constitution of the Neighborhood Committees in 1999 served an important role in increasing associational density in the area when former committee members created new neighborhood groups in addition to the pioneer "Friends of the Parks" and the "Movement Pro-Dignifying Colonia Roma" created in 1992 and 1995. For instance, the

umbrella organization *Unión de Vecinos Hipódromo, Roma, Condesa* ("Union of Neighbors *Hipódromo, Roma, Condesa*") first emerged as a space for exchange and collaboration among the *Comités Vecinales* or Neighborhood Committees from each of the colonies.

Even though Neighborhood Committees had a more limited scope than Citizen Councils, what distinguished *Roma Condesa* from most other neighborhoods in Mexico City (regardless of their economic composition) is that residents intentionally kept alive the Neighborhood Committees after they were rendered inactive by city government and the Legislative Assembly's lack of action. The 1998 law clearly defined the Neighborhood Committees' tenure to last 3 years, a period after which residents would elect new representatives. However, this never happened as the López Obrador administration implemented new guidelines regarding citizen participation and inter-party conflicts within the PRD at the Legislative Assembly brought debates about the law to a stalemate for the following 10 years. As a result, more than 70% of the Neighborhood Committees in the city stopped functioning. And those still in place became "atomized", "fragmented" or "depleted" (Vargas 2010).

In contrast with what happened in other parts of the city such as *Centro Histórico* where Neighborhood Committees were short-lived or nonexistent, neighbors elected as members of the committees in *Roma Condesa* stayed in their posts even after their 3-year term expired in 2001 and most of the committees were still in place by the end of 2010. Indeed, the first person I interviewed from *Roma Condesa* back in 2009 was a member of the Neighborhood Committee from *Colonia Hipódromo*. Her account and that of three interviewees from the other surviving committees (from colonies *Condesa*, *Hipódromo-Condesa*, and *Roma Norte*) in 2009 and 2010 painted a similar picture. For instance, this first informant from *Colonia Hipódromo* said that only seven (7) out of the fifteen (15) original members of her committee were still active since the rest had either moved to other parts of the city, disengaged from the process or died.

The same interviewee, a retired schoolteacher who had lived most of her life in *Colonia Hipódromo*, talked about three main obstacles the Neighborhood Committees faced, which were later echoed in my interviews with other committee members from *Roma Condesa*: (1) the difficulty to integrate diverging points of view since committee members had been elected as candidates from different electoral platforms; (2) the lack of defined policies regarding the committees on the part of city authorities at the local level (that is, the Delegation); and (3) the fact that results from the committees were not binding. Regarding the last problem, she emphasized that: "I can say whatever I feel like but the chief at the delegation is not required to take into account any of my suggestions." An additional problem was that some Neighborhood Committee members in other parts of *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* had become public officials at the Delegation and this accelerated the extinction of their committees. However, this was less common in *Roma Condesa* as other interviewees confirmed. According to her, this risk for cooptation also reflected on the fact that "with committees such as ours, which are very critical, and depending on who the representative is [at the delegation], what happens is that they neither see you nor hear you because no one likes to hear what their mistakes are." This lack of response, in turn, ended up eroding much of the legitimacy the committees had at the beginning since other neighbors were in a position to argue that they were "useless." Some even accused them of being mere *"pantallas"* or cover-ups for the Delegation.

Results from my interviews are also consistent with the Neighborhood Committees a Mexican colleague, architect Moisés Vargas, analyzed in his socio-economic and cultural diagnosis of *Territorial Roma-Condesa* (Vargas 2010). The four Neighborhood Committee members he interviewed were also middle-aged, mostly male (3 out of 4), and all four were highly educated. Vargas' interviewees, just as mine, emphasized that they all got involved in the committees in order to discontinue the traditionally clientelistic institutions for resident participation: the *Jefes de Manzana* (Block Chiefs) affiliated with the PRI. In particular, the

strategy of keeping their Neighborhood Committees artificially alive made sense to many activists in the context of what they perceived as a high level of apathy towards *Roma Condesa* on the part of city government despite the various limitations this channel had. Committee members continued to use the committees as a springboard for collaborating among themselves while, at the same time, legitimizing their interaction with city authorities. This was apparent in the way they would consistently introduce themselves as members of the Neighborhood Committees to city officials and others (including myself) as I was able to witness in several occasions. For them, staying on their posts for almost 10 years was a deliberate resistance strategy to safeguard this channel for participation vis-à-vis what they saw as politicians' attempts to demobilize or control them.

In their view, their main achievement was to prevent decisions in the surviving Neighborhood Committees from being defined based on party affiliations. It is important to remember that these activists were reacting to the elimination of the Citizen Councils, an earlier and far more influential channel, briefly implemented between 1995 and 1997. Similarly, both my and Vargas' interviewees referred to what they perceived as the authorities' lack of commitment as the main obstacle limiting the committees' effectiveness. As a result, most residents only mobilize when there is a "crisis" and/or a confrontation with other collective actors. They all agreed that this lack of consistent participation also led to losing members in all four committees.

Based on the way in which *Roma Condesa* residents' experienced the elimination of Citizen Councils and the standstill the Neighborhood Committees were in, former Neighborhood Committee members and other activists tend to see the future of their community with skepticism or, at least, very guarded optimism. Unlike most residents in *Centro Histórico* whose expectations and level of information were too low to care about the disappearance of the Citizen Councils and the Neighborhood Committees, many of my interviewees in *Roma Condesa* took the matter almost personally in the sense that (at least at the beginning) they did expect to be fairly

represented in decisions about their area. Such expectation, in turn, made them more aware of the limitations they faced in engaging city authorities. This was evident in the disappointment many shared in their interviews with me as well as during my participant observation of public events and meetings they organized. Such disappointment also led them to take preemptive measures such as creating a new association, the umbrella organization *Unión de Vecinos Hipódromo, Roma, Condesa* ("Union of Neighbors *Hipódromo, Roma, Condesa*") with members from three of the four Neighborhood Committees in the area and two smaller associations.

The idea was that, as an autonomous association, the *Unión de Vecinos* would not be "at the whim of the representatives of the moment while waiting to see what law they would devise for citizen participation" and it could take advantage of the experience accumulated in the Neighborhood Committees. Additionally, a leader of the *Unión de Vecinos* shared that the founders deliberately chose not to be allowed to become presidents of the organization and appointed themselves as "advisors for life" instead. This also constitutes a preventive measure to assure that younger members have enough room to participate actively in the organization instead of it being sequestered by the founders.

However, some activists would allow themselves to hope for different outcomes every time new authorities were elected. For instance, by the end of 2009, after the election of new authorities in November of that year in *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*[97] many neighbors, especially those who belong to *Amigos de los Parques México y España* (Friends of the Parks Mexico and Spain) were looking forward to the possibility of influencing the new official in charge of citizen participation for *Roma Condesa*. In particular, they were counting on the high level of interest she showed in improving the delegation's work with neighborhood associations. Several residents mentioned to me that they were hopeful about the fact that she was also an experienced long-time community activist and a long-time resident in the area.

[97] The Ebrard administration started in December 2006 and ended in 2012. Authorities at the Delegation, unlike those for the city, are elected every 3 years instead of every 6.

A smaller subset of neighbors, affiliated with neighborhood association *Nuevo Parque España* (New Park Spain), has been advocating for a *Condesa* business district as a way to capitalize on the businesses' success to benefit the community through projects of social responsibility. Another minority of residents opposes both the business-oriented and the government-oriented strategies and sees them as "naïve". One of my interviewees who had aggressively expressed his opinion during one of the neighborhood events I observed argued that "consultation and negotiation doesn't work" as shown in what he sees as very limited success of having done so for the last 20 years. On the contrary, he advocates for setting legal precedents through civil suits against businesses that violate urban regulations about noise, parking space, and other sources of conflict with the neighbors. Nonetheless, most residents at that meeting and other public events seemed unconvinced and very reluctant about the business district idea.

5.6. Mexico City's SoHo: a New Business Sector and the Revalorization of Real Estate

This section analyzes how the rapid acceleration of national and international capital influx in *Roma Condesa* at the beginning of the 1990s has led to crucial changes in land use and life in general in this part of the city as it started to happen in *Centro Histórico* ten years later. The main actors behind those changes are a new generation of Mexican and international investors capitalizing on a trajectory of cultural diversity and centrality analyzed in previous sections as well as the entrepreneurial tradition Mexican restaurants established in *Condesa* initiated in the second half of the XX century. However, unlike what happened in *Centro Histórico*, there was no government intervention or guidance or any strategic alliance between private and public actors to speak of. This lack of synergy with city government, in turn, has made the transformation process chaotic and fragmented despite the many good ideas and projects present in the area.

To be sure, *Roma Condesa* started its urban renovation process in a better position than *Centro Histórico* and it is, still today, a more attractive area than the historic center. Nonetheless,

the lack of an institutional mechanism that can serve as a counterpart (such as the *Fideicomiso* is in the center) by going beyond competing visions has contributed to an increasing stagnation regarding urban planning. City authorities in *Roma Condesa* have not been able to catch up with the multiplicity of associations and businesses working in the area, which are in turn, either weakening and disappearing or competing with one another with little room for building projects in common with the notable exception of the Cultural Corridor analyzed later in this section. To be sure, part of this competition stems from the fact that the revalorization of real estate in this area has taken place at different paces in different colonies. Interviewees from associations in *Colonia Roma*, for instance, were adamant about the need to avoid the rapid destruction of protected properties in *Colonia Condesa*; something they attributed to a lower "sense of belonging" in that colony. They, as well as other interviewees, sustained that a higher rate of vacancy among property owners in *Colonia Condesa* (who had moved to Polanco and other areas in the city without selling their properties) contributed to the rapid rate of change in that colony. On the contrary, property owners in *Colonia Roma* tend to live in their properties and have been better able to "protect" their neighborhood against the tide of change, which has led to the disappearance of the traditional small businesses in *Colonia Condesa.*

As analyzed earlier, restaurants were the economic sector where most Mexican investors got involved when the area started to recover in the 1990s because of the gastronomic tradition long present in *Roma Condesa*. In contrast, more recent private investment in *Roma Condesa* is more diversified showing a pattern similar to what is taking place in *Centro Histórico*. Nonetheless, the hospitality industry is proportionally more dominant in *Condesa* and its revival precedes the revitalization of the historic center by, at least, a decade. Hotels and guesthouses represent the other side of the hospitality industry in *Roma Condesa*. Investment in this sub-sector is much more recent (initiated during the second half of the 2000s) and ownership is concentrated in foreign or foreign-national partnerships.

In addition, cultural establishments such as art galleries, bookstores, and the like have multiplied and represent a crucial dimension of *Roma Condesa's* newfound vitality as I will analyze later in this section. These changes have been possible thanks to a new generation of both Mexican and international investors (including many Mexicans who lived abroad). They tend to be younger and more entrepreneurial than the traditional formal business sector from *Roma Condesa* the restaurant association ARCCO has led for more than 15 years. The Mexican side of this new generation of investors gravitates towards new groups even (though some are also part of ARCCO), which are more proactive and have allied themselves with other young constituents such as architects and urban planners interested in building a new common vision for the area.

The Revalorization of Real Estate and Changes in Land Use

Most interviewees recalled that changes in land use started as early as the 1990s when developers started to buy deteriorated properties at incredibly low prices after the 1985 earthquakes; especially in *Colonia Condesa*. Many artists and architects also started moving to the area around this time in order to enjoy not only low rents but also the green areas and Art Deco and Art Novo architecture in the vicinity. After a short hiatus, the most recent wave of capital influx started once again in *Colonia Condesa* at the beginning of the 2000s (Ortiz Guitart 2006) going into modern housing built to meet the growing demand for apartments in what everybody agrees is the most "in" neighborhood in the city. Some of the most important developers my interviewees identified as key actors in these changes included Mexican companies such as BAITA and that of architect Javier Sánchez but also international ones such as Century 21 and REMAX.

As work shows, there was a revival in construction of this kind at the beginning of the 2000s. This market expanded even more rapidly since 2009 as several interviewees explained and I was able to witness walking around the neighborhood after a 2-year absence. Construction was underway at such a fast pace that walking on sidewalks filled with cement bags on important

streets such as *Nuevo León* felt like going though an obstacles course. One of my interviewees let me know that those construction sites had started operating just a few months before my arrival. They were part of at least 10 new apartment buildings erected on that street in the last 3 years. Pictures 17 and 18 show two of the luxurious structures recently completed in *Colonia Condesa*:

Pictures 17 and 18

New Luxury Apartment Buildings in *Condesa*

Source: The author. December 2009.

At the time of Ortiz Guitart's (2006) study, developers publicized their offerings by highlighting the singularity of *Roma Condesa* in terms very similar to those used by my interviewees. Both Ortiz Guitart and myself found that the media, particularly art-related magazines and websites, continues to play a fundamental role in selling *Condesa*'s markers of distinction (Bourdieu 1984) as a "cosmopolitan", "chic" and "cool" area of the city. In fact, young residents in Mexico City have created a new term, *"Condechi",* to refer to those who, like themselves, belong to the active cultural and hedonistic lifestyle associated with *Condesa*. However, others use *"Condechi"* as

well as the term, *"Confresa*[98]*"* in a pejorative manner referring to those they perceive as superficial or too invested in images and values coming from the United States and Europe. Descriptions such as the following use the term in its positive meaning: "The most *Condechi* gym: If you belong to the alternative tribe of the city, this is your gym" (quoted in Ortiz Guitart 2006: 51). Similarly, a real estate developer highlighted *Condesa*'s exclusivity as follows: "Ice [name of the developer] will change your life… Enjoy the luxury that only you deserve. A block away from Park Mexico at 47 Michoacán Street. Amidst fashion and art, surrounded by cafes and glamour, Ice offers you spacious places for you to achieve your dreams" (Ortiz Guitart 2006: 51).

More recently, *Roma Condesa* was already so established as one of the favorite locations in the city that few ads included information about the area itself. Rather, publicity for Mexico City residents highlighted how close each property was to various attractions in the area. Not surprisingly, proximity to parks Spain and Mexico was frequently mentioned as well as key features like the presence of surveillance, luxury interiors, and either modern or Art-Deco style. The following descriptions are typical examples of real estate publicity available online in April 2011 (www.metroscubicos.com accessed on April 1, 2011):

> Spectacular new apartment! In one of the mot beautiful and traditional areas in the Federal District, La Condesa, great location, totally finished, and ready to be occupied. Super luxury finish in clear granite in areas like kitchen and bathroom. Hardwood floors… Building with just 5 apartments. Surveillance… [Unique] Opportunity.
>
> Building in excellent condition. Apartment to renovate. Excellent finish. Spaces with spectacular views to Park Mexico, privileged location, plenty of light. Includes open and ventilated laundry area, walk-in closet, terrace, balcony, roofgarden [in English in the original] in common areas.
>
> Iconic building in *La Condesa*… Modern style apartment with high ceilings. Large spaces, luxury finish, privileged location, views of the trees, whites closet, walk-in closet, bathtub with hydro-massage.
>
> Spectacular and modern apartment in the most exclusive street in *La Condesa*, high ceiling, 60 meters in combined living and dining room where a studio can be easily built. Luxury finish, views of tops of the trees. Master bedroom with walk-in closet and Jacuzzi.

[98] "Fresa" means posh in Mexican slang. "Confresa" then means "Fresa" people from *Condesa*.

As a result of these changes, land use in *Roma Condesa* has diversified even further in the last 15 years with an exponential growth in the number and types of restaurants, bars, coffee shops, galleries, design stores, and new apartment buildings designed by young architects. Again, using the case of *Colonia Hipódromo* we can look at land use patterns in the area as shown in Table 5.2 below (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b):

Table 5.1

Predominant Land Use Distribution in *Colonia Hipódromo* 1998

Land use general categories	Percentage	Land use sub-categories	Percentage
Residential use	**52%**	Multi-family housing	32%
		Single-family housing	20%
Commercial use	**42%**	Offices	23%
		Commerce	7%
		Restaurants	3%
		"Equipamiento" (infrastructure)	6%
		Parking space	3%
Other use	**6%**	Other uses	1%
		Not used	4%
		"Baldíos" (empty plots)	1%

Source: The author based on Graph 11, *Asamblea Legislativa del DF* (2000: 20)

More recent data about the real estate market in *Colonia Roma* indicate that almost half (45.1%) of the properties offered (almost exclusively) for sale in 2005 had been built in the previous two years. In other words, a great deal of the dynamism in this market was directly related to new developments. Nonetheless, the secondary market was also very strong since it represented 54.9% of the properties offered that year (Benítez Ortega 2008) as shown in table 5.3 below:

Table 5.2

Age of Properties in Primary and Secondary Markets in *Colonia Roma* 2005

Age of Properties	Number of Properties	%
Primary Market		
0 to 2 years	37	45.1
Secondary Market		
3 to 9 years	2	2.4
10 to 19 years	7	8.5
20 to 29 years	5	6.1
30 to 39 years	10	12.2
40 to 49 years	10	12.2
50 to 59 years	4	4.9
60 years and more	7	8.5
Total	82	100

Source: Table 2 in Benítez Ortega (2008), p. 37

Similarly to what happens in *Centro Histórico*, land use is at the heart of most conflicts in *Roma Condesa*. As it is the case in the historic center, *Condesa*'s politics involves a similar array of actors: long time residents, new residents, foreign and national developers, foreign and national architects, federal[99] and city authorities, and business owners. Nonetheless, conflict in *Roma Condesa* is usually associated with two main groups: (long-term) residents, on the one hand, and (new) businesses, on the other. The main conflicts revolve around the relatively recent needs created by the proliferation of businesses in the area: an increased pressure on the area's infrastructure and services, and the de facto privatization of sidewalks and parking spaces by

[99] Contrary to *Centro Histórico* though, there is only one type of federal authorities present in *Roma Condesa:* those in charge of overseeing the country's historical and architectural heritage such as the *Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes* (National Institute for Fine Arts or INBA) and the *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (National Institute of Anthropology and History or INAH). Both institutions have included many historical buildings in this area, particularly in *Colonia Roma*, in their respective catalogues.

restaurants and bars (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b; Ortiz Guitart 2006). All the residents and merchants I interviewed in *Roma Condesa* mentioned these situations in one way or another as well as the potential for inundation, which might prove to be even more serious in the long run (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). The female retired teacher from *Colonia Hipódromo* put it this way while referring to jading among former Neighborhood Committee members:

> People are tired. It's been 10 years since we were elected. People also get tired when they see the lack of a favorable response to citizen demands. We say: "we don't want more clubs, we don't want more restaurants and bars" and they open more restaurants and bars. We say it's not possible to have so many new buildings, let's have a moratorium to see if there is really a need to continue building because you can see in the area and at all the buildings, even the new ones, the sign "for sale", "for rent".
>
> *Since when?* Starting with the "boom" with Edict #2… They started building [engaging in] real estate speculation and what do you have now? More supply than demand. Because they started building so many, so many, so many! And now the problem is very serious. We already know about the water problem but just as we have the problem with water, there is a problem with water that enters and does not come out. If you don't keep up these areas, there will be a problem with the sewage, right? And what do we see? *Condesa* is built in 1903, *Roma* in 1902, *Hipódromo* in 1925… The capacity of the sewage system was for a completely different demand from what we have today. That is the reason why, when there is a lot of rain… water leaves the sewage system and enters the houses… because of the incline we have (Rocío, retired teacher, 60+ years old).

Just as it is the case in *Centro Histórico, Roma Condesa* faces an impressive increment in the number of people using its infrastructure and services on a daily basis. To be sure, many interviewees mentioned that *Condesa* enjoys a very high level of coverage in services such as electricity, water, and sewage. Similarly, the Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* mentions that the needs of the colony in those three areas are covered 100% (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b). However, again similarly to what happened in *Centro Histórico*, most of this infrastructure was put in place during the first 2 or 3 decades of the last century and cannot possibly accommodate the rapidly increasing needs of restaurant patrons, office employees, and tourists visiting the area. Even the Partial Plan's optimistic perspective on future trends for residential and commercial water consumption in *Colonia Hipódromo* is based on the assumption that "there is not a significant increase of the floating population" that works and shops in the colony (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2000b: 33). One respondent described the situation:

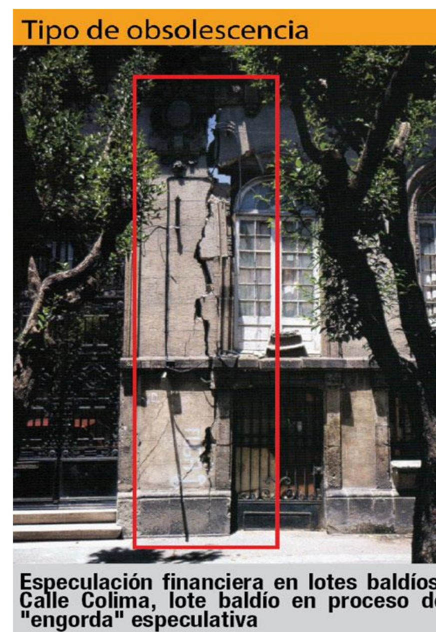
The colony is not ready for… problems accumulated over a long period of time such as [those related to] electricity, water, services in general… Because obviously they are building apartments for a lot of people and that is a very old infrastructure. Everything has to be updated. For example, the *Delegación* should expand the infrastructure because there are many [new] restaurants but there is also a lot of new housing" (Alvaro, business owner, 33 years old).

Another manifestation of this problem and the contentious relationship between long-term residents and the influx of new residents and businesses is the structural damage caused to existing buildings. New housing not only increases the pressure on services but it can also cause sinking of neighboring structures given the porous nature of the soil and the lack of enforcement regarding building regulations. This problem is especially serious in *Colonia Roma* where many of the structures affected by the 1985 earthquakes still stand. Pictures 19 and 20 show some signs of subsidence and cracking of older structures because in that colony:

Pictures 19 and 20

Deterioration (Urban Obsolescence) of Traditional

Buildings in *Colonia Roma*



Source: Vargas 2010. Left caption: "Damages to third parties due to differential subsidence / structural damage. Querétaro Street, 6 buildings affected because of the construction of a 9-story building". Right caption: "Financial speculation with abandoned properties. Colima St, abandoned lot undergoing speculative "fattening."

A New Generation of Entrepreneurs, Architects and Cultural Activists

The profound economic and social changes *Roma Condesa* started to go through in the 1990s have brought a new group of younger entrepreneurs, architects, artists and cultural activists to the area that differ markedly from the long-time businesses and residents who were already there. On the private sector side, the second most mentioned business association in my interviews was *Bienestar Imagen y Desarrollo Condesa* (*Condesa*'s Wellbeing, Image, and Development or BID Condesa). BID Condesa differs from ARCCO, the restaurant association, because is more aligned with new investors who participate in a more varied set of economic activities while focusing on a smaller geographical area. Founded in 2007, BID encompasses approximately 75 businesses grouped around a platform of social responsibility. Their overall goal is to "provide a higher level of services in the businesses' areas of influence [in order to] generate a more dynamic, safe, and interesting community for the economic and social development of businesses, residents, and visitors in the area" (Vargas 2010).

BID Condesa and the business people it represents tend to be more proactive in their relationship with residents and city authorities not always with positive results. The leader from BID Condesa I interviewed complained about having "to fight with everybody" because for him "business owners are neighbors" and must be considered part of the community. BID constitutes an interesting model patterned after the experiences of *Business Improvement Districts* found in the United States and other countries. The association currently has 9 active members, which represent a total of 22 businesses in *Roma Condesa* including restaurants, bookstores, and the like (Vargas 2010). Members of the association purposefully took its name from the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in United States and transformed it into a meaningful name associated with *Condesa*'s "wellbeing, image, and development." Another collective actor interested in following the Business Improvement District model in *Roma Condesa* is the "*Nuevo*

Parque España” (New Spain Park) association but they had not started to collaborate on concrete projects with BID Condesa at the time of my visits.

The main leader at BID Condesa, an architect, is one of the founders and co-owners of *“El Péndulo”* (The Pendulum), a famous restaurant-bookstore located in *Colonia Condesa*. He, as well as other entrepreneurs, architects, and cultural activists in *Roma Condesa* lived abroad for extended periods of time in major cities such as New York, Barcelona, and Buenos Aires before moving to *Roma Condesa*. Many of these younger residents and business owners gained experience and training in urban development in those cities and are very critical of the conservationist stand many activists from traditional organizations take. The BID Condesa leader, for instance, said that he participated in the elaboration of the Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* and found the resulting document to be “hypocritical” for denying the tradition of mixed land use present in the area. In a hypothetical example he protested: “I have had a laundromat for five years and now you’re telling me that this [area] is [exclusively] residential!”

A common theme among interviewees from this new generation was the need to move beyond “mere complaining” to concrete proposals and projects including alternative sources of funding and support. Even though they agree with long-time activists in criticizing authorities at *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc* for their lack of vision (at best) and corrupt practices (at worst), they are also critical of the traditional neighborhood associations analyzed in section 5.4 for only focusing on a narrow set of potential solutions. This perspective partially coincides with that of a few retired residents who were public officials in charge of urban development programs and institutions. For them, many of the more dominant neighborhood associations in *Roma Condesa* tend to adopt extreme viewpoints not necessarily based on objective data and technical parameters. In the words of other interviewees, there is a high risk for traditional leaders to fall into “a show of egos” with little practical value. Both younger and more technically savvy residents agree that more innovative policies are feasible and could be considered for the area

(such as building underground parking) yet the most vocal and long-standing organizations prevent those ideas from entering the debate.

Several younger interviewees and some of the retirees emphasized the importance of building alliances with the business sector. One of those instances of successful collaboration is the *Fideicomiso de Regeneración Urbana Roma-Condesa* (Fiduciary Fund for the Urban Regeneration of *Roma Condesa)*, which similarly to the *Fideicomiso* in the historic center, brings together actors from the business sector (Mexican bank BANAMEX now part of Citigroup), city authorities (Federal District's Department of the Environment), and neighborhood associations (*Mitos del Parque*). Despite having important positive outcomes in a relatively short period of time (most notably rescuing several green areas and supporting the reopening of iconic Lido Cinema), this *Fideicomiso* follows a project-based methodology that has put its sustainability at risk. Many of their interventions were supported through funding from BANAMEX in a project started in 2008 and ended in 2010. The project also faced opposition from more traditional organizations such as Friends of Parks Spain and Mexico. Afterwards, the institution has had a much lower profile and its future is unclear. Nonetheless, it might have the potential to become an institutional catalyst akin to what the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* is in the historic center.

Younger residents and business owners are also more inclined to cooperate with international actors. Many architects and urban planners are part of "associative networks" (Chalmers et al 1997), which collaborate with other collectives of architects from Spain, Argentina, and the United States with the goal of transforming *Roma Condesa* into a model of environmental and inclusive urban planning practices. For instance, an interviewee shared that one of such groups *(Movimiento Calle Michoacán)* attempted to transform Michoacán St. into a pedestrian boulevard similar to the *Ramblas* in Barcelona and had secured support from the British Embassy in Mexico for the idea. However, opposition from the residents prevented the project from ever materializing and the movement disbanded. An illustrative example of these

new groups is *Taller 13* (Workshop 13), one of the most famous architectural firms in Mexico City which is based in *Roma Condesa.* Taller 13 defines its mission on their webpage as follows:

> Taller 13, we are a design and research office. We dream realities through a deep understanding of the site which leads to an integrated, open and collaborative process, not only with a network of experts who bring to the table the worlds of biology, engineering, urban planning, technology, education and art; we co-create our designs and strategies together with our clients, inviting them to participate in the design and get a better perspective about their wants and needs. Ideas emerge from these processes that go beyond what anyone from the group envisioned individually. We always seek to regenerate our relationships with the cycles and systems of our environment to create spaces and designs that express their essence and promote wellness through learning, co-existence and co-evolution with their habitats (Taller 13, Basic Concepts – English, http://www.taller13.com/ideas_conceptos_ingles.php, accessed on April 1st, 2011).

On the artistic side, the Cultural Corridor *Roma-Condesa* is one of the pioneering cultural and artistic projects younger leaders are developing to attract investment and visitors to *Roma Condesa.* Originally founded at the beginning of the previous decade, the corridor was reactivated in 2009 as a small one-day event. Then it expanded to three days (Friday to Sunday) in 2012 when it included more than 85 spaces for contemporary art, design, fashion, gastronomy, culture and films. The corridor's curator, Ana Elena Mallet, defined it as a sort of "civic hot spot" where the organizers want not only to expose participants to art but also to generate an appreciation for recycling, keeping the neighborhood clean and green, as well as recovering the use of sidewalks and enjoying the area's architecture (Páramo 2011). More generally, the corridor's website describes it as a bi-annual event "that seeks to recover public space and restore the social fabric through contemporary culture."[100] In a 2012 article about the cultural corridor, Mexico City's Tourism Minister, Carlos Mackinlay, shared that this type of events fosters tourism in the city and have the merit of being organized and financed by the private sector; something he thinks need to be imitated in other parts of the city. Mackinlay is quoted saying that: "This is a new touristic

[100] http://www.ccromacondesa.mx/corredor-cultural-2/ (accessed on December 17, 2013).

manifestation in Mexico City that has colonies Roma and Condesa as the epicenter. We hope that it extends soon to other spaces like Coyoacán y San Angel…" (Ramírez 2012).

Every year the corridor features a theme or special event. In 2011, there was a series of activities *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc* organized at the famous Lindbergh Forum (*Foro Lindbergh*) to focus people's attention on its restoration. The Lindbergh Forum is a famous open-air theatre at Mexico Park, which has seriously deteriorated since its creation in the 1920s[101]. In 2012, the organizers put in place an ecological corridor or special route focused on environmental issues as well as a children's corridor with special activities for kids. Those two routes, along with a third gastronomic route, now comprise three distinct varieties within the three-day event. In 2013, the special event was an "Art Marathon" at famous movie theater Tonalá featuring documentaries about various artists from the United States as shown on the corridor's website.

The corridor has contributed to increasing the visibility of *Roma Condesa* while helping to positioning it as Mexico City's "Latin Quarter." During the December 2013 edition of the corridor, Mexico City's Minister of Tourism explained that they were going to work together to use this concept as a "new brand" or "communicational umbrella" to make the colonies of *Roma* and *Condesa* recognizable to foreign tourists as cultural and gastronomic sites in the city. As the minister is quoted saying on famous Mexican paper *Excelsior* (Ramírez 2013): "Latin quarter is synonymous with culture, a place where intellectuals meet, with good and assorted food, with libraries and art exhibits, all those elements are present in the corridor Roma-Condesa and that is why we have associated those activities with the brand 'Latin Quarter,' which will be more attractive" for international tourists. As we will see in the following section, an increased

[101] The situation of the Lindbergh Forum is another source of frustration among long-time activists in Roma Condesa. The association "Friends of the Parks" had agreed with a previous Delegation chief (Delegate Dolores Padierna) several years ago to hire a company to rehabilitate the Forum but the ones in charge did not do a good job and the Forum was deteriorating again less than a year later.

visibility and innovative yet isolated private initiatives are not enough to make urban development sustainable without a coherent presence on the part of city authorities.

5.7. The (Local) State Never Quite Comes Back in

This chapter shows that, in an opposite trend to what has occurred in *Centro Histórico*, residents from *Roma Condesa* have not been able to recover the level of influence they briefly gained at the beginning of the 2000s with the López Obrador administration. The area had been abandoned during the second half of the XX century (as it was also the case with *Centro Histórico)* but López Obrador's focus on the territory through Partial Plans for Urban Development brought attention back to *Roma Condesa* through the Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* in 2000. As analyzed in previous sections, older *Roma Condesa* residents still view the elaboration of that Partial Plan as the "golden era" of state-society relations and urban development in their area in recent years. However, the local state never quite came "back in" again to partner with neighbors and business owners in any significant way.

After having been involved as equals in the formulation of the Urban Development Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* in the early 2000s, and having participated as some of the most active Citizen Councilors (*Consejeros Ciudadanos*) in the city, residents and business owners are now in a position where city government representatives consult them only occasionally about changes in their neighborhood. The most common comment among my interviewees on the relationship with city government referred to the "lack of political will" shown by *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc* for addressing long-term problems in *Roma Condesa* beyond sporadic support for public events. Almost all of them highlighted that the degree of responsiveness to those problems is entirely at the discretion of each new delegation chief. This, I argue, is the result of *Roma Condesa* not having a clear institutional ally such as the *Fideicomiso*

in *Centro Histórico* that could collaborate with both residents and business owners in finding solutions to situations in the area.

Similarly, the time lag between the moment in which residents make their demands heard and the moment in which solutions to those demands are implemented has increased. The clearest example of this has been the slow and inconsistent responses city government has had to the sensitive issue of traffic congestion. Almost all the residents and business representatives I interviewed in *Roma Condesa* from 2007 to June 2010 mentioned traffic congestion as a top priority in their agendas. Most of them also referred to parking meters as a viable solution to the problem. In particular, the very seasoned leader of the association *Amigos de los Parques México y España (Friends of Parks Mexico and Spain)*, the oldest organization in *Roma Condesa*, argued in favor of parking meters as the best solution for controlling the influx of visitors with cars competing for parking spaces with neighbors and other visitors. However, city authorities have taken several years to start responding to that demand. It was only in October 2012 that *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* authorities started holding public consultations with neighbors in order to implement the *Government of the Federal District's* new regulations for controlling public parking in the Federal District (GDF 2011). Those results finally informed the definition of a parking meter pilot project the citywide *Autoridad del Espacio Público* (Authority for Public Space), started to implement in March 2013 in colonies *Roma* and *Hipódromo* (Contreras 2013).

The rest of this section analyzes the evolution of the parking meters project, as it is the only new urban policy being implemented in *Roma Condesa* and the only avenue for government-society interaction regarding urban policies today. Besides the temporary consultations held to inform the project, the parking meter project includes a limited "invited space", which pales in comparison with the spaces opened through the work of *Centro Histórico's Fideicomiso*. This invited space is comprised of the "Transparency and Accountability Committees" (GDF 2011) established to monitor the parking meter project in each

of the “zones” the project divides colonies into. Even though such committees have great potential for fostering residents’ participation in defining policies regarding public space given the broad mandate given to them in this regard, the lack of institutional catalysts such as the *Fideicomiso* in *Centro Histórico* makes their role very narrow; at least at this moment. The rest of the section expands on the comparison with *Centro Histórico* by addressing the implications of the lack of an institutional catalyst in *Roma Condesa* in more general terms. That is, a public institution that can play a role similar to the one the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* has been playing in the historic center.

A Fragmented Approach to Roma Condesa: the Parking Meters Project

The policy of installing parking meters in *Roma Condesa* is a partial response to a long-standing issue of traffic congestion and lack of parking spaces in the area; an issue that has generated tense conflicts between neighbors and business owners including a physical confrontation between neighbors and restaurant and city employees in the 1990s. The lack of parking space has been the result of the mismatch between an urban design dating back to the first decades of the XX century, and the popularity the area has regained in the last 15 years. *Roma Condesa*’s infrastructure and original single-family houses were designed for residents without cars or with very limited usage of them. An important reference in the history of *Roma Condesa* is when *Amigos de los Parques México y España* (Friends of the Parks Mexico and Spain) led a demonstration during the mid 1990s against building an underground parking lot under Spain Park. As trivial as the topic might seem to outsiders, that protest became a symbol of “resistance” and success after the association was able to halt the project. In particular, long-time residents I interviewed mentioned this precedent while insisting on the need of “keeping their guard up” against similar threats.

The issue is complicated because of many residents' lack information about parking options in this context. Even leaders from Friends of the Park, for example, have advocated for parking meters for several years since it represents a less invasive alternative than underground parking. Architects and younger residents, on the contrary, viewed the underground parking project as a feasible and needed option to deal with land use problems in *Roma Condesa*. In any event, findings from the Partial Plan for *Colonia Hipódromo* indicated a total need of 24,601 parking slots as early as 2000. Fieldwork done for the plan also showed that there was a deficit of 12,252 parking slots given the demand at the time. The Partial Plan identified changes to the *Reglamento de Construcciones del Distrito Federal* (Building Code for the Federal District) as well as the lack of enforcement of many of its requirements as the main causes of this problem. The proliferation of office buildings and an increase in the usage of regular apartments as offices has significantly increased the need for parking space which leads to double parking being a common practice during weekdays (Asamblea Legislativa del DF 2000b).

The delegation authority at *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*, the administrative city subdivision both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* belong to, has championed parking meters alongside several resident associations such as the "Friends of the Park" mentioned above. For instance, in 2010, the chief of *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*, Agustín Torres Pérez, declared its public support for installing parking meters in colonies *Roma* and *Condesa* and demanded that "the authority [city government] must take into account participation by neighbors and the delegation since we are the ones who know first hand the problems people in these colonies face" (Notimex 2010). However, the issue did not gain track until the Government of the Federal District (GDF) officially included parking meters as one of various solutions to traffic congestion all over Mexico City. The new city administration of mayor Miguel Angel Mancera Espinosa elected in December 2012 started implementing GDF's new regulations for controlling public parking the Legislative Assembly had approved a year earlier (*Asamblea Legislativa del DF* 2011).

The new regulations give the Authority for Public Space the responsibility of planning and supervising the implementation of parking meters whereas Delegations are in charge of decisions regarding the use of the income generated through them. This has become a particularly contentious issue in the parking meters controversy. Back in 2010 Delegado Agustín Torres Pérez proposed to channel those resources into repairing sidewalks, paving streets, and maintaining green areas in *Roma Condesa* as it is done in other colonies of *Delegación Cuauhtémoc*. His statements indicated that the Delegation itself had no say in how those resources were spent in practice; a problem allegedly solved through the 2011 GDF regulations. Those establish that one of the Delegation's functions is to "determine, along with each of the Citizen Committees present in the area where parking meters are to be installed, the public spaces where resources generated from controlling public space parking are to be applied" (GDF 2011: 5).

However, a petition several neighbor organizations presented in 2012 shows that the problem was still continuing. A mix of well established and novel associations such as *Amigos de los Parques México y España (Friends of Parks Mexico and Spain), Nuevo Parque España (New Park Spain), Movimiento Pro Dignificación de la Colonia Roma (Movement Pro-Dignifying Colonia Roma), Yo amo Condesa (I love Condesa), Arquitectura Roma Condesa (Roma Condesa Architecture), Amigos de la Roma Sur (Friends of Roma Sur),* and *Efecto Verde (Green Effect)* warned the Authority for Public Space that their approval of the parking meters project depended upon the initiation of a wide process of public consultations: "Our demand is for the authority to establish mechanisms for public consultation and citizen participation to define and design a program that does not affect our way of life [based upon] the central principles of transparency, access to information, and accountability on the part of the authority" (Vargas 2012). Indeed, *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* held the consultations in November and December 2012 and a final binding vote took place in January 2013. The Authority for Public Space used those results to initiate the pilot project in colonies *Roma Norte* and *Hipódromo*; only two of the five colonies

present in the *Roma Condesa* area. Nonetheless, the consultations did not lead to the kind of sustained dialogue, concrete agreements, and the establishment of permanent work groups the neighbors had asked for. As a result, residents from the other three colonies (*Condesa, Roma Sur* and *Condesa Hipódromo*) voted against installing the parking meters (Appendix M).

The project has met with both support and resistance from different groups of neighbors in *Roma Condesa* as it was evident in July 2013, which marked the end of the pilot phase of its implementation. At that time, neighbors from one of the subsections that started using parking meters asked the Authority for Public Space and Mexico City's Department of Urban Development and Housing to extend the meters' schedules. Neighbors in this subsection wanted the parking meters to work not only until 8 pm but also from 8 pm to midnight (Notimex 2013). In contrast, neighbors from the colonies that voted against having the meters installed demonstrated against parking meters arguing that they are not the solution to the traffic problem in their neighborhoods and that cars continued to use the sidewalks (González 2013).

A key argument those residents used was that the income generated through the meters which, according to them accounted to 8 million Mexican pesos (more than US$615,000), only benefited the private company in charge of the project since the money has not been used in projects to improve the colony's infrastructure. In August 2013, the Citizen Committee from *Colonia Condesa* unsuccessfully tried to reintroduce the idea at the public consultation neighbors had on September 1st. A member of the Citizen Committee highlighted that neighbors, not a private company would be in control of this new parking meter project and that, "unlike the one implemented in colonies *Roma* and *Hipódromo*", the project would generate resources they would use to expand parking meters further and make other improvements in the colony (González Alvarado 2013).

Despite those mixed reactions, parking meters seem to be expanding in Mexico City. Even though the Authority for Public Space has yet to publish data on the success of *Roma* and

Condesa's parking meters, similar programs in other parts of the city have been very effective[102] and residents from other middle- and upper-middle class neighborhoods are asking the authorities to have them installed[103]. An important feature of the project that might be contributing for its expansion is that it calls for forming Transparency and Accountability Committees where neighbors from each subsection or parking meters "zone" participate in following up on the parking meters installed in their area. Each Transparency Committee includes a representative from the Authority for Public Space who coordinates the committee, a representative from the Delegation the Parking Meter Zone belongs to, representatives from Mexico City's Departments for Urban Development and Housing, and Public Safety respectively, and the members of the Citizen Committee of the colony or colonies included in that "Zone" (GDF 2011). The Transparency and Accountability Committee for Parking Meters is supposed to meet at least once a year. At first, its mandate seems broader than just looking at parking meters. Its first function is: "To propose ways to improve public space, infrastructure, and urban facilities in the colony or colonies included in the Parking Meter Zone" (GDF 2011: 8). Similarly, the Committee's second responsibility is to "…evaluate the proposal presented by the Delegation and the relevant Citizen Committee for rehabilitating and improving public space" (GDF 2011: 9). Only the third and final function of the Transparency Committee refers to supervising "the projects" involved without even making clear that those projects are the parking meters themselves.

In sum, the use of parking meters to solve one of *Roma Condesa's* most pressing issues constitutes a telling conundrum. On the one hand, it seems to be aligned with proposals organized

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[102] The management director at the Authority for Public Space, Erwin Crowley, declared in a March 2013 interview that parking meters had contributed to reduce the demand for parking spots in the exclusive neighborhood of *Polanco* from 130% to 60%. Visitors to *Polanco* were car pooling, taking the city's Metro or riding the city's "Ecobicis" or Ecological Bikes. Crowley also informed that 70% of *Polanco* residents and visitors interviewed in a study thought that transportation had improved in the area whereas 61% believed that there was an increase in order and quality of life in the colony after the parking meters were established (Contreras 2013).

[103] These colonies include Colonia del Valle, Nápoles, Noche Buena, and Narvarte as well as Coyoacán. The Authority for Public Space declared that parking meters were in preparation for all those areas and there were several more colonies requesting their inclusion (Contreras 2013).

residents had presented in the past instead of more invasive alternatives such as an underground parking lot. The project might also be interpreted as an opportunity to influence key decisions about the use of public space in the colonies it is implemented given the ample mandate the Transparency and Accountability Committees have and the fact that they are supposed to include the members of the Citizen Committees in each area. On the other hand, the unexpectedly negative reaction of so many residents uncovers the layers of frustration many activists have accumulated over the years as I was able to witness in my interviews and participant observation of *Roma Condesa's* organizations. Such a high level of suspicion vis-à-vis a project that has been so well received and asked for in other middle- and upper-middle class neighborhoods indicates that long-time residents have grown weary of solutions where they do not play a major role as it was the case in the short-lived "golden era" of the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* and the Citizen Councilors.

The Lack of an Institutional Catalyst in Roma Condesa

Even though the broad mandate of the Parking Meters' Transparency and Accountability Committees would indicate that they have great potential for fostering residents' participation in defining urban policies in *Roma Condesa,* nothing so far indicates that this is the case. Another potentially favorable feature is that these committees incorporate within them the members of the Citizen Committees reactivated in 2010 as the main channel for city government-citizens interaction. The impact of this feature could go either way. It might help to consolidate neighbors' influence in key decisions if residents are able to use Citizen Committees as a launching pad or "counter public" a la Fraser (1992) to debate and consolidate agreements amongst themselves before entering the "mainstream" public sphere of the Transparency and Accountability Committees. In the latter neighbors have to debate with representatives from

Delegación Cuauhtémoc, the Authority for Public Space, and the departments of Public Safety and Urban Development (GDF 2011).

One could argue that, in any event, the parking meters project is still too new to know what its lasting impact will be on *Roma Condesa*. Nonetheless, a more long-term issue is that of "the irony of organization" (Eckstein 1977) that continues to fragment autonomous associations in *Roma Condesa* and prevents them from developing a holistic vision for their area. Some interviewees shared that this dynamic has increased since 2010 making traditional associations much weaker while, at the same time, multiplying the number of new groups; especially more informal ones with younger leaders and constituents. The presence of new organizations is usually understood to be a positive development in any neighborhood but, given the history of fragmentation in *Roma Condesa*, its real impact in the short term remains to be seen. Without a strong State interested in coopting neighborhood associations or a dominant or hegemonic umbrella organization to unify them (the two traditional options available in the Mexican political repertoire) *Roma Condesa* stands in stark contrast with the rapid pace of urban redevelopment in *Centro Histórico*, a much poorer and more deteriorated part of the central city. The key difference, I argue, is that the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* has played a key role as a multiplier or "institutional catalyst" (Bhatta, 2006) in the historic center making up for the coordination problem weak or, in the case of *Roma Condesa*, too vocal yet uncoordinated groups might entail. On the contrary, city government only has a timid and inconsistent presence in *Roma Condesa* either through fragmented approaches like the parking meter program or the sporadic collaboration *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* offers.

In *Roma Condesa* there is no shared project or vision either between neighbors themselves or between them and city government. That is why older residents tend to idealize the process towards the Partial Urban Program for *Colonia Hipódromo* because it represents the brief "golden era" when city government and neighbors worked together to build such a vision.

Delegación Cuauhtémoc certainly offers support in the form of expertise or limited resources for specific projects usually following the lead of organized residents. That was the case in various activities I attended at Spain and Mexico Parks between 2009 and 2010. A recently elected representative from the Delegation who also happened to be a long-time *Roma Condesa* resident was diligently asking neighbors about their needs and the main ways in which she could collaborate with the various associations to solve those problems. Similarly, representatives from the Delegation are often present at the *Roma Condesa* Cultural Corridor lending their expertise and/or showing their support. For instance, the last editions of the corridor in 2013, the Environmental Management Director from *Delegacion Cuauhtémoc* led groups of visitors at the environmental route while the Director for Cultural Heritage did the same at the cultural one.

A telling example of the limited scope of the Delegation's interventions is the project to renovate the famous Lindbergh Forum at Mexico Park. In 2011, *Delegación Cuauhtémoc* and the neighbors organized several events at the Lindbergh Forum ("*Foro Lindbergh*") to focus people's attention on its restoration. The Lindbergh Forum is a famous open-air theatre at Mexico Park, which has seriously deteriorated since its creation in the 1920s. However, the Delegation did not have the resources needed to restore. Instead it was trying to raise the 11 million pesos (approximately US$917,000) the restoration was deemed to cost by asking private companies and citizens to collaborate. At the time of writing, the Delegation (under a new delegational chief elected in 2012) had finally re-started efforts to restore the Lindbergh Forum after a year-long pause (Páramo 2014).

5.8. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that, in spite of the advantages *Roma Condesa*'s residents and business owners enjoy, they are currently unable to capitalize on them to influence urban policies in their favor. Contrary to what we would expect based on the literature that predicts higher levels of

participation among the richest and more educated (Almond and Verba 1963; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker 2004), the lack of an institutional catalyst equivalent to the *Fideicomiso* in *Centro Histórico* has prevented the higher level of associational density in *Roma Condesa* from turning into concrete gains even though it had (though briefly) a participatory mechanism much broader than any invited space (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) the *Fideicomiso* has put in place.

Residents and even business owners have not been able to consolidate another institution for regular collaboration with city authorities similar to the highly influential Citizen Councils of the mid-1990s. Even though Citizen Councilors were elected in many places around the city it is noteworthy that they became so empowered in *Roma Condesa.* This is important because such level of empowerment was not what the PRD (first at the Legislative Assembly and later also in charge of city government) had in mind. Therefore, squashing Citizen Councils and later on differing the proper functioning of the Neighborhood Committees put in their place for almost ten years showed that PRD's support for involving citizens in the definition of urban policies was limited (at best) and downright hypocritical (at worst).

Nonetheless, the more limited Neighborhood Committees city authorities implemented after Citizen Councilors went beyond their control did serve a multiplying effect at the end of the 1990s at least in *Roma Condesa*. Many of their former members founded and became leaders of the neighborhood organizations of today. In other words, participatory mechanisms implemented by the PRD administrations had a catalyst effect in *Condesa* during that decade somewhat similar to the one the *Fideicomiso* is playing in *Centro Histórico* today. The very strength and accumulated experience of these associations, combined with the area's relatively higher education and income levels, have paradoxically resulted in a noticeable level of fragmentation since no one seems to be able to convince the others about a given course of action. Instead, different subgroups continue developing their own plans based on their understanding of what the

main problem/solution is in *Roma Condesa* be it the consolidation of a business district, restoring its architectural legacy or solving its environmental problems, to name a few. If anything such fragmentation often gives the impression that *Roma Condesa* has too many representatives, too many spirited individuals and organizations that not only know each other but also believe *they* have *the only* solution to the area's growing pains.

After having high levels of participation and influence on the definition of urban policies by the end of the 1990s, many residents and business owners are now struggling with the authorities' limited responsiveness to their needs. In particular, older residents who participated in elaborating the *Partial Plan* for the area, the main planning tool implemented during the López Obrador city administration, or those who volunteered as Citizen Councilors seem nostalgic about their former level of influence on urban policies affecting their neighborhood. Those experiences stand in stark contrast with the limited assistance the Citizen Participation Department and other units at *Territorial Roma Condesa* (the geographical unit in charge of the area at Delegación Cuauhtémoc) are able to offer. Frustration among both older and younger residents also stems from the fact that they consider the area a potential "model" for other parts of Mexico City if they manage to coexist productively with businesses while maintaining the cultural and artistic distinctiveness of their neighborhoods.

Nonetheless, younger residents, in particular those connected to architecture and the arts, seem more hopeful. Interestingly, they also share a vision of *Roma Condesa* as a potential model of inclusive and green urban development. One of Vargas' (2011) informants, for example, argues that these colonies could become an equivalent of the city of Curitiba in Brazil. This group of younger citizens has led more innovative approaches to urban development. One of those instances of successful collaboration is the *Fideicomiso de Regeneración Urbana Roma-Condesa* (Fiduciary Fund for the Urban Regeneration of *Roma Condesa)*, which similarly to the *Fideicomiso* in the historic center, brings together actors from the business sector (Mexican bank

BANAMEX now part of Citigroup), city authorities (Federal District's Department of the Environment), and neighborhood associations (*Mitos del Parque*). Despite its lower profile nowadays, this experiment might have the potential to become an institutional catalyst akin to what the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* has become in the historic center.

In any event, the lack of an institutional catalyst (state-based or otherwise) that can serve as a multiplier of the various kinds of human and material resources existing in the area is the main obstacle to moving forward in *Roma Condesa*. Most interviewees agree on the need to formulate and implement a Comprehensive Urban Development Plan flexible enough to respond to changes in the area and go beyond the purist approach traditional associations have. This is, again, an area where the *Fideicomiso* has been successful by partnering with other state and non-state actors in the historic center and involving regular citizens even if it is only possible through an "invited space" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007). *Roma Condesa* took advantage of the Citizen Councilors figure to an extent that goes far beyond the limits of an invited space. Human and material resources exist in a much higher supply there than those in *Centro Histórico.* However, the lack of an institutional catalyst to bring them together has paradoxically made *Roma Condesa* unable to exploit them. This, in turn, prevents its residents from influencing urban policy affecting their lives and their neighborhood.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Overview

At the beginning of this dissertation I quoted Holston and Appadurai's (1996) article on "Cities and Citizenship" to underscore how cities are quintessential manifestations of the tumultuous and public nature of our societies. This idea was a frequent theme in my interviews with public officials, academics, and residents in Mexico City when they talked about the kind of urban life they aspire to: one where public space is indeed public as people from different generations and walks of life share it on a regular basis, one where ordinary people have a say on how their city and their neighborhood develop, and where financial considerations are not the only criteria city authorities take into account. These might seem unrealistic expectations for a city as immense and complicated as Mexico City.

However, a new generation of politicians and public officials has taken these goals to heart while taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by a momentous political transition the city started in 1997. The fact that democratization arrived to Mexico City that year before the PRI seven-decade quasi-dictatorship ended in 2000 is an emblematic coincidence. Indeed, this dissertation has shown that looking at the changes the city has gone through in the last three decades is an illuminating exercise for those interested in the links between democracy and citizen participation in urban contexts. Moreover, they have done so by building upon the legacy of various social movements (feminist, environmental, and student movements to name a few) and progressive political forces present in the city since the 1970s. Several of these progressive public officials, in particular those leading the "invited spaces" put in place to facilitate citizen participation in *Centro Histórico*, gained their political training during the 1980s and 1990s as student leaders at public university UNAM.

I chose Mexico City precisely because it is an extreme case (Gerring 2007) of late democratization in Latin America (Myers 2002; Davis and Alvarado 2004) and because it represents a negative case for citizen participation engaging the state when compared with São Paulo, the other most important global and mega-city in the region (Houtzager et al 2005). Mexico City's transformation from a "corporatist" urban regime to what I call a "pragmatic" one signals not only a break between what used to be automatically linked levels of government (local vs. national) but also gives room to the expression of the progressive political preferences among its citizens; preferences that had been buried under the authoritarian grip of the PRI-led national state for more than seven decades.

The first stage of such a regime shift in Mexico City took place as a result of PRI's growing loss of legitimacy after the state's inadequate response after the 1985 earthquakes and the various political reforms the party conceded in response to social movement (and later also PRD-led) interventions during the second half of the 1990s. The second stage has been taking place through various experiments with progressive economic, social, and urban policies PRD administrations have been implementing in the city as well as new alliances with national and international capitalists. As Orr and Stoker (1994: 68) sustain, the second stage of regime shift is usually filled with uncertainty as new things are tried and the coalition behind the old urban regime is recomposed and/or replaced and a new one forms. PRD's hesitant attitude and drastic changes in its citizen participation policies are an example of this second stage.

Based on my findings, I believe Mexico City is somewhere between the second and third stages of regime shift. On the one hand, some of its key components are highly institutionalized as shown in the significant increase in social spending and the establishment of progressive social policies favoring vulnerable groups in the city. On the other hand, there have been striking differences between the three mayors the PRD has had in charge of the city (particularly regarding the urban policies they have favored) while it is still too early to characterize the

administration of the fourth PRD mayor, Miguel Angel Mancera, who started his tenure in December 2012.

In terms of citizen engagement with the state, results in *Centro Histórico* so far suggest noteworthy outcomes regarding "the construction of citizenship," "the practice of participation," and the process of "building responsive states" following Gaventa and Barrett's (2012) classification. Results regarding the first dimension include the fact that more than 300 residents there have graduated from the structured educational program offered by the *Fideicomiso*'s Citizenship School. When it comes to the "practice of participation," those and other residents have been able to put their knowledge and previous experiences into action through concrete projects. That is the case of their involvement through the Citizen Groups that hire and oversee the engineers in charge of renovation projects on their block as well as through the final projects they work on at the Citizenship School. Finally, the work of the *Fideicomiso* and the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico* shows that it has been indeed possible to start building a more responsive local state as it has also been the case with PRD administrations in particular policy areas such as social policies and support to vulnerable groups in the city.

Looking at the issue from the comparative perspective of my local cases underscores the important role state agencies can have as facilitators of change. I took the two oldest and most iconic sections of the Mexico City's Ciudad Central as local cases. One is the relatively poor and previously neglected historic center or Centro *Histórico,* and the other is the upper-middle class and partially gentrified area of *Roma Condesa*. *Centro Histórico* is advancing more rapidly than *Roma Condesa* in its urban renovation efforts and an increasing number of residents are participating in defining and implementing those efforts while the opposite is true in *Roma Condesa.* The empirical puzzle of higher levels of citizen participation in *Centro Histórico*, the poorest of the two areas analyzed in this project, underscore the importance of political institutions and of "bringing the state back in." These findings suggest that the (local) state

continues to be a crucial actor for overcoming fragmentation and solving *public* problems in urban contexts. In this case, state "institutional catalysts" (Bhatta 2006) or multipliers such as the one I studied in the historic center, the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico* (the Fiduciary Fund for Mexico City's Historic Center) are needed to break the impasse represented by limited resources, political apathy and/or a history of unsuccessful attempts at engaging the state.

Creating a New Urban Regime: Not as Radical as Porto Alegre but Better than the Past

Simultaneous economic and political changes in Mexico in the last 30 years have led to a new urban regime in its capital. In this dissertation, I have argued that a "pragmatic" or hybrid urban regime is starting to emerge in Mexico City. PRD public officials lead a new governing coalition that also includes capitalists of a new generation (mainly in the service and real-estate sectors) and (some) ordinary residents although the latter have lower degrees of influence and involvement in urban affairs. This is a pragmatic urban regime where left-to-center PRD administrations have been balancing the economic needs of the Mexican mega-city with the social and political progressive policies that have made their party famous in Mexico and Latin America. For instance, the strategic alliance between billionaire Carlos Slim and former mayor López Obrador at the beginning of the previous decade has been a crucial facilitating reason for initiating the process of transformation in *Centro Histórico*. Additionally, formal traditional businesses are also benefiting from urban redevelopment and have been successful in having city government expel street vendors from *Centro Histórico;* a measure that sustained much of former mayor Marcelo Ebrard's city-wide popularity during his tenure (Silva Londoño 2010).

Previously Mexico City had been the scenario where PRI national authorities showcased the three-legged corporatist system Lázaro Cárdenas created (Haber 1989; Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). The governing coalition of PRI politicians and industrial groups also incorporated these actors as subaltern allies although street vendors (and other informal workers) replaced the

rural poor as they helped to expand the city with their own self-provisioning efforts (Sánchez-Mejorada 2005). Uruchurtu, the famous "iron regent" of the 1950s and 1960s, coopted street vendors with a sophisticated combination of repression and material concessions thus modeling the way in which all PRI administrations would relate to them and de facto tolerate their presence even in the center of the city (Cross and Pineda Camacho 1996; Cross 1997; Crossa 2009; Silva Londoño 2010). Landed elites were visibly excluded from the coalition as the Mexican Revolution was, in great part, fought against their excessive power and that of international investors (Gil 1992; Camp 2002; Reyna 2009). It is not a coincidence, for instance, that up until recently the Mexican Constitution prohibited foreigners to own land as stated in Article 27. Finally, small business owners and other middle-class members such as self-employed professionals had a love-hate relationship with the PRI, which usually manifested as low voting rates in favor of the party in the capital. Notably, Uruchurtu was the only mayor who temporarily managed to get this group closer to the PRI by adopting a brave position against downtown development that eventually cost him his post (Davis 2002).

Paradoxically, the highly educated and pro-market PRI leaders of the 1980s and 1990s that displaced the old guard that created the ISI-based corporatist Mexican state also created the conditions for the displacement of their party from Mexico City's governing coalition. This occurred as the political strength of PRI's traditional constituents in the city (organized labor, street vendors, and public employees) was undermined through the very changes the new generation of PRI "technocrats" brought about. Those included sharp increases in living costs, sales of key public companies such as the phone company Carlos Slim famously acquired, combined with the drastic reduction of state legitimacy as a result of its failures in addressing the destruction and loss of lives the 1985 earthquakes caused.

The latter, in turn, informed the grassroots urban movement or *"movimiento urbano popular"* mobilizing the urban poor (Ortiz 1997; Tamayo 2007), whose leaders have become the

basis for the PRD's political dominance in the city since the second half of the 1990s. In this context, the fact that PRD administrations have experimented with various forms of citizen participation mechanisms ever since reflects not only their ideological commitment to progressive urban governance or municipal socialism (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009) but also their attempts to continue winning over the urban poor and at least some sections of the city's middle class. Simultaneously, sales of key public companies have helped consolidate new business leaders like billionaire Carlos Slim. This shift has not only represented a major transfer of state wealth (formerly a PRI monopoly) to private hands but has also provided PRD mayors with the possibility of allying themselves with national capital not necessarily tied to the PRI or the PAN. This "bifurcation" of the Mexican business elite (Cypher & Delgado Wise 2010: 77-78) has been a critical factor in the appearance of the new pragmatic urban regime.

In sum, despite PRD's ideological commitment to promoting citizen participation, the moving terrain it stands on has moved its city administrations to an intermediate place between the socialist urban regimes their leftist counterparts have put together in Porto Alegre, Montevideo, and other Latin American cities (Baiocchi 2001, 2005; Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009) and the neoliberal urban regimes put in place in cities like Santiago in Chile (Salcedo and Torres 2004; Trivelli 2007; Lopez-Morales 2011). A challenging national political context has represented serious economic constraints that moved the PRD to accommodate national and international capital in more deliberate ways (Peterson 1981) than progressive mayors in other countries. PRD's difficult coexistence with right and center-right (PAN and PRI) national authorities decreased the availability of funds to implement their agenda early on (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Davis 2002) leading them to a strategic shift. In particular, Mayor Andrés Manuel López Obrador (2000-2006), having seen the extreme limitations Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas faced in his tenure (1997-2000), made a deliberate alliance with capitalists including Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim (Davis 2002; Greyson 2007).

Invited Participation: Moving Beyond an "All or Nothing" Approach to Participation

One of the central arguments in this dissertation is that limited yet valuable *invited spaces* established by public officials in Mexico City are an essential part of the new *pragmatic* urban regime in the city. In fact, the more consolidated the new regime is (as it is the case in *Centro Histórico*), the more visible and forward the invited spaces public officials offer to residents in the area. Even though these forms of invited participation inevitably start being one-sided they are essentially different from corporatism. Invited spaces are more open-ended, less hierarchical and are not tied to non-competitive and singularly defined organized sectors (Schmitter 1974). Additionally, they can be transformed or "subverted" by expanding their scope, which can lead to moments of "unexpected democratization" (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007; Rodgers 2007) as it has been the case in *Centro Histórico* through an alliance between the area's fiduciary fund and the residents it invited into the urban redevelopment process.

Invited spaces in Mexico City's center represent an improvement in comparison with the exclusionary or cooptation practices the PRI had used on a regular basis in the past. The flexibility *Fideicomiso*'s believers and their allies (mainly the *Fideicomiso*'s real estate division and the *Autoridad*) have shown has allowed them to avoid mistakes previous administrations had made as shown in the hybrid nature of the 2011-2016 Comprehensive Management Plan. By so doing, *Fideicomiso*'s believers have been playing a crucial role in starting to reverse the depopulation and extreme commodification trends in the area while opening the city's political structure to regular citizens. As a result, ordinary residents have had some (if limited) level of involvement in *Centro Histórico's* urban development process. Going back to two kinds of concrete results defined as parameters in this dissertation, (1) the existence of urban interventions favored by and/or explicitly asked for by citizens and the associations representing them and (2) that they have some degree of participation in defining the policies leading to those interventions, it is clear that long-time residents from the area have positive results in both fronts. Those who

have been part of the dozens of Citizen Groups formed to oversee the renovation of more than 2,000 buildings in 18 streets in the area and those among the 342 students graduated from the Citizenship School certainly have had their voices heard in matters as varied as taking decisions about budgets for building renovations on their block, defining new community projects from scratch or seeking support for being elected in the Neighborhood Committees reactivated in 2010.

The Importance of Institutions: State Agencies as Institutional Catalysts

The positive outcome found in *Centro Histórico* would not have been possible without the direct and deliberate intervention of the *Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico*, and especially the group of "believers" in citizen participation within it. That is, a subset of public officials who have led the process through which the *Fideicomiso* became an institutional catalyst in an alliance with the *Autoridad del Centro Histórico*. The "believers" are socially and politically progressive public officials similar to many of their leftist counterparts in other Latin American cities (Chavez and Goldfrank 2004) and, as such, gravitate towards municipal socialism (Goldfrank and Shrank 2009). Although they would have preferred to implement wide-ranging participatory policies such as those in place in Porto Alegre, Montevideo and other "municipal socialist" cities they understood the limitations of the context they were in and took advantage of the opportunities available to them to create invited spaces for participation (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) such as the Citizen Groups and the Citizenship School in *Centro Histórico.*

On the contrary, residents in *Roma Condesa* have not been able to consolidate another institution for regular collaboration with city authorities similar to the highly influential Citizen Councils they had in the mid-1990s. Even though Citizen Councilors were elected in many places around the city they became particularly influential in *Roma Condesa.* This is important because such level of empowerment was not what either the PRI or the PRD had in mind when the Legislative Assembly created this figure. Therefore, squashing Citizen Councils and later on

postponing the Neighborhood Committees that replaced them for almost a decade indicated a hesitant attitude towards citizen participation on the part of the PRD. Nonetheless, the more limited Neighborhood Committees city authorities implemented after Citizen Councilors went beyond their control did serve a significant multiplying effect in *Roma Condesa*. Many of their former members founded and became leaders of the neighborhood organizations in the area.

However, the very strength and accumulated experience of these associations, combined with residents' relatively high education and income levels, have paradoxically resulted in a noticeable level of fragmentation. Different groups continue developing their own plans based on their understanding of what the main problem/solution is in *Roma Condesa* be it the establishment of a business district, restoring its architectural legacy or solving its environmental problems. If anything, such fragmentation often gives the impression that *Roma Condesa* has too many representatives, too many spirited individuals and organizations that not only know each other but also believe *they* have *the only* solution to problems in their area. For instance, most of the leaders I interviewed in *Roma Condesa* agreed on the need to formulate and implement a Comprehensive Urban Development Plan flexible enough to respond to changes in the area and go beyond the purist approach traditional associations have, as the *Fideicomiso* successfully did in *Centro Histórico*. *Roma Condesa* took advantage of the Citizen Councilors figure beyond the limits of an invited space. Also, the area enjoys more human and material resources than *Centro Histórico*. However, the lack of an institutional catalyst to bring them together has paradoxically made *Roma Condesa* unable to exploit them. This, in turn, prevents its residents from influencing urban policies affecting their lives and their neighborhood.

After having enjoyed high levels of participation and influence on the definition of urban policies by the end of the 1990s, many residents and business owners are now struggling with the authorities' limited responsiveness to their needs. In particular, older residents who participated in elaborating the *Partial Plan* for the area, the main planning tool implemented during the López

Obrador city administration, or those who volunteered as Citizen Councilors seem nostalgic about their former level of influence on urban policies affecting their neighborhood. Those experiences stand in stark contrast with the limited assistance the Citizen Participation Department and other units at *Territorial Roma Condesa* (the geographical unit in charge of the area at Delegación Cuauhtémoc) are able to offer. Frustration among both older and younger residents also stems from the fact that they consider the area a potential "model" for other parts of Mexico City if they manage to coexist productively with businesses while maintaining the cultural and artistic distinctiveness of their neighborhoods.

6.2. Theoretical Implications and Future Research

Looking at how regular people struggle with the challenges associated with urban development in a context as challenging as Mexico City offers some important contributions to the literature. First, adapting Polanyi's (1944) idea of the "double movement" to urban contexts proved to be useful for connecting the debate on the growth machine (Molotch 1976; Logan and Molotch 1987; Harding 1994) and urban regimes (Elkin 1987; Stone 1989) to a developing world and historically authoritarian context. The concept underscores that outcomes of urban development are open-ended and contingent even in contexts as complicated as these. Groups benefiting from land commodification (which in Mexico City has been further reified through economic globalization) can indeed gain leverage from new opportunities for highly profitable investments such as those present in real estate. That is the case, for example, when they ally with city administrations willing to create the conditions for their investment's almost immediate revalorization as the PRD has done in *Centro Histórico*. However, the other side of Polanyi's "double movement" is also present as progressive collective actors struggle to regain control over land commodification and those areas of the city into social relationships by fostering citizen participation in urban development programs.

Second, this dissertation showed that paying more attention to everyday forms of citizen participation in order to move beyond either/or perspectives is certainly worthwhile. It is important to remember that the social side of Polanyi's (1944) double movement can hardly take place in a seamless manner in cities with a long authoritarian history. Taking Mexico City as an extreme case (Gerring 2007) of late democratization does put conditions for citizen participation to the test. It forces us to grapple with the limitations associated with citizen participation in various forms (in corporatist networks, in contentious politics, or in spaces for collaboration) and the way it can evolve over time as citizens learn from previous achievements and failures in their attempts to engage the state. The "plasticity" of participation (Chaudhuri and Heller 2005) has to be taken as seriously as it limitations (Silver et al 2010) in order to allow for surprising possibilities such as the coexistence of new and old institutions and practices rather than assuming the clear cut replacement of the latter by the former.

The significance of more fluid analytical frameworks to study state-society relations in general, and citizen participation in public policy in particular (Baiocchi and Heller 2005; Silver et al 2010; Becher 2010), lies in the need to understand that "old" and "new" forms of state-society engagement can take place at the same time and in the same place. For instance, citizens in Mexico City's central core or *Ciudad Central* attempt to influence urban policy by using the old corporatist and clientelistic networks, by showing up at various types of novel consultations, by organizing public demonstrations when needed or by resorting back to corporatist structures formed in the not-so-distant past. Future research on Mexico City and other Latin American cities could benefit from applying this perspective, in particular, by exploring other contexts where "invited spaces" for participation (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) are present and whether they evolve into more radical modalities of state-society interaction and if so, how and when.

Third, another important point regarding citizen participation and the role of institutions emerges from the comparison between the local cases in this dissertation. My two local cases signal a telling paradox with great implications for the literature on citizen participation. Contrary to what we would expect based on the literature that predicts higher levels of participation among the richest and more educated (Almond and Verba 1963; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Walsh, Jennings, and Stoker 2004), the lack of an institutional catalyst equivalent to the *Fideicomiso* in *Centro Histó*rico has prevented the higher level of associational density found in *Roma Condesa* from turning into concrete gains even though it had (though briefly) a participatory mechanism much broader than any invited space (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Roque and Shankland 2007) the *Fideicomiso* has put in place. State institutions can indeed mark the difference at the local level even when facing financial constraints a la Peterson (1981). Yet findings from my local cases suggest that more research is needed not only on the conditions under which this is the case but also on the agendas and capabilities of the committed public officials seeking to establish social and urban policies aligned with municipal socialism (Chavez and Goldfrank 2004; Goldfrank and Shrank 2009).

Additionally, this dissertation contributed to expanding the literature on urban regimes in Latin America by closely examining the transition from the "corporatist" regime PRI led from the 1930s to the 1990s to the "pragmatic" urban regime PRD initiated in 1997. Future avenues of research could compare such regimes with urban regimes in other Mexican cities and expand our understanding of regimes in other Latin American urban contexts. Similarly, greater consideration of other dimensions of Mexico City's pragmatic regime could be of interest as the regime continues to unfold. For instance, whether PRD indeed manages to consolidate the pragmatic urban regime in the rest of the city by moving from the second to the third phase of regime shift (Orr and Stoker 1994) or whether it manages to "sell" its progressive discourse on

the city as a manifestation of public life to other constituencies such as the ones present in middle-class milieus like *Roma Condesa*.

As this dissertation suggested, although international and national investors, one of the key allies in the city's pragmatic urban regime, are extensively present in my second local case of *Roma Condesa* they are not as clearly articulated into Mexico City's governing coalition as Carlos Slim and other investors are in *Centro Histórico*. The same is true with residents in both areas as there is no institutional catalyst to integrate them (although in a subordinate role) in *Roma Condesa* as systematically as they are in *Centro Histórico* thanks to the work the *Fideicomiso* has done. Similarly, as democracy in Mexico City gets "older", more research needs to be done on how closely the composition of the city's governing coalition is related to party affiliations at the level of the colonies. In my cases, the fact that PRD backpedaled in its take on citizen participation by eliminating the Citizen Councils affected *Roma Condesa* much more than it did *Centro Histórico* because Citizen Councilors had acquired a preeminent role in the former.

In sum, Mexico City has proven to be a fascinating urban context to look at the dynamic between democratizing forces represented by committed public officials taking advantage of lessons learned through a lineage of progressive social movements and politicians in the city and economic forces represented by national and international investors attempting to reap the benefits from rapid valorization of land in the central parts of Mexico City. Those sets of forces, instead of being always at odds, are both parts of an eclectic or *pragmatic urban regime.* Even though their agendas diverge they are aware of one another's presence and the way they each benefit from (even if indirect) mutual collaboration. As we have seen, despite the limitations associated with a corporatist past and the financial and political limitations PRD administrations face, there is no clear-cut end result in place; at least not yet.

It is necessary to pay more attention to urban contexts like these in the developing world and the contradictions associated with institutional layering. In the case of Mexico City it is

precisely the precedent of corporatism what makes it difficult to completely dismiss the urban poor as, at least, some of their collective representatives in the *Movimiento Urbano Popular* have learned to use contentious politics to negotiate their presence and progressive public officials struggle to find citizen engagement modalities better (but never less than) the corporatist mode of incorporation to involve them and others in urban renewal projects. Seemingly counterintuitive findings like these might give us more insights about the intricate connections between different forms of citizen participation engaging the state, inclusive urban policies, and the future of complex mega- and primate cities in the developing world. The dance is still unfolding and the possibilities are still up in the air.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Local Elections Results for Federal District Delegation Chiefs. All Delegations. 2000-2012.

2000 Local Elections					
Delegation	**PAN-PVEM**	**PRI**	**PRD**	**Other**	**Invalid Votes**
Ciudad Central	**363,356**	**226,210**	**273,874**	**75,677**	**18,873**
Álvaro Obregón	121,448	84,715	95,837	27,402	7,696
Azcapotzalco	112,552	58,432	63,475	16,897	4,936
Coyoacán	105,030	85,798	132,215	31,192	6,127
Cuajimalpa de Morelos	23,146	17,194	19,579	3,405	1,542
Gustavo A. Madero	230,280	152,098	207,153	53,363	14,847
Iztacalco	71,347	51,904	75,761	21,009	4,993
Iztapalapa	205,350	177,671	303,300	70,170	19,398
Magdalena Contreras, La	33,411	29,114	35,905	9,638	2,651
Milpa Alta	4,319	10,956	18,182	1,944	901
Tláhuac	30,526	29,675	44,980	11,832	2,811
Tlalpan	97,418	60,039	97,713	22,547	5,743
Xochimilco	41,299	31,123	65,659	15,937	3,670
Total DF	1,439,482	1,014,929	1,433,633	361,013	94,188

2003 Local Elections					
Delegation	**PAN**	**PRI**	**PRD**	**Other**	**Invalid Votes**
Ciudad Central	**196,351**	**71,043**	**285,770**	**80,972**	**20,958**
Álvaro Obregón	63,094	30,198	103,360	27,034	8,792
Azcapotzalco	57,216	18,956	74,725	24,177	5,699
Coyoacán	61,976	26,759	111,042	35,982	8,497
Cuajimalpa de Morelos	13,778	4,132	18,212	6,876	1,655
Gustavo A. Madero	103,898	46,263	205,560	61,408	14,611
Iztacalco	29,008	16,028	75,634	21,372	5,366
Iztapalapa	88,016	47,376	282,641	68,914	19,650
Magdalena Contreras, La	16,961	7,657	31,808	15,331	3,134
Milpa Alta	3,462	10,717	10,337	4,267	1,250
Tláhuac	11,552	14,164	40,461	13,137	2,977
Tlalpan	55,809	21,148	85,718	25,579	6,860
Xochimilco	22,360	13,962	48,474	16,181	4,458
Total DF	723,481	328,403	1,373,742	401,230	103,907

2006 Local Elections					
Delegation	**PAN**	**PRI-PVEM**	**PRD-PT-CONV.**	**Other**	**Invalid Votes**
Ciudad Central	**341,666**	**135,576**	**448,453**	**75,158**	**15,074**
Álvaro Obregón	123,279	36,293	190,152	22,658	6,516
Azcapotzalco	90,490	36,045	123,745	14,941	3,844
Coyoacán	118,779	45,612	195,807	24,992	5,353
Cuajimalpa de Morelos	21,640	14,913	29,134	11,524	1,513
Gustavo A. Madero	157,713	83,637	375,688	56,955	11,012
Iztacalco	50,083	35,628	128,193	18,572	3,754
Iztapalapa	158,201	99,886	526,172	68,410	16,472
Magdalena Contreras, La	29,610	17,093	66,437	9,096	2,408
Milpa Alta	7,581	14,868	22,363	3,443	1,343
Tláhuac	23,121	30,517	80,815	10,989	2,659
Tlalpan	87,398	36,887	175,588	24,438	5,330
Xochimilco	37,249	23,441	116,849	11,672	3,659
Total DF	1,246,810	610,396	2,479,396	352,848	78,937

2009 Local Elections					
Delegation	**PAN**	**PRI**	**PRD**	**Other**	**Invalid Votes**
Ciudad Central	**182,202**	**103,347**	**189,089**	**114,973**	**60,526**
Álvaro Obregón	53,450	36,187	72,551	52,401	23,507
Azcapotzalco	43,450	29,386	51,532	32,763	14,670
Coyoacán	73,651	34,625	74,570	47,417	23,891
Cuajimalpa de Morelos	25,194	6,927	17,863	7,474	3,636
Gustavo A. Madero	75,949	69,256	148,401	88,278	41,041
Iztacalco	23,066	24,509	45,963	34,097	13,703
Iztapalapa	65,309	73,424	127,846	257,318	54,616
Magdalena Contreras, La	13,542	14,396	25,375	17,290	8,260
Milpa Alta	2,769	11,987	11,774	6,898	2,089
Tláhuac	9,926	15,243	27,316	26,088	6,752
Tlalpan	44,844	30,547	62,427	44,580	23,422
Xochimilco	15,637	16,230	42,483	29,047	11,881
Total DF	628,989	466,064	897,190	758,624	287,994

2012 Local Elections					
Delegation	**PAN**	**PRI-PVEM**	**PRD-PT-CONV.**	**Other**	**Invalid Votes**
Ciudad Central	**237,620**	**159,918**	**343,848**	**229,443**	**24,995**
Álvaro Obregón	96,603	54,263	127,630	92,533	11,056
Azcapotzalco	51,606	47,756	87,426	61,921	6,153
Coyoacán	96,173	50,201	141,717	84,190	10,506
Cuajimalpa de Morelos	21,029	24,674	23,186	20,199	2,410
Gustavo A. Madero	101,082	100,785	267,275	181,954	17,749
Iztacalco	27,827	49,201	83,008	62,715	6,042
Iztapalapa	89,603	122,676	356,167	283,092	23,139
Magdalena Contreras, La	16,457	30,530	41,311	32,488	3,476
Milpa Alta	3,794	17,899	17,459	16,420	1,403
Tláhuac	19,560	33,348	49,523	48,302	4,419
Tlalpan	63,066	51,448	125,749	79,021	16,027
Xochimilco	26,502	30,986	74,499	56,093	13,361
Total DF	850,922	773,685	1,738,798	1,248,371	140,736

Source: Own elaboration with data from www.iedf.org.mx

Appendix B

Winning Party in Local Elections for the Federal District's Delegation Chief

Ciudad Central. 2000-2012

Elections	Benito Juárez	Cuauhtémoc	Miguel Hidalgo	Venustiano Carranza
2000	PAN 43.9%	PRD 32.5%	PAN 41.9%	PAN 35.8%
2003	PAN 40.74%	PRD 53.28%	PAN 41.9%	PRD 46.61%
2006	PAN 46.51%	PRD-PT-Convergencia 49.30%	PAN 39.05%	PRD-PT-Convergencia 51.99%
2009	PAN 40.66%	PRD 30.90%	PAN 39.41%	PRD 38.11%
2012	PAN 39.69%	PRD 35.39%	PAN 31.52%	PRD 42.09%

Source: Own elaboration with data from **www.iedf.org.mx**

Appendix C

Local Elections Results for Federal District Delegation Chief. Ciudad Central. 2000-2012

Delegation	2000			2003			2006		
	PAN-PVEM	PRD	PRI	PAN	PRD	PRI	PAN	PRD-PT-Convergencia	PRI-PVEM
Benito Juárez	43.90%	25.30%	21.60%	40.74%	33.03%	9.06%	46.51%	35.81%	11.06%
Cuauhtémoc	32.30%	32.50%	24.00%	20.42%	53.28%	10.71%	25.72%	49.30%	14.49%
Miguel Hidalgo	41.90%	25.20%	24.40%	39.05%	38.03%	10.64%	43.05%	36.05%	14.11%
Venustiano Carranza	35.80%	29.80%	24.40%	23.96%	46.61%	12.77%	23.84%	51.99%	13.46%

Delegation	2009			2012		
	PAN	PRD	PRI	PAN	PRD	PRI
Benito Juárez	40.66%	19.59%	13.50%	36.90%	27.77%	13.33%
Cuauhtémoc	19.07%	30.90%	19.45%	16.28%	35.39%	18.67%
Miguel Hidalgo	39.41%	26.72%	12.92%	33.05%	31.52%	14.81%
Venustiano Carranza	15.86%	38.11%	16.88%	10.82%	42.09%	16.54%

Source: Own elaboration with data from www.iedf.org.mx

Appendix D

Distribution of Seats in the Federal District Legislative Assembly 2000-2012

Party	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012
PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party)	16	7	4	7	9
PAN (National Action Party)	17	16	17	15	13
PRD (Democratic Revolutionary Party)	19	37	34	30	34
PVEM (Mexican Green Ecological Party)	8	5	3	4	2
PT (Workers Party)	1	0	1	6	3
Others	5	1	7	4	5
Total	**66**	**66**	**66**	**66**	**66**

Source: Own elaboration with data from www.iedf.org.mx

Appendix E

Population Growth in Mexico City and Percentage of National Population 1900-2000

Year	1900	1910	1921	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population (in thousands)	345	471	662	1,049	1,645	2,952	5,125	8,623	12,995	15,274	17,946
Population as % of national total	2.5%	3.1%	4.6%	6.3%	8.4%	11.5%	14.7%	17.9%	19.4%	18.8%	18.4%
Mean annual growth rate		3.2%	3.1%	5.6%	4.7%	5.9%	5.7%	5.5%	4.0%	1.7%	1.4%

Note: from 1950 onwards, the population refers to Mexico City Metropolitan Area, comprising the Federal District and a variable number of municipalities belong to the surrounding State of Mexico.

Source: Connelly 2003, p. 5

Appendix F

Mexico: Economically Active Population by Sectors, 1895-2000 (Percentages)

Year	Primary (Agriculture)	Secondary (Industry)	Tertiary (Services)	Unspecified
1895	62.50	14.55	16.23	6.72
1900	61.93	15.66	16.33	6.07
1910	67.15	15.05	16.57	1.23
1921	71.43	11.49	9.30	7.78
1930	70.20	14.39	11.36	4.05
1940	65.39	12.73	19.07	2.79
1950	58.32	15.95	21.45	4.29
1960	54.21	18.95	26.12	0.72
1970	39.39	22.95	31.88	5.77
1979*	28.90	27.50	43.10	0.50
1990	22.65	27.79	36.13	3.43
2000	16.25	27.39	56.35	0.41

*The author used data from the annual Labor Continuous Survey because the 1980 census had a not specified economically active population of 29.9% unlike all the other censuses.

Source: Table II.1 in Ortiz Cruz 2006, p. 80

Appendix G

Free Trade Agreements in Which Mexico Takes Part, 1994-2005

Countries involved	Date of enactment
Canada, United States	January 1994
Costa Rica	January 1995
Colombia, Venezuela	January 1995
Bolivia	January 1995
Nicaragua	July 1998
Chile	August 1999
Austria, Belgium-Luxemburg, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom	July 2000
Israel	July 2000
El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras	March 2001
Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland	July 2001
Uruguay	July 2004
Japan	April 2005

Source: Werner et al 2006, Table 6.2, p. 78

Appendix H

Selection of Main Collective Actors in Centro Histórico

Collective Actor	Characteristics	Main Institutional Goals
Residents		
Unión de Vecinos y Comercinates del Poligonal del Centro Histórico	The Association of Neighbors and Merchants of *Centro Histórico* is one of the few citizen organizations in the area that has been able to sustai its work over a long period of time. Its President, Teresa González, is an active and well-known community leader who was collaborating with *Fundación del Centro Histórico* in various projects at the time of my first visit in 2007.	Defend the interests of long-standing poor residents and merchants in the area, particularly against increases in the costs of services and evictions.
Unidos por Centro Histórico	The association *Unidos por Centro Histórico* (United for *Centro Histórico)* is a neighborhood association created by middle- and upper-class residents. It addresses traffic congestion and environmental problems in the area. For example, the association issued an "Access Card" neighbors can use to enter the area to go back home whenever streets are closed for public events.	Their stated goal is to "improve the quality of life of its inhabitants and visitors, through the defense, promotion, and monitoring of the historic center of Mexico City" (*Unidos por Centro Histórico* webpage accessed on February 28, 2010).
Government Institutions		
Delegación Cuauthémoc	Both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* belong to the same delegation, *Delegación Cuauthémoc.* And this is among the most centrally located among the 16 delegations in the city. Each delegation, in turn, assigns staff to *coordinaciones* in charge of working in one or more neighborhoods or *colonias*.	Avoid or at least reduce depopulation trends in the delegation while improving services and infrastructure in the area.
Territorial Centro Histórico	Although it has a much lower profile than its counterpart in *Roma Condesa*, this is the organ or "coordinación" of the municipal government in charge of *Centro Histórico* within the delegation.	Avoid or at least reduce depopulation trends in the delegation while improving services and infrastructure in the area.

Collective Actor	Characteristics	Main Institutional Goals
Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico	Fiduciary fund created in 1990 as a private entity to provide part of the local funds to renovate the area. Founded by prominent institutions and individuals from the private sector (including billionaire Carlos Slim), the fund became part of city government in 2002. Pages: www.centrohistorico.df.gob.mx http://escueladeformacionciudadanaypb.blogspot.com	To promote, chanel, and supervise public works and services intended for "the recovery, protection, and conservation of Mexico City's *Centro Histórico" (Fideicomiso* 2007b: 3). Its mandate was temporarily expanded to collaborate towards the celebration of the Bicentenary of Mexican Independence and the Centenary of the Mexican Revolution in 2010.
Autoridad del Centro Histórico	The Authority of the Historic Center is a quasi-governmental institution organ created to assit the Chief of Government (Mayor) by coordinating actions among the various government agencies and private actors in the area. Page: www.autoridadcentrohistorico.df.gob.mx	Keeping the center "alive" while also preserving the arhictectural and cultural legacy it contains.
Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)		
Fundación del Centro Histórico + Casa Vecina + Casa Mesones	Institutional umbrella for billionaire Carlos Slim's presence in the area. Slim competes with Warren Buffett and Bill Gates on rankings of the richest people on the planet. These three institutions carry out economic, social, and cultural programs for residents in the area. Pages: www.fundacioncentrohistorico.com.mx www.casavecina.com http://proyectomesones.blogspot.com	Assist residents through social, economic, and cultural programs as well as collaborating in urban renewal projects (e.g. the new building of the Mexican Foreign Ministry and the renovation of buildings South from Alameda Central).
Casa Talavera	Cultural center created by the Autonomous University of Mexico City (UACM). The center is open to all audiences but it targets youngsters and kids. Page: http://casatalavera.uacm.edu.mx	Offer oppotunities for art training, recreational activities, and cultural dialogue in the commuities of the traditional *La Merced* neighborhood.
Business and street vending associations		
CANACO-DF	Mexico City's commerce chamber branch has studied the prevalence of street vendors in the area for many years to advocate for their removal. Page: www.camaradecomerciodemexico.com.mx	"This is an organism that promotes and defends the legitimate interests of businessmen and supports its growth through training and legal consultancy work and it is involved in the development of national and international trade" (*CANACO-DF* website,

Collective Actor	Characteristics	Main Institutional Goals
		accessed on February 16, 2011).
Procéntrico	The Association of Merchants and Entrepeneurs United for the Protection of *Centro Histórico* was founded in 1980 and has Guillermo Gazal as its historic leader. Gazal is famous for his famous confrontations with street vendors, particularly with leader Alejandra Barrios.	Defend the interests of established middle-size businesses in *Centro Histórico*.
UDCEN	The second most important business association in the area is the Union of *Centro Histórico* led by its president, Víctor Cisneros Taja. UDCEN has been very active, especially through their alliance with an organization called "El Círculo" (The Circle) as well as collaborating with the city's Tourism Board.	Unite to stop the deterioration of the area and "actively support the needs of legal businesses" (*El Círculo* webpage, accessed on December 2nd, 2010).
Street vendors associations	*Asociación Cívica Legítima Comercial* led by Alejandra Barrios and other street vendors associations	Defend their interests and negotiate with city government, for instance, trying to get relocated to commercial plazas.
Merchant associations of former street vendors	These organizations bring together former street vendors that used to make theri living in *Centro Histórico,* particulary in the streets around *"el Zócalo."*	To defend their interests vis-a-vis their relationship with city government, particularly regarding the process of relocating other street vendors in the area.
Merchant associations in *La Merced* district	These include small businesses in the Southern part of *Centro Histórico* in the famous popular business district of *La Merced*.	To defend their interests in their negotiations with city government, for example, because of extensive water damage they suffered as a result of flooding in September 2009.
International actors		
Foreign investors	The presence of foreign investors is extensive but hard to pinpoint because it is usually disguied in multinational partnerships under the names of their Mexican counterparts. Their investments tend to concentrate in hotels near *"el Zócalo"* as well as in the *Alameda Central* section (for instance, www.reforma22.com represented by Mexican real estate firm Danhos and www.delparque.com.mx/puerta_alameda represented by Del Parque Consortium).	Benefit from their investments in the area by taking advantage of *Centro Histórico's* urban recovery starting in the 2000s.

Collective Actor	Characteristics	Main Institutional Goals
UNESCO	UNESCO has been the international collective actor more systematically linked to *Centro Histórico* over time. This UN organization started collaborating with the Mexican government at the end of the 1960s regarding the conservation of historic buildings in the area. Starting in 2010 UNESCO collaborated with the *Fideicomiso* in holding a series of workshops with residents and merchants about the area's tangible and intangible heritage. Page: http://www.unesco.org/new/es/mexico/	To work with the Mexican government and others to safeguard Mexican tangible and intangible heritage.
Spanish government / *Centro Cultural Español (CCE)*	The Spanish Cultural Center has been playing an important role in the cultural renaissance of *Centro Histórico* because of the diverse and mostly free program of activities in features in 5 areas: education, cultural rights and cultural diversity, historic heritage and memory, promotion of the Ibero-American (Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American) cultural identity and creativity, and women's rights. This work is often tied to conservation or urban redevelopment efforts to showcase the colonial (Spanish) architectural legacy of Latin American cities. Page: www.ccemx.org	The center works in response to "the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation's committment of rescuing a historic monument [the building where the center is located] as well as contributing to the socio-functional and environmental rehabilitation of Mexico City's center *(CCE* webpage, accessed on December 15th, 2010) .

Source: Interviews with key informants and *Centro Histórico* residents and merchants (October 2007, November-December 2009, and June 2010 plus follow-up interviews with key informants since June 2010 to the present)

Appendix I

Unidos Proposal of a "Credencial de Acceso" (Access Card) to *Centro Histórico*

Credencial de Acceso

Credencial de acceso para
Vecinos

Source: http://unidosch.com/CentroHistorico/Credencial.html

Appendix J

Funding Mechanisms Applied in Different Historic Centers

Mechanisms		Buenos Aires, Argentina	Santiago, Chile	Olinda and Recife, Brazil	Bogota, Colombia	Havana, Cuba	Quito, Ecuador	Mexico City, Mexico
Direct Public Resources	Public banks					X		X
	Government agencies	X		X	X			X
	Designated budget lines	X		X		X		X
	Autonomous public institutions	X						X
	Public funds or fiduciary funds	X	X	X	X		X	X
Indirect Public Resources	Tax reliefs	X	X	X	X			X
	Subsidies		X	X				X
Private Resources	Private corporations		X	X			X	X
	Private individuals	X	X	X	X		X	X
Public-private investment	Public-private partnerships			X		X	X	X
International organizations (IDB, UNDP, UN, UNESCO)		X		X		X	X	X
Other mechanisms								X

Source: GDF/FCH. 2011. *El Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México. Patrimonio de la Humanidad (Mexico City's Centro Histórico*. World Heritage. PowerPoint Presentation July 2011)

Appendix K

Most Important Street Vendors Leaders and Estimated Number of Followers

Leader	Estimated number of followers
Alejandra Barrios Richard*	3,762
Julio, Silvia* and Salvador Sánchez Rico	2,762
Miguel Angel Huerta	1,884
Martín Cancino	1,754
Raymundo Pérez	1,128
Clara Franco*	1,011
Benita Chavarría*	802
Rafael Rojas Tarín	584
David Guzmán	582
Malena Acuña*	455
Miguel Sandoval	421
Jovita Cruz*	278
Joaquín Gutiérrez Contreras	240
Oscar Liebre Espinosa	225
Luis Demetrio Palma Guzmán	182

Source: *La Jornada* webpage, Jesús Villaseca, March 17th, 2007

Note: Names followed by an asterisk denote female leaders. Additionally, siblings Julio, Silvia and Salvador Sánchez Rico are the children of and "heirs" to legendary female leader Guillermina Rico.

Appendix L

Selection of Main Collective Actors in *Roma Condesa*

Collective Actor	Characteristics	Main Institutional Goals
Residents		
Amigos de los Parques México y España, A.C.	The civil association "Friends of the Parks Mexico and Spain" is the most important neighborhood association in the area.	Defending the interests of residents in *Roma Condesa* vis-à-vis city government and business particularly in environmental problems caused by the latter.
Nuevo Parque España, A.C.	The civil association "New Park Spain" works closely with the former and it also has a more traditional membership of highly educated middle-aged neighbors. However, their institutional goals are slightly different.	Develop a business enclave in Roma Condesa to enhance economic growth in the area while benefiting residents.
Movimiento Pro-Dignificación de la Colonia Roma	Although not legally incorporated as the former two associations, the "Movement Pro-Dignifying Colonia Roma" is a group of highly educated residents from *Colonia Roma*.	Preserve the architectural and artistic legacy of *Colonia Roma* while improving the residents' quality of life.
Comités Vecinales of Colonias Roma, Roma Condesa, and Hipódromo-Roma Condesa	Neighborhood Committees were established as a mechanism for citizen participation by the López Obrador administration and their members were supposed to be replaced by new representatives elected three years later. The election has been postponed twice so some of these remaining committees have continued to operate while they push for new elections and clearer rules.	Represent the interests of neighbors in their respective areas before city government.
Unión de Vecinos Hipódromo, Roma, Roma Condesa	The "*Unión*" is an umbrella organization of the more established and active neighborhood associations described above and the remaining Citizen Committees in the area.	Serve as a unified front of the most established neighborhood associations from three of the four colonies in *Roma Condesa*.
Environmental and/or youth groups	There are other less visible associations with younger members that seem to be perceived as more "antagonistic" by the residents I interviewed. They are mainly devoted to environmental issues in the area.	Advocate for protection of green areas in *Roma Condesa*. *La Cuadra* works on issues of environmental preservation including establishing sustainable urban gardens (www.huertoromaverde.org and www.lacuadra.org.mx).

Collective Actor	Characteristics	Main Institutional Goals
Government Institutions		
Delegación Cuauthémoc	Both *Centro Histórico* and *Roma Condesa* belong to the same delegation, *Delegación Cuauthémoc.* And this is among the most centrally located among the 16 delegations in the city. Each delegation, in turn, assigns staff to *coordinaciones* in charge of working in one or more neighborhoods or *colonias*.	Avoid or at least reduce depopulation trends in the delegation while improving services and infrastructure in the area.
Territorial Roma Condesa	Although it has a much lower profile than its counterpart in *Centro Histórico*, this is the organ or "coordinación" of the municipal government in charge of *Roma Condesa* within the delegation. In the last few years people in charge have been neighbors from *Roma Condesa.*	Avoid or at least reduce depopulation trends in the delegation while improving services and infrastructure in the area.
Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)		
Fideicomiso Roma Condesa	The Fiduciary Fund *Roma Condesa* is a non-governmental organization devoted to environmental issues in the area. It managed to successfully collaborate with the city's Department of Environment on various projects. However, lack of funding threatened its sustainability. (www.efectoverde.org)	Foster projects that promote urban regeneration including restoration of public spaces and green areas, and promoting culture harmonious coexistence.
Business and street vending associations		
Asociación de Restaurantes del Corazón de la Roma Condesa (ARCCO)	ARCCO is the Restaurants Association in Roma Condesa. Although relatively recent in its formation, it seems to have gained respect among the residents, which is remarkable given the frequent conflicts between them and the various businesses established in the area.	Defend the interests of restaurant owners and managers in *Roma Condesa* in their relationship with residents and city government.
International actors		
Foreign investors	The presence of foreign investors is extensive but hard to pinpoint because it is usually disguied in multinational partnerships under the names of their Mexican counterparts. Their investments tend to concentrate in hotels, hostels, and apartment buildings in colonia *Condesa*.	Benefit from their investments in the area by taking advantage of *Roma Condesa's* urban recovery starting in the 1990s.

Source: Interviews with key informants and *Roma Condesa* residents and merchants (October 2007, November-December 2009, and June 2010 plus follow-up interviews with key informants since June 2010 to the present)

Appendix M

Results from voting on parking meter projects from consultations in Roma-Condesa

Source: "Excelsior Especiales, Parquímetros: orden al estacionamiento en vía pública"
[Excelsior Special Sections, Parking Meters: order in street parking]
http://www.excelsior.com.mx/especial/parquimetros/roma-condesa
(accessed on December 1, 2013)

Note: the diagram shows that administrative subsections Roma Norte III, Roma Sur I, Roma Sur, Condesa, and Hipódromo Condesa voted against installing parking meters whereas subsections Roma Norte I, Romar Norte II, Hipódromo I and Hipódromo II voted in favor of doing so.