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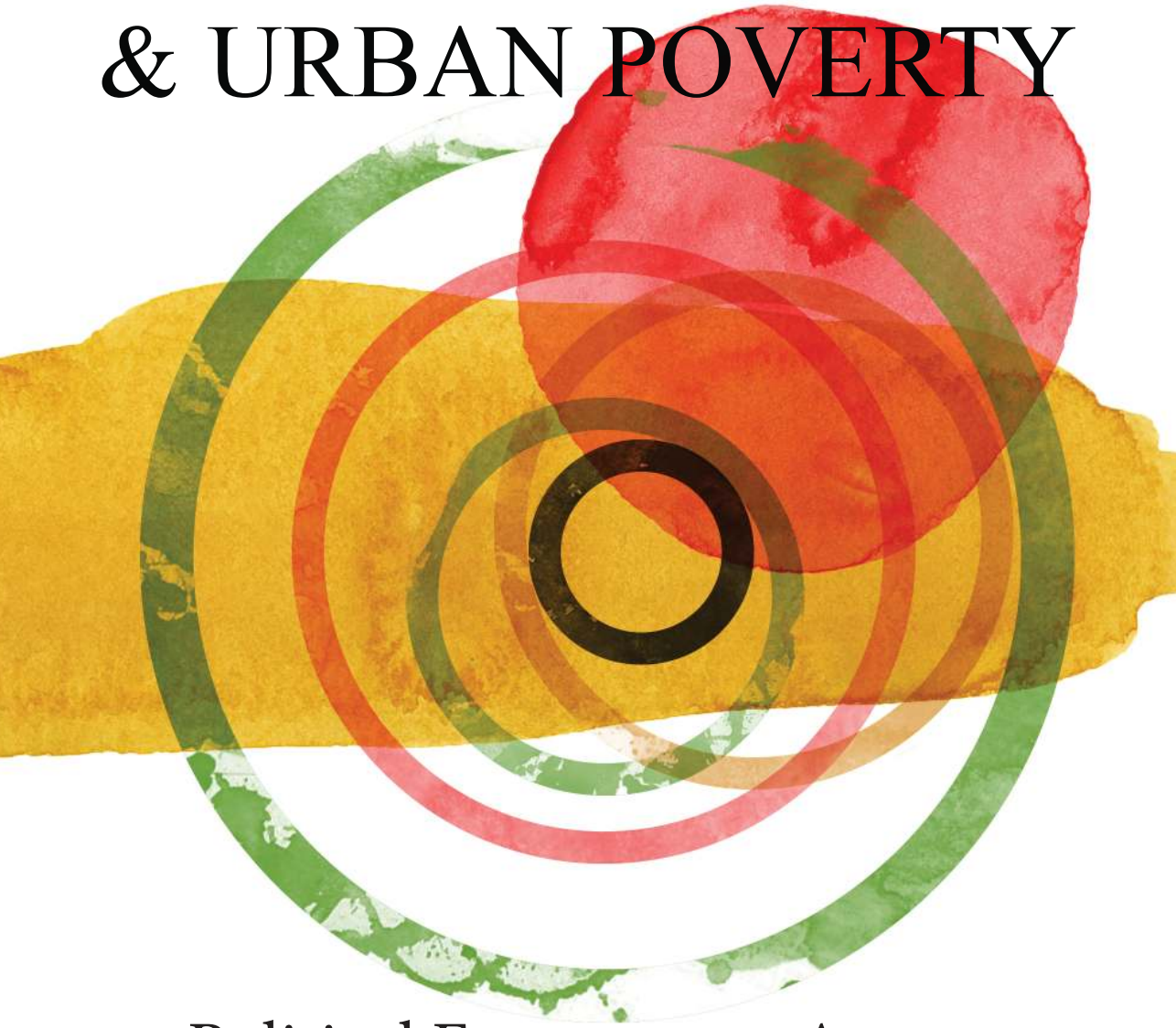

Political Engagement Among the Poor in Mexico City

Courtney Lake Vegelin

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Courtney Lake Vegelin

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALDF	Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal (Legistlative Assembly of the Federal District)
AMLO	Andrés Manuel López Obrador
ARDF	Asamblea de Representates del Distrito Federal (Assembly of Representatives of the Federal District)
CCCM	Consejo Consultivo de la Ciudad de México (Consultative Council of the City of Mexico)
CCE	Business Coordinating Council of Mexico
CENAMI	Centro Nacional de Misiones Indigenas (National Center for Indigenous Movements)
CNOP	Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (National Confederation of Popular Organizations)
CONAMUP	National Coordinator of the Urban Popular Movement
CONEVAL	National Council for Evaluation of Social Development Policy
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CTM	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Mexicanos (National Confederation of Mexican Workers)
DDF	Departmento del Distrito Federal (Federal District Department)
DF	Distrito Federal (Federal District)
EZLN	Zapatista National Liberation Army
FAT	Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (Authentic Worker's Front)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSCIP	Union, Peasant, Social, Indigenous, and Popular Front
FSM	Mexican Union Front
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IDS	International Development Studies
IFE	Instituto Nacional Electoral (Federal Elections Institute)
IFI	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPE	International Political Economy
IR	International Relations
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation
LAC	Latin American and Carribean section of the World Bank
MCD	Movivimiento Ciudadano Democracia (People's Democratic Movement)
MAMC	Metropolitan Area of Mexico City
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
PAN	Partido Acción Nacional (National Action Party)
PRD	Partido de la Revolución Democrática (Democratic Revolutionary Party)
PRI	Partido Revolucionarío Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)
PRONASOL	Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Programme)
PSE	Economic Solidary Pact
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNT	Unión Nacional De Trabajadores (National Labour Union)
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZMCM	Zona Metropolitana Ciudad de México (Metropolitan Area of the City of Mexico)

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of this dissertation

This dissertation seeks to address the disturbing reality that as an abundance of wealth is accumulated among small groups and limited sectors in some of the world's major cities, increasing numbers of individuals living and working in or near these same cities are largely cut off from its benefits (UN Habitat 2010, 2013). As urban economies transform to adapt to new demands of the global economy and urban societies struggle with new pressures, much of the burden of change falls on the most vulnerable, lowest paid groups who are growing in number (UN Millennium Project 2005) and who have few resources beyond minimal incomes to make such changes easier to manage (UN Habitat 2010). Prodded into more precarious forms of work as labour relations break down, and into more marginalized and criminalized (Jaffe et al 2012; Koonings and Kruijt 2007; Rodgers 2004, 2009) areas of residence as living expenses increase, overcoming the multiple pressures from urban transformation seems to be an insurmountable task. Under such conditions, the poor and marginalized of the world's major cities are becoming a defining feature of the present-day urban scene (UN Habitat 2010).

Moreover, as we approach the tipping point in which urban poverty is to become the primary characteristic of global poverty by 2030 (Cohen 2004, 2006), understanding the drivers, the contexts, and the conditions for urban poverty around the world is increasingly urgent. As the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals have been designed with an eye toward the needs of promoting inclusive and sustainable development in cities (UN 2015a; UN 2015b), there must be continued exploration into the challenges in reaching such goals. This dissertation contributes to such needed understandings by carrying out an historical, multi-level analysis of the politics and dynamics of urban poverty. In Mexico City, where vast wealth is generated in some areas, poverty is nonetheless chronic and increasing in others. In an effort to understand some of the fundamental drivers behind poverty, the conceptual point of departure for this research is that the global institutional context of political and economic neoliberalism penetrates urban societies and transforms the context in which urban poverty is produced and resisted at the local level. It maintains that urban poverty is not the result of isolated urban phenomena, but is a reflection of the power relations that define neoliberal capital accumulation in general (Castells 1998; Harvey 2009).

This is an historical study, focusing on a particular moment of transition in Mexican urban society to show how multi-scalar power relations are relevant to understanding urban poverty. This research highlights that there is a *multi-scalar politics of urban poverty* in terms of how ideas and objectives among the poor in the city respond to and are changed by local, national and international processes. The historical period is from the early 1980s to the early 2000s, and makes use of fieldwork carried out in the early 2000s, to get a better understanding of how political and economic transitions were experienced on the ground. There is a wealth of literature on the changing political and economic spectrum of Mexico from the time of neoliberal structural adjustment reforms (Chapter 3) to the present time, and this research draws from these invaluable sources to bring out a multi-scalar analysis for the purposes of better understanding the social and political conditions of poverty. From this perspective, it is interesting to explore how global and national ideologies gain expression through political discourse, political actors, and policy-making at the national and urban level. At the same time, it is necessary to explore how organized groups among the urban poor have positioned themselves politically – both in word and in action – to transform their circumstances.

1.2 Problem statement: Multi-scalar politics of poverty

The main problems addressed by the dissertation are on both a conceptual and practical level. On the conceptual level, the dissertation suggests that there is limited empirical knowledge about the political dimensions of poverty, and as a logical corollary, its multi-scalar political context. Through the research design, this dissertation hopes to offer new conceptualizations of poverty that cannot be separated from either its political or international context. It seeks to illustrate that when the social and political relations of poverty are linked level-by-level to its global context, then it becomes impossible to deny that global forces – filtered through the national, urban and local levels, and defined by neoliberal capitalism – tie the poor into global dynamics. This allows 'local' poverty to be construed as 'global' poverty. When viewed in this way, urban poverty – particularly in the context of a globalizing city, and despite the range of local factors that also come into play – gains new conceptual meaning and theoretical relevance when assessing the benefits of the neoliberal model of cooperation and growth.

Such relevance stems from the argument that problematizing the concept of poverty cannot be sufficient without problematizing the context in which it exists. This means two things. The first is to explore the explanatory limits of both the economic and institutional arrangements in which poverty is chronic and increasing. The second is to look beyond the limitations for other causal mechanisms. If we observe that a deepening of neoliberal principles in Mexico and

particularly in Mexico City (and elsewhere in the world) since the 1980s has been accompanied up to the present time by more deeply entrenched and complex forms of poverty (Townsend 1993; Chossudovsky 1997), then one can draw the conclusion that neoliberalism fails to live up to its widely touted promises of increases in both wealth and welfare (Stiglitz 2007; Bello 2013). This dissertation is premised on the position that insofar as neoliberal principles fail to provide economic wellbeing of the population at large, then its claims as a legitimate development approach are false. There are enough of Karl Popper's 'black swans' to suggest that neoliberal economic growth should be challenged at its core as to whether it is the most desirable growth model, despite its widespread acceptance and implementation by governments and international institutions (Popper 1985).

Thus, by expanding the radar, this work is situated in the literature which maintains that neoliberalism is not a value-free functionalist mechanism for promoting growth, but is intricately embedded in a given social and political context (Harvey 2005; McMichael 2011). Put succinctly, neoliberalism cannot exist on its own and cannot serve as a model of cooperation and development without the social and political actors and processes, which give it shape. Going beyond the idea that neoliberalism is embedded differently in different state or institutional contexts (Evans 1995), neoliberalism itself must be re-conceptualized fundamentally as a social and political practice driven by certain preferences for how society should be organized (Harvey 2007; Gill 2002). This, in turn, means that the predictive and explanatory power of neoliberal claims must be challenged and re-oriented into a model of understanding, the assumptions about what constitutes relevant factors in promoting growth and cooperation must be questioned, and an examination of the nature of interactions between a broader range of actors and processes must be allowed. Within this broader range, the political and social interests of the poor may play a role. The possibility thus emerges of 'elevating' the theoretical relevance of local and lived experiences of the poor to the macro-level to enhance global understandings.

Solving this conceptual problem ties directly into solving a practical problem, that of using new understandings of poverty to find new ways of solving the problem of poverty. On a material level, insofar as it can be shown that the principles and policies of neoliberalism create material and administrative obstacles to reducing certain forms of poverty (Cornia 1987; Bello et al 1994), then it makes clear that new policies for global to local cooperation need to be explored and implemented. Through a social and political lens, we can observe how globally motivated incentives and interests among a range of actors are shaped by neoliberal transformations. In seeking to enhance global competition, state and city leaders match their

interests to those of the domestic and global economic elite, undermining the potential for building stronger bonds to their citizens. This could reinforce or intensify economic, social and political inequality for lower wage groups and inhibit them from participating in processes of urban development. However, by recognizing how new ideational and associational opportunities for political integration emerge from these vacuums and taking account of the ideas and discourse emerging from them, we increase the possibility of finding more successful routes to addressing poverty according to not only economic, but also social and political rights.

As will be seen in Chapter 2 (section 2.4), the evolution of understandings about poverty will be discussed. Here, reflecting the multi-scalar context, I provide the definition that serves as a backdrop for the analysis in this dissertation. The definition builds on new knowledge about the social and relational dimensions of poverty (Chambers 1997; Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2000; Hulme and Shepard 2003; Hickey 2005; Harriss-White 2006; Narayan et al 2009). As such, for this dissertation, poverty is understood as sub-standard living conditions that are caused by a lack of social and political power to directly change one's own circumstances. Moreover, the causes themselves – as will be explored throughout the dissertation – also become part of the definition. To put it differently, the definition used here draws very much on the idea that poverty is a denial of the 'freedom to be and do' (Harriss-White 2006, quoting Sen 1999 and Nussbaum 2000), but requires that the social and political phenomena which deny such freedoms are part of the definition as well. In this way, the dissertation agrees with the aspirations within the social sciences to move beyond parsimonious explanations and to embrace theoretical complexity (King et al 1994). As poverty is situated in a complex social and political setting, the definition is necessarily complex as well.

1.3 Contributions to knowledge

This dissertation seeks to contribute to knowledge in four ways. Each of these accounts below will be elaborated and situated in existing literature in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, and later discussed in Chapter 7. In light of the limitations of neoliberalism for adequately addressing the economic, social and political reality of poverty (section 1.2), this dissertation situates neoliberal development principles into a social and political framework to offer new understandings about it. It thus addresses local experiences of poverty to highlight how social and political power relations are grounded in international and global politics. It likewise adds voice to the normative observations in the literature of traditional International Relations (IR) and more contemporary International Political Economy (IPE), henceforth IR/IPE, that the

theoretical boundaries of these fields limit the ability to generate new knowledge about some of the world's most pressing problems, including poverty (Tooze and Murphy 1996). In making global and international claims, while simultaneously ignoring up to 75 percent of states and 85 percent of the global population in its academic output (Saurin 1996), this disciplinary neglect of the poor must be redressed. To do so, this dissertation develops an interdisciplinary theoretical framework and methodological approach which draws in and endows analytical relevance to actors and processes at different levels, with specific attention to groups and processes often neglected by macro and meso-level IPE theories. As part of this, it seeks to include a distinctly political interpretation of urban poverty which allows for a better understanding of the multi-scalar power relations which sustain it.

Firstly, this research contributes to this gap by bringing Neo-Gramscian critical international relations theory into the field of International Development Studies, demonstrating that it provides an essential framework to develop new ways in which poverty can be analysed. Situating poverty within Neo-Gramscian conceptualizations of state/society complexes and social forces, it will be historically analysed as the outcome of multi-scalar unequal political and social relations (Cox 1981). Key to the Coxian Neo-Gramscian approach is the ability to understand societal change, and this implies for this research that urban poverty can be viewed as a process. Applications of an International Relations approach to poverty are few and far between with Ruckert's Neo-Gramscian analysis of international financial institutions (2009), and Biekart's (1999) extensive and invaluable study of civil society in Latin America providing possibly the best examples. Through the lens of Biekart it becomes conceivable to constitute the poor as a social force in itself by recognizing their attempts to impact political decision-making at both the local and national level and facilitates the unlikely claim of this research that the poor are relevant to international politics. To the extent that this can be shown, this research forces the lens of International Relations to widen.

Secondly, it contributes to a gap in knowledge in the field of International Development Studies (IDS) regarding what can be known about poverty if we focus on its politics, as well as on the political agency of the poor themselves. Inspired by calls to, first, make the study of development and poverty as a process more interdisciplinary (Harriss-White 2006; Harriss 2007; Krishna 2004; Narayan et al 2009); second, more aware of the pervasive logic of capitalism that penetrates every aspect of life (Harriss-White 2006); and third, more informed by social and political analysis (Hickey 2005), it becomes obvious that poverty itself must be theorized differently. By subjecting an analysis of poverty to multi-scalar political and social relations through the Neo-Gramscian framework, it becomes not just possible but necessary to

constitute the poor as political subjects, with political agency and political objectives. This research thus moves beyond approaches in IDS that address the politics of the poor through concepts such as social capital (Narayan et al 2009) and empowerment (Narayan 2002; Moser and Moser 2005). While both of which are valuable contributions, they are also limited in scale and in capturing the political nature of poverty. It conceptualizes the political agency of the poor in terms of the ideas, discourses and actions that are taken as they engage and struggle in both formal and informal political processes, and – crucially – as they are defined and shaped in response to economic and political shifts linked to urban, national and international processes. At the same time, this research contributes to IDS in another way. By extending the reach of critical international relations theory and situating poverty within a multi-scalar political and social analysis, this research may add to the relational analysis of poverty and development that is currently being explored in new paradigms of inclusive development (Gupta et al 2015; Hickey et al 2015) with particular relevance to its relational components. It offers the argument that the relational aspect of inclusive development can be strengthened by Neo-Gramscian theory.

Thirdly, this research may also contribute to global city literature in two ways. While developing world cities are increasingly included in global city categorizations (OECD 2006; AT Kearney 2008), there is less academic work on how global city analyses can be applied in developing world contexts. In particular, that the 'globalizing cities' (Marcuse and Kempen 2000) of developing countries have been drawn into the global economy differently than developed world cities is taken into account in this study, as well as the more extreme development challenges that traditional global cities do not experience. However, rather than only focusing on the development challenges, it falls in line with Robinson's (2002) observation that urban studies have tended to breakdown developing world cities into specific issue areas or needed development interventions. The literature has not sufficiently addressed urban problem of developing countries, particularly poverty, as structural and relational in nature, but in terms of the lack of particular services or support that developing world cities can provide. Through a global city lens, the structural explanations for urban poverty can be observed and offer a container for further exploring the relational aspects.

At the same time, this study adds to global city literature regarding the ways in which political agency and participation of the urban poor are transformed in the context of top-down urban economic development policies. Global city literature has sparked interest in the way transnational relations between cities emerge (Sassen 2001; Castells 1998; Taylor et al 2008, 2012) and in the corresponding patterns which can be observed at the city level, including the

squeezing out the middle class, insecurity of low-wage work forces, growing polarity between the wealthy and poor, and increasing low-income migration (Sassen 2001; Fainstein 2001). While significant attention is thus given to the changing economic opportunity structures and the material conditions of poverty in the context of deepening neoliberalism in global cities, less has been explored regarding how those who are marginalized by global city ambitions articulate new political demands and act on them. In the same vein, this research deepens global city literature by linking it up with concepts such as political agency (section 2.4.3), civil society (section 2.3), and political participation (section 2.5.2) in order to explore how social and political rights are embraced and articulated among the urban poor in a changing urban setting.

Finally, this dissertation contributes to growing interest in the complex relationship between deepening neoliberal transformations and newly claimed spaces for democratic challenges – something different than enhanced democratic participation, but a significant phenomenon, nonetheless (Gaventa 2006; Hickey and Mohan 2005). There is little in neoliberal modelling that would have predicted the nature of social and political responses to the disciplining features of neoliberalism. While the increase in the number of non-governmental organizations to fill the space left by state retraction in the provision of services is more easily understood (Lewis and Kanji 2009), this is less so for the way in which diverse individuals and groups squeezed out by market discipline have discovered each other's causes and issues, voiced new ideas, and collaborated around both their intellectual and activist resources to form new social movements (O'Brien 2000; Stahler-Sholk et al 2007).

1.4 Selecting the research location

The decision to locate this research in Mexico City was based on a number of factors. As a global city, it provides a context or 'container' for viewing multi-scalar processes and interactions leading to both wealth and impoverishment at the urban level. As an important political and economic center in Latin America and developing countries more generally, it likewise provides an appropriate context for viewing how a city of the developing world has moved into a global city category, as well as the social, political and economic implications of this transition. In terms of its historical relevance, the economic distress of Mexico had caught the attention of the world beginning with the debt crisis in 1982, and then again with the peso crisis in 1994-1995. While perched on the cusp of sustained economic growth, the country fell into crisis twice, contributing to a steady rise in poverty levels throughout the country, but particularly in the 'mega-city' of Mexico City, where poverty increased from 52.5 percent of

the population in 1981 to 71.2 percent in 1996, just following the 1994 peso crisis (Boltvinik 2002a). Secondly, even as Mexico was characterized as a developing country, and was held firmly in the grip of World Bank and International Monetary Fund prerogatives into the 1990s, two parallel phenomena were taking place. On one hand, Mexico joined the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada, a step which promised to increase the economic growth potential of Mexico (Nafta at 20 2014). Secondly, despite the economic crises, Mexico City began to appear on the radar of global city analysts because of its growing transnational economic linkages and wealth consolidation driven by a new service sector and heavy manufacturing industries (Parnreiter 2003). This seeming contradiction raises interest not only in the polarity in wealth distribution between Mexico City and the rest of the country, but also within the city itself.

A third phenomena was that as Mexico was undergoing profound transformations in favor of neoliberal development policies, a new discourse of democratization and participation was also coming to the fore (Smith 2005; Steifel and Wolfe 1994; Klesner 2007), with particular fervor in Mexico City (Vargas Solano 2014; Sánchez Mejorada and Álvarez Enríquez 2003). This newly emerging discourse was in line with a more general trend favoring democratization and decentralization of government across Latin America in the 1990s. The processes and outcomes of these democratizing trends have been viewed in different ways. On one hand, it has represented a favorable and feasible movement toward enhancing citizen participation and rights (Cornwall and Coelho 2007). On the other, it continues to be seen as only a nominal and technical shift in representation in Latin America, but not one that would substantially confront the patronage- clientelist practices present throughout the continent (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999; Weyland 2004). The proliferation of participatory budgeting was also perceived as an important step toward challenging existing power relations over the distribution of resources (Goldfrank 2007; Novy and Leubolt 2005). However, over time this had also come to be viewed as insufficient to contribute to genuine change (Cabannes 2004) and must be reconsidered in terms of how it actually promotes empowerment (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014).

These transitions are further reflected upon in the literature at different levels. Some argue that both the neoliberal and democratic transitions in Latin America required the active participation of civil society, stimulating acquiescence and resistance (Weyland 2004; Roberts 1995; Gwynne and Cristobal 2014). Further highlighting such tensions with specific attention to Mexico, it has been argued that rather than free market success, neoliberal policies required new forms of market regulation. Within Mexico, this allowed for power holders to consolidate

their authority through new regulatory methods and new forms of political support (Snyder 1999). In this way, democratization is seen as situated and mitigated by a political economy context, shaped by special multi-scalar interests. At another level of analysis, it has been shown how the power held by state governors in Mexico also changed with the decentralization of federal government authority (Rodríguez 2003). This gave governors new opportunities to organize political groups around their interests, but also build new ties with civil society. In a comparative urban study across continents, including Latin America, Heller and Evans (2010) apply Charles Tilly's conceptualizations of citizenship (1995) and inequality (1999) to highlight that even as democratic principles became more firmly anchored in a society, the quality of the democratic experience is mitigated by existing political relations and notions of citizenship. Thus, the experience and quality of democratic transitions at the local level were and are bound to a complex path mitigated by existing relationships between the state and society.

With a focus on Mexico City, the political and civic life of urban residents captured scholarly attention leading up to and following the democratic victory in the city with the election of its first independent mayor from an opposition party in 1997 (Chapter 3). Around this time, expectations for long-term change among urban residents were high, low-income groups felt particularly empowered, and there was momentum for enhanced participation coming from both the municipal government and civil society. Nonetheless, such momentum took place alongside the persistence of high levels of poverty and increases in precarious living conditions in the peripheries of the city (Boltvinik 2002a). As such, a good deal of scholarly observations focused on the activity of city-based groups to address different issue areas that overlapped with varying conditions of poverty, including informal market participation (Cross 1998, Crossa 2009), gender (Stephen 1996; Fraizer and Cohen 2003; Bliss 2001), and housing (Eckstein 1989; Monkkonen 2012). While the content of these studies are diverse, they generally emphasize access to a range of resources within the city, and highlight local level solutions to urban development problems. Beyond this, some scholarly attention offering important new insights moved beyond the issue areas themselves, and toward the changing institutions and ideas about political access and power through which urban residents were able to have a voice regarding those issues (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Davis 2014).

Two events in Mexico City's contemporary history are marked as being important moments when the concept and role of citizen participation in setting the political agenda of the city became paramount. The first wave, of a strong leftist leaning, followed the student massacre in Mexico City in 1968 during which several hundred protestors were murdered by government-

sanctioned order (Davis 2014; Frazier and Cohen 2003). The second wave followed the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, which provoked many neighbourhoods and communities to organize against the profound neglect that the government displayed as citizens tried to re-build (Eckstein 1989; Arzaluz Solano 2002, Ramírez Sáiz 2005). As citizen participation gathered momentum, umbrella organizations such as the National Coordinator of the Urban Popular Movement (CONAMUP) drew in smaller groups to try to articulate a more coherent political posture. This dissertation will offer new insights on how changing politics and new incentives for democratic participation among the urban poor emerged by giving particular attention to the multi-scalar political and economic context in which it was situated.

It is within the spirit of these different literatures and historical developments that my own interest has been anchored. From the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, globally driven neoliberal transformations were contributing to state transformation and the achievement of second-tier global city status. Meanwhile, increases in urban poverty alongside some of the most energetic efforts toward democratic transformation were taking place in Mexico City. Thus, the opportunity was presented to situate these transformations in an historical multi-scalar context, given the global and international presence in the city. While the literature addressing changing civil society and urban political activity in Mexico City has drawn attention to how the changing role and ideas of state or municipal leaders has impacted participation (Hellman 1994; Davis and Alvarado 2004), there is less on how the political agency of the poor themselves is seen as changing in relation to changing global hegemonic principles in Mexico (Morton 2003). Eager to address the concern raised above about the limited reach of International Relations theory, working with existing literature supplemented by fieldwork allows for a retrospective vantage point to observe how the political lives of the urban poor are changed by mechanisms far beyond the city, and how they may play a role in mitigating such changes. In other words, Mexico City offered a location to view the poor as objects and subjects of global politics.

1.5 Research questions

The key objective of this dissertation is to understand how urban poverty can be contextualized and theorized in the context of neoliberal global economic restructuring. It seeks to analyze multi-scalar linkages between global economic changes, top-down political decision-making, and the existence and resistance of poverty at the local level. As explained above, in order to build these linkages, economic restructuring is viewed in terms of the political and power interests that have motivated the kind of economic changes that have taken

place in Mexico and Mexico City. Through this political lens, it becomes possible to explore how the poor respond politically, both in terms of the forms of agency their political actions take and in the demands they make. By paying attention to the discourse of the poor in the changing global economic environment, it becomes possible to understand the multi-scalar politics of poverty more concretely. As such, the main research question for this dissertation is: How have changing relations between the state and society under conditions of neoliberal transformations re-shaped the context and opportunities for political agency and participation among the urban poor in the globalizing city of Mexico City?

This main research question is supported by four sub-questions, the discussion of each is located in the forthcoming chapters. They are:

1. How has Mexico integrated global neoliberal principles into its national development strategies and what are the political and social implications? (Chapter 3)
2. How has Mexico City become a global city? How has it become more integrated into the global economy along with the deepening of neoliberal policies in Mexico and how has this impacted the urban economy, wages, and poverty levels? (Chapter 4)
3. How has the political landscape of Mexico City changed along with its economic transformations and what has this meant for the poor? (Chapter 5)
4. How have low wage groups in Mexico City taken political action to respond to the changing urban economic and political structure? (Chapter 6)

1.6 Epistemology and methodology

As will be elaborated in chapter 2, this research is based on an epistemology of critical emancipatory theory (Cox 1981). Such an approach is based on a subjective interpretation of reality. This means that, for different groups or individuals, reality is linked up to their respective lived experiences, education and influences. If we accept this interpretation, and that reality is not an external given, it becomes possible to imagine alternate realities that may change the nature of relations among and between members of any given society. Furthermore, if we accept this interpretation, and recognize unjust inequalities or other conditions in society, we must address them according to the quality of the relations that sustain such inequalities and seek to transform them. In this vein, this research has required a critical approach because it ultimately seeks to find new ways of addressing poverty, based on the fundamental assumption that the current neoliberal era does not provide the logic, the institutional design, nor the policies that are capable of addressing the roots of poverty. Perhaps this may eventually contribute to some form of poverty alleviation.

As such, critical emancipatory theory allows the researcher to question not just the limitations of policy or procedure, but to interrogate the overall system in which inequalities and power relations are embedded and contribute to the ongoing persistence of poverty. Moreover, critical theory requires the same interrogation of the existing theories themselves, which inform politics and policy-making, to unveil the ways in which theory itself serves certain interests and silences others. To the extent the theory can be challenged, so can the real life applications on which they are based. The emancipatory goals tied to critical theory speak to the social justice dimension of the social sciences. To the extent that old theories can be overturned and new theories can be introduced, it should be the goal of the researcher to seek the emancipatory potential of marginalized and oppressed groups in society.

A qualitative methodology has been used to support this. In seeking to primarily understand the phenomena that lead to the political inclusion or exclusion of the poor, a qualitative methodology thus allows for a relational understanding of poverty outcomes. In line with seeking new understandings that challenge existing structural relations, this research has paid particular attention to multi-scalar social forces (see Chapter 3), in how they implement, support or challenge existing economic and political structures. Of key importance is to understand the motivations for action of different social forces, whether they, for instance, promote the status quo in power relations or challenge them. In this way, it becomes possible to understand how different social forces take each other into account, if at all, and confront each other in the political and social realm. It is by understanding the nature of relations between different social forces that the relational approach is established.

1.7 Methods and fieldwork

1.7.1 Literature review

Because this is an historical study, much of this dissertation is grounded in the rich offerings of secondary sources and existing literature. These secondary sources have served different purposes and have been both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The specific application of secondary sources is explained in the specific chapters that follow. In general, I have used secondary sources to elaborate on the historical development of economic transformations in Mexico (Chapter 3), and to describe the shifts towards global city status (Chapter 4). Moreover, at the level of the city government, secondary sources have been used to provide biographical information about key leaders, to give an account of the developments within political parties, to chart the historical development of the urban government, and to analyze changing city-based political discourse addressing poverty (Chapter 5). I have also used

secondary literature including grey literature to analyze the historical emergence of social movements and civil society activity in the city at the time of research (Chapter 6).

1.7.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this study was carried out in two research trips in 2002 and 2003, totaling approximately 16 weeks in length. The purpose was to better understand how different actors experienced and interpreted the changing political and economic spectrum of Mexico City. The field research time in Mexico City can be easily divided into two clear blocks. The first block from mid-September to December 2002 was largely exploratory in nature, as I improved my Spanish and made initial contacts in the field. In the second block, in the first months of 2003, I carried out the actual fieldwork by collecting primary and secondary data, and conducting interviews. Most of the research took place in the Federal District, while some took place further out in the greater metropolitan area of Mexico City (or *Zona Metropolitana de Ciudad de México,* ZMCM*)*, which expands into the state of Mexico. As a brief explanation, the term 'Federal District' (or *Distrito Federal,* D.F.) is often used interchangeably with Mexico City, though they are not one in the same. While the official jurisdiction of the urban government of Mexico City is over the territory of the Federal District, the influence of the urban government can be felt in the peripheral areas and vice versa as low-income individuals in particular work and live in different part of the ZMCM.

1.7.3 Units of analysis

In addition to carrying out an historical and descriptive analysis of the political and economic context in Mexico and Mexico City, the field research has focused on two main units of analysis. First are the civil society organizations among or representing the poor. Such organizations inherently have a political perspective and engage in various forms of politics. Given this natural inclusion in the political process, and the ease of access to speak with them, they contributed very much to the findings of this research. It was also very important to speak to those groups and individuals among the poor who are politically active in order to ascertain their own interpretation of their relations with other sectors of society, and their interpretations of poverty in a social and political context. The second unit of analysis was the city government and government representatives actively participating in addressing concerns of the poor, developing discourse about the poor, and attempting to formulate new policy interventions that affect the poor in different ways. While official documentation often biased the successes of the city government in addressing the needs of the poor, interviews and

newspaper articles were helpful in explaining the conflicts and obstacles in effectively addressing poverty.

1.7.4 Primary sources

Primary sources have included documentation (including official statistics, explanations of development plans, and minutes from meetings) from municipal government offices of Mexico City, the National Council for Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL), and other smaller research institutes. Primary information also included observation of public hearings on issues pertaining to urban poverty, and newspaper coverage to provide alternative views on government policies. Individual community based organizations among the poor also provided documentation which described their activities and highlighted the ways in which they reach out to the poor in the community. In addition, newspaper articles covering the activities of community based organizations, as well as observations at both regularly scheduled meetings and public protests helped give a broader picture of the politics of poverty.

1.7.5 Interviews

Interviews played an important role in the findings of Chapter 6. An important objective was to explore the ways in which different ideas about urban poverty and ways of challenging it have taken shape among different sets of actors. Interviews and more casual discussions among those active in these areas have helped to define the discourses that have emerged. Official interviews were carried out with 24 individuals from community based organizations which were created by or represented different groups among the urban poor (Chapter 6), academic institutions, and the city government. The majority of interviews were carried out among the community based organizations. For these interviews, I travelled to their office locations to get a sense of the social and economic environment in which the organizations were based, the facilities and size of the organizations, and the daily activities. (See Appendix 1 and 2 for the list of interviews and the interview questions).

On most occasions, I spent at least half a day at each of the organizations. During the visits, I carried out the ‘official’ interviews lasting approximately an hour, and this often turned into casual conversations with other individuals also working at the office, a small tour, and at times a tour around the neighborhood. The majority of the community based organizations I visited were located in the Federal District and were selected because their positioning in the city as organizations struggling to confront poverty or factors associated with poverty, including labour conditions, peace and sustainability, democratic representation, gender, as

well as two organizations seeking alternative modes for social and economic organization within the city. A few organizations were located outside of the Federal District, and I included their views in the research results even though they fall out of the immediate jurisdiction of the city government and, thus, the 'official' political reach of the city government. However at the suggestion of city-based contacts, it was worth exploring the solidarity between groups in the center and in the periphery of the metropolitan Mexico City. Sharing concerns about issues such as rights and representation, though within different immediate contexts, revealed a broader relevance of the ideas expressed within the Federal District.

1.7.6 Data analysis

The primary goal of data collection was to determine how and why political agency among the poor changed in response to deepening neoliberal processes at the urban level. As such, I looked for evidence that would explain these changes in my primary and secondary data. Thus, the overall method for analyzing the data was by content coding from all primary and secondary sources to eventually categorize findings into two overarching categories. In line with the two units of analysis, these overarching categories include *formal* changes in the political landscape of Mexico City, which draws on information collected at the level of the city government; and *informal* changes in political agency which takes into account information collected on the activities of community-based organizations (See Conceptual Framework in Chapter 3). While the units of analysis and data analysis are somewhat local in nature, in both cases changes are viewed and analyzed in terms of the global and national pressures and incentives that have filtered down into the urban context. As such, the locally collected and organized data is viewed in relation to these broader transformations. Moreover, in the category of formal changes, three additional sub-categories emerged through an exploratory approach which included discourse on participation, the nature of representation, and the role of party politics. These categories highlight how changing top-down economic and political transformations have translated into the urban political context. In the category of informal changes, the two sub-categories include discourse on political agency and forms of political participation. Among the many ways that this data could be organized, I hoped to create some consistency between the processes of formal changes and informal agency, and which would capture the nature of political responses of the poor active in or represented by community-based organizations.

1.8 Structure of dissertation

The dissertation is structured in the following way. Following this introduction chapter (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 is divided into two parts. The first provides an in-depth discussion about the epistemological and ontological limitations of International Relations/International Political Economy (IR/IPE) for understanding poverty and argues that it is both relevant and possible to expand the range of IR/IPE analyses to provide explanations and understanding about the existence of poverty on a global scale, the social and economic power structures that cause poverty, and the role that the poor play in international politics. The second part provides the theoretical framework in which the epistemological and ontological challenges can be addressed. It does this by introducing the urban context in which global and local dynamics overlap. The main objective is to develop a multi-scalar and relational framework which allows poverty to be viewed through an international lens and as a dynamic political and social outcome.

Chapter 3 ties the global to the national by providing an historical account of political and economic changes that have taken place in Mexico as the country has become more deeply entrenched in global neoliberal transformations since the 1980s. In line with Cox's Neo-Gramscian model (1981), it interprets the state not as an autonomous entity acting on its own interests in the global arena, but as a complex of state-society relations. This particularly social interpretation of the state allows for a deeper understanding of how the state is present in other social forces, and how those social forces contribute to shaping the nation. It explores the relations between the state and business, and the state and labour. These changing relations have facilitated the entrance of new actors to the political arena during the period of economic and political reforms, which will be further explored in Chapter 6.

Chapters 4 and 5 turn to the urban level. Chapter 4 is descriptive in nature. It considers the main drivers behind the changing status of Mexico City from a mega-city of the developing world to its current global city status. It does this by looking at the way in which national development goals favoured the political and economic centralization of Mexico City to the rest of the country and how this translated into its increasing global connectivity. More importantly, however, this chapter looks at the implications of achieving global city status to the rest of the city by providing data on wages, un- and under-employment, and poverty – all of which worsened as the city enjoyed overall economic gains. In this context, Chapter 5 turns to the city government of Mexico City to explore how urban political goals have changed in reaction to the increasing marginalization of the poor. It specifically addresses participation

and representation of the poor, and how the deepening of neoliberal urban development has both undermined material opportunities for the poor, but – in compensating for this – motivated the city government to enhance their political participation and agency.

This irony will be further explored in Chapter 6, where the participation and political agency of the urban poor will be explored. It makes three points in regard to their discursive and non-discursive responses to political and economic structural changes. The first is that from the perspective of the organizations representing the poor, the key driver of poverty is not limited to failures at the city level, but through the globally driven logic of neoliberalism. The second is that these observations, along with the changing rhetoric among urban city leaders, has motivated community based organizations of the poor to articulate new forms of participation and agency that are coherent with multi-scalar sources of poverty. Thirdly, in re-conceptualizing their agency in this multi-scalar context, they illuminate a particularly political dimension to their poverty by tying it to the vested interests of urban, national and global elite, rather than to a lack of specific services or provisions.

Chapter 7 will recapitulate the findings of the preceding chapters and show how they have answered each of the sub-questions, and in turn answer the main research question. In addition to this, it will discuss the findings in light of the theoretical framework and explore to what extent it has succeeded in conveying both a multi-scalar and relational interpretation of poverty, based on its political conceptualization. To do this, it will summarize the Mexican experience, providing a clear multi-scalar account to show how agency among the urban poor is situated in broader societal change. The chapter will also reflect on the relevance of looking at urban poverty within the shifting development paradigm we see today since the inception of the Sustainable Development Goals, and consider how this research may provide useful information in this regard. It will close with recommendations for further research based on more abstract reflections on the research results.

2. Ontologies, Epistemologies and Theories of International Relations and Poverty

2.1 Introduction

This chapter develops the theoretical framework for analysing the multi-scalar politics of urban poverty. The theoretical framework will try to overcome limitations in International Relations (IR) to sufficiently understand the role of agency at various scales in impacting the direction of political and economic transformations. I develop the claim that IR approaches can and should extend their ontological, epistemological and theoretical gaze to not only reach the poor, but should also include interpretations of their actions (the poor) in making claims about international relations and politics. I make this possible by theoretically linking international and national politics to a globalizing city context, a space in which multiple layers of politics, economics and decision-making come together (see Chapter 5). In this way, I am moving toward an operationalization of civil society or community-based political engagement among lower-income urban residents within a context of international, national and urban politics.

I will use Neo-Gramscianism (Cox 1981) to carve out an overarching framework. The key opportunity allowed by this theoretical framework is to explore how multi-scalar interacting social relations change in the specific context of deepening of neoliberalism. By linking up an analysis of changing state/society relations with micro-level theory on political agency, I want to add what shifting state interests, filtered through the urban environment, mean for the political agency of the urban poor. These combined approaches allow me, first, to make claims about the nature of the changing relationship of civil society with the state and other social forces. Second, within the realm of civil society, it allows me to explore if civil society actors are able to engage in social resistance that will enact hoped for changes, or if they are subject to neoliberal and/or state discipline and constraint. Third, I will be able to judge if and how their expressions of political engagement are shaped by the historical transformations.

The chapter is organized in the following way. Section 2.2 first raises the question of why the field of International Relations (IR) should expand its reach in order to eventually explore the political relations of poverty. It introduces a broad range of theories in IR to show how the potential for studying poverty is partially emerging from within the field. It follows this by demonstrating how the field of IR can conceptualize poverty by discussing the ontological and epistemological limitations of the field and how they can be overcome. Section 2.3 then

focuses on Neo-Gramscian International Relations theory to provide the analytical framework in which the multi-scalar analysis of the dissertation will take place. Section 2.4 then turns to the ontologies of International Development Studies (IDS). It provides an historical account of how thinking in IDS has changed over time, and then focuses more specifically on changing conceptualizations of poverty within the field. These changes will be considered in line with approaches to human agency in order to emphasize the social and political dimension of poverty. Section 2.5 provides the 'container' for the study. It explains the globalizing city approach and how the multi-scalar analysis is best situated in this geographical context. Finally, section 2.6 provides the conceptual framework for understanding how the multi-scalar analysis will come together.

2.2 Ontologies of International Relations

2.2.1 Why should we look at poverty from the perspective of IR?

The ontological point of departure for this dissertation is the shared concern within International Relations that the field is too exclusive in terms of its subject, its audience, and its goals to deal with a range of problems facing the world today, including poverty. It attempts to redress the discomfort among some IR scholars that traditional approaches in the field, as well as some of its critical development, remain too conservative and exclusive in scope relative to the claims that are made about the international or global state of affairs. Included in this are critiques coming from within the field that through its main research methodologies, strategies and goals, the nature of the field is increasingly de-politicized (Edkins 1999; Walker 1993). Rather than grapple with the political and power relations between states, there is a strong tendency to break down their interactions to strategic calculations for achieving material gain (Mearshimer 1994; Snyder 2002; Toft 2005). In this way, it is argued that the field has lost touch with its most basic roots (Linklater 1998; Williams 2004) and, in turn, fails to understand the politicized nature of its central concern of war and peace, as well as of power and oppression (Frost 1996; Gruffydd Jones 2005).

Additionally, limitations in the actual subject matter and failure to understand the human condition in international politics are also being addressed. For instance, a powerful argument has been made to integrate human rights into international relations theory (Forysthe 2012), while some have questioned the privileging of state security over human security (Paris 2001; Sheehan 2005). Others argue that IR has not successfully transformed to engage with changing world events such as the sudden increase in the number of states following decolonization (Jackson 1993; Gruffydd Jones 2005), the challenges that those new states have faced in

attempting to replicate European statehood (Ayoob 2002), and massive migration flows between states during times of conflict (Adamson 2006). As such, there is interest within various strands of IR to go beyond its traditional boundaries and engage with new subjects that are relevant not just to its traditional object of research, the state, but to the world population (Eagleton-Pierce 2011).

Some important contributions have been made to the field of International Relations which accommodate attention to poverty. Starting with perhaps the oldest and most traditional school of thought in IR, traditional realism, as well its contemporary cousin, neorealism, there is a simple argument that there is no room for the consideration of poverty. With focus on the way in which states interact under conditions of anarchy, no attention is given to the populations of those states, which concomitantly precludes attention going towards the most disadvantaged populations. In another broad and traditional approach in IR, liberal and neoliberal views do not address the hardship associated with poverty, but it can be argued that there is an implicit assumption about the reality of poverty. In short, inherent in (neo)liberal approaches is an aim toward cooperation and enhancing overall welfare.

Additionally, on-going debates on ethics, equality or progress are also wrapped into liberal discourse (Burchill 2013). While expressing a concern with overcoming poverty by achieving universal welfare, it is not suitable as a theoretical approach. In the traditional liberal view is the notion that individuals are morally inclined to pursue their own self-interest, and in doing so will also promote the interests of society as a whole (Burchill 2013). In the neoliberal view, while pursuing one's own interest loses its moral imperative, it is abstracted into the realm of rational calculation through which individuals seek to achieve their preferences (Nye 1988; Hay 2004). Whether morally or rationally driven, there is a deeply entrenched conviction in both about the universal nature of human kind and an expectation about what constitutes normal human behaviour. Since it is unlikely that anyone would choose to be poor, one must conclude while looking through a liberal/neoliberal lens that the condition of poverty is the result of choosing behaviours that are not driven by a rational interpretation of how to progress in one's society. In this way, liberal theories do not make direct claims about the causes of poverty, but by limiting their gaze to the rational models through which progress can be attained, implicitly suggest that poverty is the result of not successfully conforming to such models. The reasons for why one might not be able to successfully conform fall out of the scope.

Much has been said about the introduction of World Systems Theory and Dependency Theory into the field of IR as providing a lens through which inequalities between states can be interpreted (Hoffman 1987). Both of these approaches are also central to the field of International Development Studies and have made it impossible for a wider range of IR theorists to ignore questions about how and why some states remain more economically powerful than others and the tensions due to such inequalities (So 1990). Informed by a Marxist critique of capitalism, the well-known assertion of these theories is that poorer and weaker states are made so not through their own incompetence or lack of resources, but rather through their position in the world system and the active exploitation and ex-traction of their resources by richer countries (Frank 1996).With these theories, a deep relational analysis between states was introduced to the field of IR which has also made it possible to critique not only the current neoliberal manifestation of global capitalism, but observed inequalities in global neoliberal institutional arrangements as well (Seligson 1998). As World Systems and Dependency theories focus on the levels of state and world system, they are not able to inform a social or political analysis of poverty among particular populations. Nonetheless, the political spirit behind them provides impetus to do so.

The entrance of postcolonial and feminist scholarship to the field of IR has brought with it new ways of interpreting relationships not only between states, but between the actors within them. Post-colonialism offers significant opportunities for exploring the driving forces and experiences of poverty in formerly colonized territories. It has claimed its place among IR theories by arguing that contradictions of capitalism are what necessitated and drove the colonial project, carrying capitalism from one part of the world to another, and this was in turn made possible by the role of ideas in international relations (Loomba 2015). In the case of colonization, these ideas took the shape of a sense of superiority from the West toward the rest of the world defined through race, gender and class (Geeta and Nair 2013). Through this lens, newly informed explorations of oppression and inequality have brought attention to groups and even individuals that have otherwise been ignored by macro-level theories, thereby increasing the potential for making them subjects of international relations, along with states and the international system.

Finally, among the many variations of feminist IR theories, a common ground between them is that they have expanded the field of IR in a way that is relevant for studying poverty and inequality by the questions it asks about what or whom should the subject of IR theorizing beyond the state (Tickner 1992; Enloe 2014). Feminist IR theories problematize the notion of statehood in terms of its patriarchal form and the demands it makes on its subject based on a

partial view of human nature, while re-conceptualizing the notion of power in such a way that it can be claimed by otherwise subjugated groups (Tickner 1992). Crucially, both post-colonialism and feminist IR approaches have transformed the subject matter of IR and provide compelling reasons for including previously unnoticed, ignored, or marginalized groups in analysing international politics.

2.2.2 Ontologies and epistemologies of International Relations

In bringing change to the subject matter of IR, the last two approaches mentioned above have focused attention on how the ontologies and epistemologies of IR can be explored. In general, a broad range of critical IR theories, including the postcolonial and feminist approaches, have taken up this task. Though critical IR approaches vary, they are often lumped together under one of several different names: critical theory, constitutive theory, normative theory, constructivist theory, post-positivist theory, or postmodern theory. Despite the variations in them, there are some key common threads to consolidate the critical orientation.

To begin, critical theorists challenge mainstream ontologies by arguing that the world is not a pre-existing given with laws and rules external to social interaction. Countering both the realist and liberal claims that there are features of an objective reality (for instance, an anarchical state system or universally shared norms, respectively) to which human kind must succumb, critical theorists maintain that the world is a social world (Wendt 1999), second, that social structures are determined through time and space (Wendt 1999), and third, any specific construction of world order comes into being according to the interests of the most powerful states and actors (Walker 1993). Thus, critical scholars assert that human beings endogenously create their social reality: they act, interact, make decisions, execute them and change (or maintain) the course of events. To explore their claims, the works of critical scholars illuminate how particular ideas have taken hold over time by human volition and likewise seek to ‘de-naturalize’ ideas and claims on the world which persist long enough to create the impression of being ‘given’ or natural (Ashley 1988). This is because, for them, undermining the potential for and understanding of change in an objectivist ontology is its most fundamental flaw.

Thus, the purpose of critical theorists to challenge mainstream ontology has to do with the problematic implications of objectivity which, in short, are detachment and neutrality. To the extent that an objective reality is accepted, the claims that can be made about it must also be objective and detached in nature requiring, in turn, no interaction with the subject matter itself. In this way, given the limitations of any human experience, observations are likely to be

incomplete, inaccurate, and distorted. As claims from international relations are meant, by the nature of the field, to extend globally, the likelihood of falsehood is possible. Secondly, an objective reality suggests that claims which are made about it are neutral in nature, and that they carry no power or weight beyond the force of their descriptions.

Rather, for critical theorists, this mask of objectivity and neutrality obscures both the powerful position of those accumulating information about reality and perpetuates assumptions about what is relevant social experience. Critical theorists argue that what a 'given' world or reality looks like closely resembles the world or reality in which the traditional academics live, and that scholars neglect to consider themselves and their identities as being shaped by their social realities. As most Western academics enjoy materially wealthier life styles, their own experiences do not offer them reason nor motivation to consider how the hardships faced in other countries are significant to relations established between states (Lapid 1989). As Durfee and Rosenau (1996) succinctly state, to the traditional IR/IPE academic, the lives of the poor are out of sight, and thus, out of mind. The corrective, in turn, is to highlight that 'the current ways of constituting the world and ourselves within it create and privilege certain kinds of actors […] and denigrate others.' (Frost 1998: 127).

Thus, an objectivist ontology allows for only limited knowledge to be generated about a given reality, in which the tasks of the traditional theorist are to observe and document patterns and regularities in societies and determine to what extent states and/or societies are functioning within the parameters of the accepted laws and rules. The epistemology on which traditional IR approaches are based – or, put otherwise – what can be known about international relations, are those phenomena which pertain to accepted or 'given' structures: the state, the condition of anarchy, and the functioning of the market. Theory building takes place according to these accepted structures which certainly provide crucial insights at those level of analyses, but can only make claims about the subject and level it addresses. For the critical theorist, especially one attempting to make sense out of global poverty, the concern is that such theory generation is exclusive in nature and fails to understand the reality of, as well as the relational dimension to, poverty and inequality. What is thus considered irrelevant to world politics fall off the radar of what can be known, and thus carry no weight in the way judgments are made about global politics, from either academic or policy-making circles. Even if omissions in knowledge generation are not a conscious rejection of either those attempting to develop understanding or currently marginalized realities, or of those who are living such marginalized realities, there is nonetheless a failure to notice their existence.

Finally, these broad challenges to the field of IR were brought succinctly together with a specific articulation of its purpose for the understanding of global poverty by Roger Tooze and Craig Murphy (1996). As this article served as one of the first inspirations for this research undertaking, it is perhaps appropriate to close this section with its argument. Narrowing in on the question of power, Tooze and Murphy have argued that power is the command over resources that matter in any particular world view. In this vein, by raising the notion of a politics of epistemology, they critique both the ontological and epistemological underpinnings that limit the conceptualization of power in mainstream theories to its association with wealth, weapons and elite networks through which knowledge about these relevant resources can be shared and protected. They provide the obvious explanation that the poor do not have access to these resources, and also that they are not able to contribute to knowledge about them. At the same time, they highlight several ways in which power among the poor can be observed if the criteria for what is important are changed.

Such forms of power range from the power to resist, the power to challenge and the power to create. In this way, they refer to 'disintegrative power' (Tooze and Murphy 1996: 699) as the power for individuals and groups to disrupt common practices by both non-participation or direct challenges. They also include 'expressive' or 'explosive' power to highlight the power of the poor to show their frustrations in ways, 'which exceed…the moral norms which ordinarily bind most members of society.' (Tooze and Murphy 1996: 699). The power of 'innovation' is also included (Tooze and Murphy 1996: 699), to highlight the ways in which their own experiences can lead them to imagine new forms of social organization. The purpose of this is to bring attention to the proactive behaviours of the poor. Nonetheless, many transactions among the poor are not characterized by the use of money, as an example, or their associative power may result in only small changes. The effect is that where the resources relevant to the daily lives of the poor are not considered to make much of a difference in global economic or political spheres, they are in turn neglected as potential sources for change. For Murphy and Tooze, this is a failure of International Relations academics to engage with the poor on terms they both understand be-cause of the perceived insignificant impact the poor have on the rest of world. Subsequently, it makes these scholars suspect to not engaging deeply enough with an epistemology based on the notion of power as resource, theoretical inconsistency, and social injustice.

In asking why IR should look at poverty, it has been shown that the theoretical evolution and shifting lenses about what makes up the field and reach for IR has changed over time, providing analytical space to new subjects of and participants in global politics. Alongside

these theoretical changes, ontological and epistemological challenges have been raised by a range of critical scholars to transform the field to be more true to itself by moving away from objectivity. This is enhanced by recognizing that the historically and socially driven structures of international politics are prone to both resistance and change, by recognizing sources of knowledge that have been relevant for such transformations over time, and by giving ethics and justice a more prominent place in the field. The goal is that such changes will make space for marginalized populations to possibly claim their place in the global arena.

2.3 Neo-Gramscian International Relations Theory

The above discussion has paved the way for moving toward a theory of political agency of the poor within international relations. While the previous sections have shown that there is more than one option for exploring agency through an IR lens (for instance, through feminist and postcolonial IR), the ensuing discussion will now focus on a Neo-Gramscian approach, largely inspired by Cox (1981). Starting in the 1980s, this approach captured a strong following among IR scholars in two important ways. Firstly, it offered a complex understanding of hegemony (Gramsci 1971), moving beyond a notion of hegemony according to coercive state power (Strange 1987), or institutional stability (Snidal 1985), and toward a more complex notion based on a combination of consensus and co-optation (Gill 1986). Secondly, it centred its analysis on the dynamic and historically driven relationships between three key sites – world order, forms of state, and social forces (Cox 1981) – in order to make more complex claims about the nature of international politics. The Neo-Gramscian analytical model also allows for an analysis of capitalism, and concomitantly, neoliberalism. Motivated by, but not restricted to, a Marxist critique of capitalism, it expands on a class-based historical materialist approach by problematizing the role of the state in capitalist development in terms of its relations with external and internal forces, and in terms of the range of actors, institutions and ideas crossing through different sectors that change the way capitalism is both implemented and challenged at different layers of society (see Chapter 3). As such, this way of problematizing the state turns both states and their international relations into social phenomena, and facilitates understanding of the ways in which domination, subordination and inequality emerge from such relations.

This approach also gives the space for understanding human agency and the close link between agency and its normative emancipatory claims. At its core, the range of Neo-Gramscian approaches applied are based on a social ontology (Bieler and Morton 2004 and 2008). Whether structures appear durable over centuries, or can be transformed in shorter

periods of time, the theory allows us to see that structure itself is a characteristic and outcome of human agency – agency is part of the definition of structure – and what we can come to know about the world stems from understanding the character of relations between different actors, forces and processes, but also how agency reinforces given structures, or challenges them (see Chapter 3 and 5). In this way, understanding both structure (as something that can be changed) and agency demand an historicist method, placing them within the broader social, material and temporal (not just historical) context in which a period of time is being explored. Cox defines this context as 'historical structures', 'frameworks for action', or 'limited totalities' (Cox 1981: 135, 137).

Historical structures are explored through a constellation of material capabilities, ideas and institutions in a given social and historical period of time (Cox 1981; Linklater 1990). Significant is both the material and ideational basis of the historicist approach. In this context, populations take what they can know about their material world, and shape their ideas and actions based on this. In his account of ideas, Cox makes clear that both perceptions of social and material reality and the nature of discourse about them are important (Cox 1981; Linklater 1990). In this dissertation, the social and ideational reality will be the most relevant areas for reflection. Actors develop perceptions about their world, based on the realities they observe, and act on them according to assumptions that are shaped by their own experiences and forms of knowledge, knowledge which may either reflect or challenge common assumptions. While Cox does not express this directly, he thus highlights the power of at least communal agency (though possibly not individual) to go against the constraining force of accepted structural norms (Cox 1999). While his model does not give primacy to agency over structure at any stage of analysis, Cox does not dismiss that human perception and agency can transcend what appears to be a set of structured constraints. This is an important feature of the theory in itself, and also an important link to the discussion of agency below.

Two components of Cox's model play a key role in guiding the analysis in the following chapters, they are social forces and ideas. Purely speaking, social forces are groups of people with shared interests and are constituted by their role in the social relations of production (Cox 1993; Gill 1993). Such groups need not know each other or act collectively, but they rather fill certain positions within a societal structure (Gill 1993). For Cox, the social relations of production also extends to the political and social resources that reinforce their roles in the production scheme and help to maintain more durable structures of power and inequality. With this extended conceptualization of social forces, it becomes possible to observe them as acting independently of productive processes per se, but still acting in ways that serve their particular

social and material interests. Furthermore, the notion of social forces may include state actors, but has also extended into the category of civil society to capture the range of those participating in different forms of social mobilization (Cox 1999). By exploring the relationship between hegemony, social forces and civil society (Chapter 7), it becomes possible to see what forms of agency and knowledge are capable of challenging existing structures.

As explained by Cox (1981), and also developed in constructivist IR theory (Hopf 1998; Finnemore and Sikkink 2001), agency and knowledge are motivated by the presence of ideas in society and reflect the lived experiences of different groups. These ideas fall into two categories, the first is called 'intersubjective meanings'. These are ideas that are widely shared among different sectors of society, and have such a deep anchor among nearly all groups, that they appear natural. It might be what is often referred to as 'mainstream' thinking. The example given by Cox (1981: 136) is that of states. While states are a social construct which have come to exist through an extensive historical trajectory, their presence is now so widely accepted that it is nearly impossible to imagine a world made up of different forms of political communities. Capitalist development in Western countries holds the same status. The second type of idea is called 'collective images'. These are ideas held by smaller groups of people which may conflict with those of the mainstream. The collective images are created around their own experiences, forms of connectivity to each other and other sectors of society, or even their relationships to natural resources. To the extent that smaller groups attempt to create social, political or economic structures that reflect their own collective images, political and social tensions may emerge (Chapter 6). Indeed, his notion of collective images has been present in International Development Studies as part of alternative development and post-development approaches (Escobar 1998; Sachs 1997). As it has not been named in that way, the overlap between them has not been emphasized in the literature.

It is of interest to include an explanation of civil society for which Cox's model gives space and is drawn into a relationship with hegemony. Drawing heavily on Gramsci's notion (Gramsci 1971), civil society is an indispensable element in any hegemonic project. It is through civil society per se that consent and resistance, whether conscious or unconscious, for the hegemonic project is generated and sustained. The ideas of the hegemonic project shape systems and goals of education, mass media, play into popular culture and become the status quo through laws and institutions (Katz 2006). In short, the claim is that civil society is attached to the state – though this can be in line with or by challenging state interests. Thus, no matter what part of civil society one chooses as a focus – whether it be labour unions, religious

organizations, NGOs, grassroots organizations, immigrant organizations, or other groups in society not formally linked to production processes –its historical emergence can be understood through the development of the state and its capitalist mode of production. In looking at it this way, hegemonic principles then become visible in local structures of power and local, 'tangible' circumstances (Worth 2008). Civil society is to be seen 'not as the sphere of freedom, but of hegemony,' and as more directly constitutive of the state than formal political institutions of government (Buttigieg 1995: 6-7). As will be explored in Chapter 6, how the presence of the state is interpreted by different civil society groups motivates a particular sense of agency among them and guides what action can be taken to work with or challenge the state.

2.4 Ontologies of International Development

2.4.1 How has the conceptualization of poverty changed in development theories?

Poverty is a central subject matter in the field of International Development Studies (IDS). In this section, I will create a context for exploring the conceptual evolution of poverty by first going through the main development paradigms, with brief reflection on the transition from one to the other. This reflection highlights the reasons for exploring new conceptualizations of poverty, and creating new knowledge about poverty as scholars try to come to terms with the failures and weaknesses present in various development agendas and in knowledge about development. This will be the content of the next section, moving from behaviouralist to social and relational interpretations of poverty, in order to emphasize the need and feasibility of developing a political conceptualization. As will be seen, the overview of development and conceptualizations of poverty takes us to the present, though the empirical research for this project is historical. The hope is twofold: that the historical perspective will justify the need to develop a political conceptualization of poverty, and that current conceptualizations will help give more meaning to past experiences.

As is well understood, IDS has been broadening its scope, arguably transforming itself fundamentally, since its inception as a discipline in the immediate aftermath of WWII (Peet and Hartwick 2009; Escobar 1995; Esteva 1997). First taking shape in the Western world through the promotion and then the critique of modernization, it has shifted from a profoundly state-driven to a market-driven process (Peet and Hartwick 2009; World Bank 2002; Gore 2000). There is a deeply geopolitical context in which both knowledge about and the shifting development agendas have evolved (Slater 2008; Power 2010; White 2003). At the beginning of the Cold War, there was a strong motivation to extend the sphere of Western influence into

the Southern hemisphere, including Latin American countries where communist-led insurgencies were taking place, in Asian territories where the threat of Chinese communism was present, and in newly de-colonized countries of the African continent to ward off the expansion of Soviet socialism (Rostow 1960). With promises of growth through first state-led industrialization and modernization, and then market-driven economic growth to poorer countries, Western countries were able to extend their influence and the authority of Western-based institutions into other parts of the world (Chang 2011; Ikenberry 2009). The chronology of the theoretical and policy development in Development Studies reflects these international political motivations, and adds new meaning to each phase of development (Duffield 2007).

In deepening the shift to a market-driven development paradigm in the 1980s, the well-known failures of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) structural adjustment policies, implemented in developing countries seeking debt relief, captured the attention of a wider scholarly and activist audience (Chossudovsky 1997; Bello 2013). The reckless implementation of such policies and the ensuing negative externalities largely borne by the poorer populations fortified the nascent critique of development agendas for being out of touch with human needs (Cornia 1987). Following this, the Poverty Reduction Strategy papers were initiated by the World Bank as it sought to re-invent its identity and image in the 1990s, demonstrating a move away from the forceful imposition of structural adjustment (Craig and Porter 2003; Ruckert 2009). This was an attempt to promote national participation in and ownership of development agendas that would remain in line with broader objectives of global neoliberal transformation, but would be shaped by inputs from various nationally-based groups and individuals, including elected officials, civil society organizations, and the private sector. While judged suspiciously with various levels of success and failure (Curran 2005), this step coincided with a revised interest in the role of the state in development and poverty reduction (Haggard 1990; Stiglitz 2007).

This move also coincided with growing attention to poverty as a global problem, driven by global transformations, and needing global solutions. The ability to address poverty globally was to be guaranteed by a deeper commitment to development assistance by developing countries, a more comprehensive set of indicators for measuring various aspects of poverty and deprivation, and more effective global cooperation (Sachs 2005). Reflecting these optimistic views, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were put into effect by the United Nations in 2000 to promote a global agenda for poverty reduction, mitigating, but not qualitatively transforming the neoliberal development paradigm (Gupta et al 2015). The likely success of the MDGs was to activate norm transformation throughout some layers of the

public and private sectors, perhaps motivating new global imperatives to become involved in poverty reduction (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011). Nonetheless, the failures in meeting its specific targets has generated critique and provided new insights for the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (Gupta et al 2015). While these critiques are organized around the former MDGs, they also reflect broader debates about poverty which will be addressed below.

Firstly, and the most concrete, is that there are important limitations associated with the targeted nature of the MDG goals. At an early stage, they were proving to be more successful in reaching the less poor instead of the extremely poor (Pogge 2004), as the less poor already had certain basic assets on which they could build, while the extremely poor require much more new input and understanding; they do not account for the multidimensional nor intergenerational characteristics of poverty (Alkire 2007; Ansell 2014); and they undermine social solidarity from the local to the national level through donor-driven mechanisms of achieving the goals (Deacon 1997). Secondly, a focus on poverty has steered attention away from a needed focus on inequalities (Sen 1992; Stiglitz 2012). A growing literature on inequalities since the mid-2000s has stressed several important relationships between inequality and capitalist driven economic growth (Piketty 2014). As part of this is the argument that the pervasiveness of inequality continuously undermines long-term success in poverty-reduction (Vandemoortele 2011). Persistent inequalities, moreover, maintain structural forms of inclusion and exclusion in society (Seery and Arendar 2014). Such forms of exclusion can be based on a range of qualities not taken into account in the MDGS such as race, ethnicity, party affiliation, religion, class, citizenship status and cultural norms (Sen 1999).

Thirdly, the goals did not include criteria for accountable institutions, whether they be the state, domestic legal systems, or terms of intervention by the private sector or international organizations (Satterthwaite 2003). This is despite the existing knowledge that appropriate institutions and legitimate agendas for growth and distribution are key to poverty reduction and development (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012). Fourthly, moving to the more abstract, the MDGS failed to include attention to political, social, economic and knowledge structures (Enns 2014). This point draws attention to the relational nature of poverty that can be explored in each of these realms. For instance, knowledge structures validate what are legitimate ways of knowing and doing (which can reflect back to social, political and economic structures), to the effect of marginalizing unfamiliar forms of knowledge, through which exclusion and dispossession can occur. Finally, even if they included needed interventions to offer poverty

relief, the MDGs were profoundly neoliberal (Khalema et al 2015). They are grounded in a conceptualization of human beings as rational actors and of society that is individualized, merit-driven, and competitive. This disciplining effect sets the criteria for success or failure in society, and creates divisions between those who can and want to play by such rules, and those who do not or cannot (Ilcan and Phillips 2010).

The Sustainable Development Goals, put into effect in September 2015 by the United Nations, intend to re-orient knowledge, policies and practices in development towards sustainability and inclusion. With regard to sustainability, growing knowledge about environmental destruction and climate change has forced global society to reconceive development as a global endeavour affecting the entire world population (Sachs 2012). There is also the recognition that the poor are particularly vulnerable to risks and hazards associated with ecological challenges (Adger 2006). Therefore, the conceptualization of sustainability includes the traditional view that the earth needs to be protected for current and future generations, but also that through sustainable development the needs of the poor may be more comprehensively addressed (Pouw and McGregor 2014). Inclusion is addressed at multiple levels. While the SDGs still emphasize the particular needs of developing countries, the radar of development has been profoundly expanded to also include both the challenges and the responsibilities of developed countries, and also addresses inequalities between countries. Inclusion is also meant to confront the failure of the MDGs to move past targeted poverty reduction, promote institutional development that incorporates diverse knowledges and practices, and economic growth in which more people can participate. Meanwhile, the conceptualization of inclusive development is currently being debated in the literature (Gupta et al 2015; Hickey et al 2015), and will likely impact future assessments of the SDGs.

2.4.2 Theorizing poverty and human agency

The purpose of this section is to go through conceptualizations of poverty toward those in which agency and the relational nature of poverty can be understood and supported. We can observe that shifts in development paradigms have highlighted new conceptualizations of poverty, but perhaps more importantly, new conceptualizations of poverty have partially been a driving force behind new development agendas. In the early phases of development studies definitions of poverty were designed for developing countries which reflected the objectives and value-system of the Western world (Chang 2011; Peet and Hartwick 2009; Escobar 1995). With such a perspective, attention goes to measuring whether a population is able to meet its

basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) with the method of measuring levels of income and consumption.

Drawing on national surveys or national accounts, national poverty lines were designed based on such criteria (Ravallion 1998; Deaton 2005). Through this process, it became possible to compare the level of poverty between countries according to an internationally set income-based poverty line. With such a clear poverty line, two simple but significant assumptions about poverty can be made. The first is that any household which falls under the international poverty line cannot meet their basic needs, and the second is that any household that falls above the poverty line is able to meet their basic needs. While obvious, it is worth stating so clearly since it has served as the launching pad for so much future debate. According to this criteria, some of the first interventions were made to reduce poverty, and the first lines were drawn between countries based on their different levels of development (Deaton 2005). In this early process, the mold was cast to view poverty according to economic principles and with quantitative indicators, and much of the current work in poverty studies is characterized by a resistance to the limits of economic definitions and conceptual innovation to go beyond it.

As knowledge has increased about poverty, critiques against the implications of such econometric assessments continue to emerge across the spectrum from policy-oriented to alternative development views (Escobar 1995; Esteva 1997; Peet and Hartwick 2009). The first reflects, in part, the challenges to objectivity above (section 2.2.2) and refers to human agency. In this way, it rejects the assumption inherent in econometric approaches of the rational economic agent, of humans as self-interested rational actors instead of social human beings (Sen 1977; Pouw and McGregor 2014). The second refers to what is being measured, and rejects the implication that poverty can be adequately known through a limited set of indicators. Poverty can be both worsened and mitigated based on access or denial to other assets including, for instance, health, education, employment, land, but also transportation, or communication (Alkire 2007). The range of measurement indicators must be expanded to include these and be capable of combining them. The third refers to the actual conceptualizations of poverty, and rejects the idea that poverty should be restricted to even an expanded set of static measurements, and that it changes only due to its sensitivity to what is being measured. Such indicators undermine the lived experience of poverty and limits what can be known about it to fit in with the types of policy frameworks that best address any particular deprivation (Pouw and McGregor 2014). This neglects both the social and political relationships through which poverty might be sustained (Harriss-White 2006; Harriss 2007), and the quality of the institutional contexts in which it exists (Hickey 2005; Narayan et al

2009). These are embodied in the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs as new understandings have been adopted by and further developed by the World Bank and other development institutions.

2.4.3 Reflecting on human agency

Moving from the contexts provided above, the politics of poverty will be addressed by conceptualizing the political agency of the poor in a relational context (see Chapter 6). It is worth reflecting on the meaning of human agency itself, before turning to political agency in the following section (2.4). This section will go over a range of conceptualizations of poverty and human agency ranging from the simple positivistic explanations to the critical interpretations that explore poverty and agency as being inescapably interconnected to the temporal and social contexts in which poverty and agency take place. In trying to consolidate and simplify the perennial sociological agent-structure debate (Giddens et al 2000), Campbell (2009) usefully provides two articulations of human agency, noting that the difference between them impact the way we interpret structural constraints. Briefly, the first (type 1) is the power of agency. This means that individuals can, simply put, act. They are able to 'initiate and maintain a program of action' based on their own personal capacities (Campbell 2009: 407). While actions taken are based on one's own ability, will and 'creativity' (Campbell 2009: 410), there is no assumption about the character of these actions, nor that they will function outside of any given set of norms and customs. The second (type 2) is agentic power. This refers to the ability of individuals to act 'independently of structural constraints' (Campbell 2009: 408), by circumventing them, and possibly transforming them. This approach emphasizes a particular character, and an intentionality. Volition and creativity are applied for the purposes of resistance and challenge. Even if the sought outcomes of such agentic power do not materialize, the nature of the action is what remains relevant.

The above concepts of agency are both used in conjunction with the word 'power'. The concept of power can be viewed through four simplified approaches consolidated from the relevant literature, the 'power to', the 'power over', the 'power with' (Narayan 2005; Narayan et al 2009, building on Lukes 1974), and building off Campbell's approach, I add 'communicative power' (Habermas 2006). The power of agency, implies the 'power to' without taking into account the outcome of the act, but simply using power in a certain direction (Campbell 2009). 'Power over' on the other hand, captures the idea that carrying out the intended act means changing something or someone else – having influence over the

outcome of something external to the actor(s). This form of agency demands, then, that appropriate resources be available to the agents to exert some form of power.

'Power with' refers to forms of power that comes with access to social capital and is enhanced through networks or links. This closely resembles the associate power highlighted by Tooze and Murphy (1996) in the IR discussion above. 'Communicative power' (Habermas 2006; Arendt 1986; Lukes 1974), could be one of those forms, and emphasizes the ability to achieve common ends through public and engaged dialogue. Dialogues are structured by, but also mediate, the nature of discourse, issues and goals. Relationships between different actors are a prerequisite. Thus a relational dimension to agency comes out, not (necessarily) determined by power inequalities, but through the discovery of intersubjective meanings and understanding.

Critical interpretations of agency see limitations to these conceptualizations of agency, arguing in particular that even to the extent that they may require collective action, they reinforce methodological individualism (Hodgson 2007). Two important contributions coming from critical approaches include a more elaborate notion of inter-subjectivity (Pouw and McGregor 2014), and historicity (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Anchored in a sustained critique against neoliberalism and its capacity to fragment society, undermine social solidarity, and create an atomized, competitive social world (Harvey 2005), Coole (2005) expands the notion of inter-subjectivity beyond Habermas's contribution, by suggesting that it remains restricted by an ontological commitment to individuals having to choose independently to cooperate for the sake of achieving their goals. She argues rather, that in restricting agency to the individual, important observations about shared responses, to the effects of neoliberalism in particular, are overlooked. Agency is thus conceptualized in a collective sense, as 'agentic capacities', rather than subjective capacities, that are expressed through 'personal commitments and collective identifications' (Coole 2005: 126). Indeed, she makes a normative generalization that the quality of individuals to sustain personal relations, shared interests, and collective goals under an otherwise atomizing neoliberal regime are integral to the definition of agentic capacities, thus overcoming an individualistic bias.

For other critical scholars, this approach – while rendering agency as something more complex – still falls short in providing a truly useful framework because they are not grounded in historicity. Emirbayer and Mische (1998) argue that conceptualizations of agency (such as those above and others including Bourdieu's habitat and Giddens routine practices) should avoid the basic commitment to agency (despite the nuances between them) as action taken to achieve certain goals. None of these approaches provide the tools for making claims about

how 'agency informs social action' (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 963), a key motivation for understanding agency at all. Through the concept of 'agentic orientations', they argue that actors orient themselves to their past, present and future as they consider actions (at least those who choose to do so) to enact change. History is important and action is rendered temporally specific and constrained by social relations, which make up a given structure. Importantly, structure itself becomes the subject of agency and is modified through deliberate agentic orientations, by different actors employing different means according to their own reflections on what is a combination of feasible and desirable. Though not explicit in their approach or in their own theoretical overview, agentic orientation embraces both a call to action and an emancipatory tone, fortuitously consistent with Neo-Gramscian critical international relations theory.

That the poor possess power of agency fortunately has a strong presence in the literature, much of which has been addressed above. The capability (Sen 1992), participatory (Chambers 1997), and livelihood (Chambers and Conway 1992; Scoones 1998) approaches importantly emphasize that being able to act at all according to one's will, even without the intent of influencing external forces, may already reflect social and political freedoms that the poor may not have previously possessed (this point will be taken up further in Chapter 6). Building from here, the approaches to urban political engagement to be explored in the section 2.4 of this chapter are selected based on their potential links to the more complex forms of agency provided above. Additionally, given the conceptualization of power in the Neo-Gramscian framework as being the ability to impose 'power over' through complex processes of co-optation and consensus, political engagement of the poor will be considered according to the same criteria (Chapters 5 and 6). While the goal is to weave the most appropriate forms of agency through both Neo-Gramscian theory and approaches to urban political engagement, the final choices must be justified not only in that it is coherent with the broader theoretical framework, but that it is also a meaningful choice when reflecting on the political agency of the urban poor, as will be done below.

2.5 Globalizing cities and the urban poor

2.5.1 Globalizing cities

As explained in section 1.3, this research seeks to explore the relations between global dynamics and the poor within the 'container' of a global or globalizing city, understood as an urban environment increasingly characterized by its transnational links to other cities and the global economy (Marcuse and van Kempen 2000). As such, it will be briefly reflected upon

here. As both a concept and as a geographic reality, the global city is by now well established in scholarly literature. Beginning with the seminal works of Sassen (2001, 2011) and Castells (1998), the global city is known as a hub of transnational economic activity through which other global cities are linked to each other, in ways which may transcend the capacity of the state to regulate the transactions of private sector corporations (Sassen 2001). Through these links, global cities are also the gravitational centres of economic, political and even cultural life (Brenner and Keil 2006) within a state, country, or geographical region. They likewise share a number of characteristics. These include a disproportionately high number of multi-national corporation headquarters located in their cities, usually representing finance, insurance, and real estate industries, as well as other advanced service sectors such as information technologies, advertisement, and media. For instance, as of 2013, one third of the world's largest companies were located in only 20 cities around the globe (Dobbs et al 2013).

However, part and parcel of the global city concept is that the density and demand of high skilled services have implications for the city more generally, and produce a range of inequalities and forms of exclusion (Keil 1998; Purcell 2003). Some common patterns include a visible squeezing out of middle-income jobs (Hamnett 1994; Walks 2001), and a demographic shift caused by flight of the middle classes (Rennie-Short 2013). Largely associated with this are falling rates of unionization, the de-industrialization of durable manufacturing sectors, and general losses in job security (Sassen 2001). This runs parallel to a rise in the demand for low-skilled and insecure jobs which are often filled by immigrant workers who – in turn – are more easily exploited due to their potentially precarious status (Sassen 2001). Linked to this, others have highlighted the squeezing out of participatory channels for lower income residents in global cities that has come with the re-territorialization of authority to private sector economic powers in the city (Purcell 2003; Brenner 2004). As new forms of private sector authority are combined with a high concentration of insecure low-wage labourers and immigrant workers, there are changes in the ways in which accountability and representation are experienced (Purcell 2003). Urban residents, especially those who experience the negative pressures of global city formation, must therefore seek new ways of expressing and acting on their place as citizens with both social and economic rights in the city. As their roles are re-shaped in their relationship to private sector actors, and shared interests emerge among otherwise disparate groups to enhance their positioning against the more powerful, new forms and expressions of citizenship also emerge (de Koning et al 2015). This will be explored further in Chapter 6.

In this vein, Keil's suggestion (1998: 617) that '…the urban [is] a relevant site of the political in the era of globalization,' becomes particularly compelling. It firstly brings attention to the political forms of marginalization and exclusion experienced by lower-wage groups, beyond a focus on the economic outcomes. Moreover, in the global city context, it provides incentive to explore the multi-level political decision-making that gives shape to the internal political and social reality of global cities (Kanai 2010). A key point here is that global city transformations are born by, and cannot exist separately from, conditions shaped by neoliberal principles and institutions (Brenner 2004, Jessop 2002). Neoliberal policies create a permissive environment for both private and public sector actors to make strategic economic decisions to increase their wealth and status in the global city setting. Meanwhile, neoliberal principles create the incentives to become more competitive in the global system, particularly with the many examples of the near trillion US dollar revenues that the biggest corporations can generate on a yearly basis (AT Kearney 2014). As such, being globally competitive is often a priority with the assumption that wealth reaches all (Rennie-Short 2013) and that global city status will guarantee prosperous urban development (Robinson 2002), though the reality shows that it creates winners and losers (Keil 1998; Sassen 2001; Castells 1998). As such, there is something particular about studying the political and social realm within global cities, as a specific phenomenon which can tell us more about the social and political implications of neoliberalism for different groups of actors and their interests, beyond its claims for economic growth.

For this study, the global city context needs further problematization. As cities in developing countries exhibit increasing transnational linkages, there has been a growing scholarly interest to extend the analytical framework to them as they become more globally relevant (Robinson 2002). However, global city analyses may be inappropriate for some locations, and undermine the value of what can be learned from not-yet global cities. As such, the term 'globalizing cities' (Kanai 2010; Lemanski 2007; Shatkin 2007; Marcuse and van Kempen 2000; Beauregard and Haila 2000) can be found in the literature and refers to economically relevant cities of the developing world which are also becoming more integrated into global networks, but that experience a range of challenges. These include the reinforcement of extreme economic polarities that have been generated by urban development patterns in cities of developing countries, associated with a small circle of political elites and the ownership classes (Rennie-Short 2013). In addition are the higher rates of poverty and vulnerability among the urban poor, housing crises, and more intense environmental pressures (Douglass 2000; Weinsten and Ren 2009). In grappling with these problems, private sector and public

sector leaders are inhibited in their ability to draw in investments and new industries (Marcuse and van Kempen 2000), while there is also less incentive for external investors to take an interest in less secure environments (Rennie-Short 2013). Thus, a tension exists between the economic goals and potential of globalizing cities and the range of social, economic and environmental pressures in the urban environment.

Urban development agendas in globalizing cities nonetheless reflect aspirations to accommodate competitive drives in the interests of an already established economic elite (Kanai 2010). In reconstituting the various actors who participate or acquiesce in the moves toward global city transformation as social forces, the Neo-Gramscian approach allows us to see how the economic elite interacts with the particular limitations and desires of domestic political and economic actors to achieve such ends (Jessop 1997). In turn, the domestic elite interacts with different sectors and actors in the urban setting. In this way, the struggle to achieve wealth through the transformation of the urban environment becomes a social and political study that draws in and has an impact on various scales, and includes the particular challenges that are faced as developing world cities are pressured to facilitate neoliberal reforms. Furthermore, inequalities inherent in neoliberalism can be observed in the city, particularly the globalizing city, according to the nature of social relations between opposing urban social forces, and not just as economic or social outcomes. As such, globalizing cities allow an expression of global dynamics interacting with local dynamics, among the urban poor and others, to provide a container in which the global and local come together.

2.5.2 Political engagement of the urban poor

Within this context, this section turns to how urban civil society fits in to the previous discussions (starting in section 2.3), and allows both Neo-Gramscian IR and Development Studies to come together through a mutual concern for how notions of agency (sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 above) and notions of participation (below) in urban civil society can eventually contribute to improved livelihoods for the poor. Civil society is sometimes explained through a liberal lens in which it is seen as functioning independently of the state and can exert autonomous pressure on it (Fukuyama 2001; Mercer 2002). The implications of this are that actors, the sense of agency they possess, and their forms of participation emerge autonomously from the constraining forces of the state or the pressures of economic discipline. While this approach emphasises an external influence that can be exerted on the state or other actors to make change, it overlooks the way the negotiated nature of both agency and participation to which the poor, in particular, are subjected due to their exclusion from and

dependence on the state. By contrast, as mentioned earlier, Neo-Gramscian approaches constitute civil society as emerging in both acquiescence to and in struggle with the state, and more specifically, the capitalist ideology expressed and challenged by different social forces (Cox 1983; Bobbio 1988). This difference in conceptualizations importantly highlights the range of relationships that constrain, facilitate, but in all cases must be negotiated in order for civil society actors to command a particular position in society (Fox 1996).

As such, no actor or set of actions takes place autonomously or in a vacuum, but it is seen as inexorably linked to those other actors and forces which dynamically reconstitute political space. In regard to the discussion about agency above, 'agentic capacities' (section 2.4.3) takes into account the temporal and structural way in which human action is mitigated, and thus fits in well with a Neo-Gramscian notion of civil society. Both – at different scales – are tied into a temporal and structural relation with the state and other social forces. The following paragraphs will provide a brief look at the ways in which agentic capacities will be considered in Chapter 6, insofar as they are constituted and reflected upon, and more directly – how they motivate action. There is a particular emphasis on two ways in which action can be expressed, political participation and coalition building across issue areas. These final paragraphs address this by bringing attention to theoretical themes as they emerge in the context of Mexico and Mexico City.

Political participation

Understandings of the nature of political participation have become more complex as participation is seen along a spectrum of activity to obtain material goods to transformational challenges to authority (Rodan 1997). It has expanded to include a wider range of views with new knowledge about how the urban poor in developing world countries articulate or actualize certain goals, and as the relationships between urban poor residents, local governments and the state has changed. The traditional notion is that political participation is about having some kind of influence over government and government decisions, mostly through the electoral process (Domínguez and McCann 1998). This has expanded to include views of political participation which refer to how private individuals undertake voluntary actions in their own interest and likewise attempt to have an impact on different levels of the political system (Berg-Schlosser and Kersting). In this vein, driven by notions of self-help, as the poor participate more actively they also bring into question forms of representation and democracy.

Additional literature emphasizes the very loose nature of defining political participation in that it can refer to electoral participation, developing relations with government authorities or other

powerful individuals in a society, communal activity either at the grassroots or in association with non-governmental organizations, protests, and participation in political discussion (Krishna 2008; Ortega Nieto 2014; Claggett and Pollock 2006). As such, it becomes more difficult to define what political participation is and what kind of impact it can have on representation and citizen rights. Bringing some clarity to this are recent discussions on 'participatory governance' (Baud et al 2011: 4) which explores how modes of authority shift from the central role of urban government to more networked participation among an expanded range of actors. Such networks are built through the incorporation of local 'spatialised' knowledge (Baud et al 2011: 7) to create a more comprehensive understanding of particular challenges across the urban landscape.

In Mexico City, political participation in the context of democratic reforms is viewed somewhat sceptically. On one hand, as will be seen in Chapters 3 and 5, the process of decentralization of government to more local levels in Mexico City that took place in the 1990s is praised as enhancing political participation by building it in to the overall system of governance (OECD 2004; Blair 2000) through legislative reform and institutional transformations. Such measures resulted in more avenues for representation and increased resident confidence in the national and local government as they were able to demand more accountability (Banks 2008). However, the traditional Mexican political system remained characterized by deeply entrenched clientelism and patronage politics. Even as elected leadership accepted formal reforms, it was (and continues to be) difficult to break through the political culture of patron-client relations. As will be elaborated in Chapter 3, with the enduring presence of diminished clientelism (Fox 1994; Shefner 2001) and the disciplining features of neoliberalism (Mahon and MacDonald 2010), there is concern that both the authenticity of political participation and the nature of the gains to be made were undermined.

In this context, as urban residents sought out favours from political leaders, political participation ends up being characterized by only a nominal form of representation, but also by informality in politics. Such informality has two implications. On one hand, it refers to the inauthenticity of representation which does not endow the poor with political power, but with the fulfilment of small favours. This has an atomizing effect as urban poor residents turn to a pattern of self-reliance by establishing individual relations with local leaders, and in obtaining material favours that help in their daily lives (Gilbert and Ward 1984; Hutchinson 2007). On the other hand, however, informality may also open space for new political pressure generated by the changing interests of actors and new social groups under conditions of neoliberal transformation, which in turn challenge existing notions of authority. Referred to as

incremental 'encroachment' of the poor into political space (Bayat 2000: 545), civil society groups – through their own agendas for claiming a political voice – can gradually change the political setting. Constituting neither a social movement nor broad collective action, the range of new actors (such as immigrants, indigenous groups, or the increasing public presence of women) challenge social exclusion from the political system (Bayat 2000). As will be seen in Chapter 6 and 7, this incremental nature of political challenges to urban authority may have analytical weight in developing an associational definition of poverty provided above (section 1.2) and in exploring a multi-scalar analysis of the politics of poverty (section 7.4).

Coalition building across issue areas

At another scale of participation, the spirit of coalition building among diverse civil society organizations has grown in the last 20 years as the negative externalities of neoliberalism have been felt in different ways. With a focus on neoliberal institutions and policies, specifically, diverse groups have realized that while their specific issue areas may differ, they overlap fundamentally as they look to the same source (Cerny et al 2005). On a global level, labour, environmental, women's rights, and human rights organizations have found themselves marching side by side against international institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the World Economic Forum (WEF) (Cox 1999). In the same vein, urban grassroots organizations such as Shack Dwellers International actively pursue transnational coalitions to confront housing rights violations among other forms of inequality, while Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood seeks ways for poor women working in textile industries to have more access to global markets (Batliwala 2002). As these transnational organizations become more consolidated, they present a stronger force for affecting change (Appadurai 2001). In particular in North America, as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was being negotiated, a plethora of transnational organizations from Mexico, the United States and Canada emerged to protest what were seen as built-in environmental and labour violations (Hogenboom 1998; Thacker 1999).

In Mexico, the overlap of issues opened the opportunity to collectively address fundamental principles which have led to various forms of injustice (von Bülow 2009). In this context, different configurations of civil society coalitions started taking shape in the 1990s, with combinations of grassroots organizations, NGOs, religious organizations, trade unions, and even commercial representatives (Mitlin 2001). As an example, to improve quality of life, coalitions of community based organizations in neighbourhoods across the metropolitan area of Mexico City joined up with students and urban professionals to upgrade public buildings and public green spaces (Moctezuma 2001). As another example, the rise of the Zapatista

movement in the southern part of Mexico in 1994 against NAFTA also influenced thinking about the nature of democratic representation across society, and influenced the positioning of organizations within Mexico City (Dellacioppa 2009; Zugman 2005; Stephen and Collier 1997). Their influence was felt not only among leftist organizations in the city, but also in the tensions that existed within the newly formed Party of the Democratic Revolution (Alemán 2009; Almeyra 2006; Modonesi 2011; see also Chapters 3 and 5).

Another form of coalition building refers to social movement unionism (Robinson 2000; Turner and Cornfield 2007). The term, first coined in relation to the changing nature of Northern trade unions, has also extended to developing countries (Lier and Stokke 2006). There are two key driving forces behind social unionism. The first is to breathe new life and modes of action into traditional labour unions weakened by neoliberal transformations. The second is to seek out new forms of solidarity among, but also beyond, labour unions against the more general disenfranchisement and disintegration of social interests in favour of individual interests. Such losses in social solidarity may undermine class-based interests and support for class-based economic well-being, but also the economic well-being of a wider range of social groups. As such, urban labour unions seek collaboration with other community or social justice organizations in order to work together to achieve mutually desired structural change (Turner and Cornfield 2007; Fairbrother 2008). Social unionism intends to re-establish some form of economic security for urban labour, but more importantly, generate new forms of political power to reinforce and sustain their positions over the long-term. Thus, moving beyond a mutual interest in addressing economic inequality, this form of coalition building is based on a much more comprehensive range of issues including gender, identity, ethnicity, and ecological concerns (Keil 1998; Briskin 2014; Felli 2014). While the literature on these links between groups is still largely focused on the Global North, it will be seen in Chapter 6 that such goals were present and relevant among independent labour and social organizations in Mexico City.

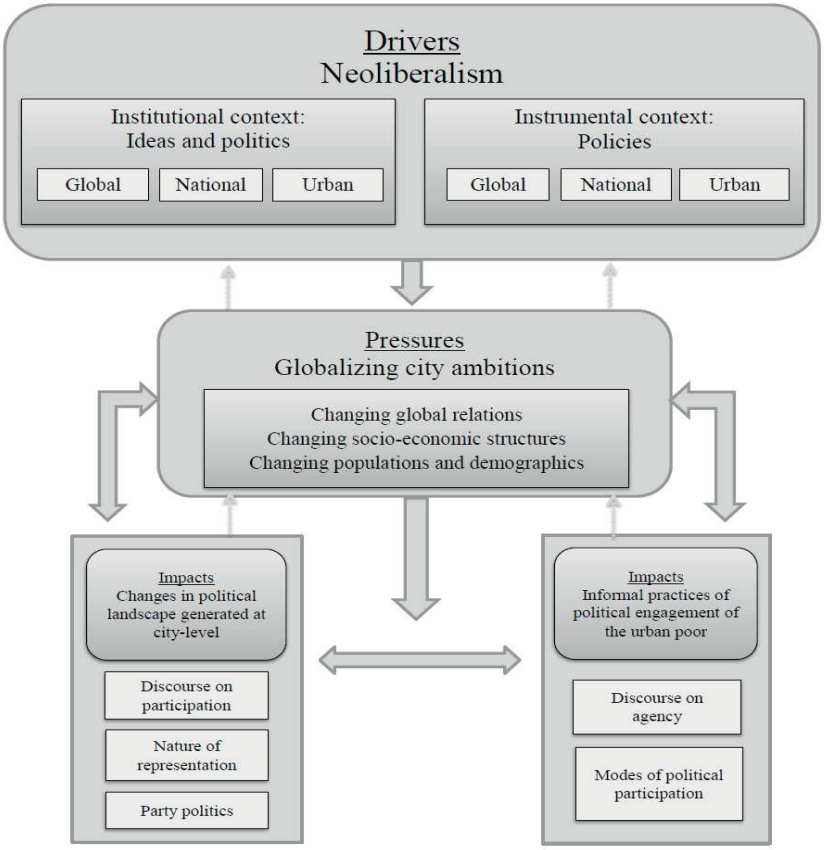
In trying to give meaning to political engagement of the urban poor, the notions of agentic capacities, encroachment and social unionism give shape to the ways in which political agency of the poor came to be understood in Mexico City. They become important when reflecting on the findings of field research and helped shape the broader concepts of discourse on agency and modes of political participation that can be found in the conceptual framework below. As civil society organizations interpreted their position within the constraining context of traditional political hierarchies, they were also aware of the changing pressures of neoliberal economic policy and tendencies towards individualization. However, a dialectic can be

observed in how new social forces can emerge according to their own collective images (as will be further described in Chapter 6), sometimes in collaboration with each other, but also according to their own needs. As weak coalition building could be observed, they were not strong enough to form networks that might contribute to participatory governance, but suggest shared grievances and interests that have some local influence and may over time contribute to new forms of representation within new forms of governance. The implications of this for a multi-scalar political analysis of poverty will be taken up in Chapters 6 and 7.

2.6 Conceptual framework and closing comments

This chapter closes by presenting the conceptual framework below that guides the following chapters and shows how urban political agency is linked into multi-scalar political dynamics. It begins by breaking neoliberalism into two parts, institutional and instrumental, which have

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



different ways of influencing and pressuring both national and city level decision-making (Chapter 3). These changes filter through the globalizing urban setting, re-shaping the city to accommodate market-led growth, and forcing actors into new and sometimes unfamiliar roles (Chapter 4). The framework demonstrates the context in which city leaders, both economic and political, reorient their own strategies to serve the needs of different sectors of the population, and in doing so, likewise transform the context in which political interaction takes place. As is seen in the lower left box, these transformations are conceptualized as changes in the political landscape which are generated at a top-down city-level (Chapter 5). This refers to changes that come from the municipality and have an impact on the way in which citizens see their roles in participating in democratic processes and decision-making. In the lower right box, changing political agency of civil society organizations representing the poor are given a place. This is conceptualized as changes in informal political participation (Chapter 6). Informality refers to the forms of participation that are driven from within civil society, not dictated or regulated by official forms of authority. The ways in which civil society can respond to top-down changes in the political landscape reflect bottom-up decision-making and actions and the term informality is meant to capture this. The concepts present in each of these boxes will be elaborated in the following chapters and the implications of these multi-scalar interactions will be explored again at the end of the dissertation in the context of Neo-Gramscian IR Theory.

3. Mexico: International Pressures, National Development, Sectoral and Social Shifts

3.1 Introduction

With a focus on the nation-state, this chapter begins the historical and empirical exploration of the multi-scalar relationships that shaped changes in political engagement of the urban poor in Mexico City (to be addressed in Chapters 5 and 6). This chapter fits into the top horizontal bar of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2 (section 2.6) and uses the nation-state as an anchor for historically examining the ways in which global, national and urban transformations intersected in the period from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. Likewise, the chapter ties these different layers together through an account of the political and economic changes that took place in Mexico as the country became more deeply entrenched in global neoliberal transformations. In line with Cox's Neo-Gramscianism (section 2.3), this chapter construes the state not as an autonomous entity acting on its own interests in the global arena, but as a dynamic outcome of the relationship between state actors and multi-scalar society. This relationship constitutes the character of the state at given time, and is driven by how the interests of different social forces are able to express themselves and put pressure on each other. Importantly, this social interpretation of the state (section 2.3) allows for a deeper understanding of how the state is present in other social forces, and how those social forces contribute to shaping the nation (Chapter 7). More concretely, this chapter will first provide a general historical context of the state (section 3.2), and will then turn to providing a broad picture of changing state/society relations in Mexico (section 3.3). Section 3.4 will take a closer look at the economic and political reforms that took place from the 1980s to the early 2000s, and then explore the implications of these reforms for the relationship of the state with business (section 3.5) and the state with labour (section 3.6). The closing (section 3.7) will highlight how these changing relations have facilitated the entrance of new actors to the political arena, which will be further explored in Chapter 6.

3.2 General context (1980s – 2000s)

From 1982 onwards, the relationship between the Mexican state and both domestic and international social forces began a period of significant transformation (Cornelius et al 1994). The repercussions of these transformations shaped the economic and political landscape of the country in the years to come with what seems to be almost no likelihood of return to the considerably stable political and social structure that had been known for the previous 65

years. While the most obvious culmination of such changes was embodied in the political act of electing a president in 2000 who did not come from the traditional ruling party, this election result did not alone stem from a shift in political preferences among the Mexican electorate. It is possible to argue that electoral preferences had always been more diverse than election results revealed, but that the forms of control and power deeply entrenched in the political structure gave no meaningful place to such diversity (Domínguez and McCann 1998; Ai Camp 2007). Rather, weaved into the backdrop from which such changes became possible were many unprecedented presidential decisions made between 1982 and 1994 to bring economic and political reform to the country (Vanden and Prevost 2006), which will be looked at throughout the chapter.

While such reforms aimed to enhance the power of the ruling party by making it more appealing to the electorate, they paradoxically opened the door for the Mexican population to opt for change instead. Such reforms were grounded in the need for continued national growth to international competition, political expediency to compensate and appease the population when such growth did not materialize as increased wealth for all, and concern about Mexico's worsening reputation abroad for being an unstable investment destination and for falling short as a fully modernized state (Hamilton 2006; Wise 1998; Cornelius et al 1994; Otero 1996). Without such reforms, the ability for the population to bring a new party to the office of the president would have been very unlikely. Moreover, though primarily motivated by self-preservation, the reforms permanently weakened the capacity of the state, and most certainly that of the ruling party to continue exerting its control over society (Vanden and Prevost 2006). However, there is an important debate about how these transformations have contributed to substantial democratic changes that empower the population (Hogenboom 2004) which will be further explored in the following sections.

Table 3.1: List of presidents of Mexico in chronological order

Period	**Name**	**Party**
1970-1976	Luis Echeverría	PRI
1976-1982	José López Portillo y Pacheco	PRI
1982-1988	Miguel de La Madrid	PRI
1988-1994	Carlos Salinas de Gortari	PRI
1994-2000	Ernest Zedillo	PRI
2000-2006	Vicente Fox	PAN

3.3 Historical state/society relations

While the Mexican economic and political reforms beginning in the 1980s were drastic in themselves, they take on a particularly drastic character because they were very different from the ideals established following the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). This Revolution aimed to herald an era of social justice, democracy, land reform, and national sovereignty. However, while such principles were only partially implemented in the post-revolutionary Mexican state, the emotional appeal of the ideals and populist rhetoric created a strong political identity among the Mexican population that surpassed social and economic differences (Loaeza 2007). Additional characteristics of post-revolutionary Mexico are the federal state structure with a separation of powers, single-term presidency, a constitutional mandate for a strong interventionist state that would be able to carry out the various goals in achieving social justice, and the weakening of the previously powerful institutions of the Catholic Church and the military; however, neither lost informal influence, but they were not a recognized part of the government decision-making structure (Ai Camp 2007).

The interventionist state would furthermore be able to control land and natural resources, distribute land ownership rights, and establish extensive labour rights. As part of the revolutionary ideal, an 'institutionalized ideology of authoritarianism' (Loaeza 2007: 413) emerged. This means that under the assumption that the state would provide, the Mexican population was willing to submit to and support the interventionist state, even to the extent that its control over land and people took on an authoritarian character. Under president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), the authoritarian state became more deeply entrenched through three institutions structuring a wide range of state/society relations. These were a highly centralized state, a powerful and paternalistic president, and the consolidation out of its previous versions of the PRI (Loaeza 2007). For example, President Cárdenas promoted populist ideals, which were seen as betrayed by the population following the 1982 economic reforms. Cárdenas's presidency strengthened the role of the executive in relation to other sectors of society.

On the one hand, he wanted to establish a sense of direct contact between himself and the population to create solidarity and trust. On the other hand, he wanted to ensure that the majority of power in Mexico was held by the state in order to resist the pursuit of private and foreign interests. The effect of both was to create a strong, centralized administrative structure with disproportionate responsibility going to the office of the president. This is often referred to as Mexican 'presidentialism' (Weldon 1997: 226). Under Cárdenas (1934-1940), such circumstances were celebrated (though this would change in years to come). This would

change as the problems of presidentialism became more obvious (Ross 1989). For instance, following a remarkable confrontation with the private sector, when Cárdenas moved in 1938 to protect national resources by nationalizing the oil holdings of foreign investors, the Mexican population celebrated: '200,000 jubilant Mexicans, as flushed with victory as if the national selection had won the World Cup, jammed the Zócalo on March 20th. Women shook piggybanks on street corners and lined up to hock their excess jewelry outside the Belles Artes Institute to raise the compensation Cárdenas promised the oil companies he would pay in ten years time. Campesinos came from the countryside, offering their turkeys' (Ross 1989: 99).

In line with his ambition to enhance the connections between the people and the president, Cárdenas (1934-1940) also restructured the newly named PRI to formalize the populist sentiments of the government into a corporatist system of representation in 1938. The beginnings of the corporatist system took rough shape in previous administrations, but Cárdenas formalized them. In this system, government controlled umbrella organizations were created in which various social groups would become members making them 'official groups'. The three sectors of society represented by umbrella organizations were the peasants, labour, and the popular sector including teachers and state employees. The military was originally included, but was later left out. Crucially, participation in groups that would be represented under the umbrella organizations was contingent upon party membership. That is, each individual in the groups being represented had to be a member of the PRI. Up until Zedillo, party membership was only possible through organizations, not on an individual basis. This would change with the reforms of Zedillo in 1996. The primary aim of such a relationship between the state and social groups was, thus, 'political reciprocity.' (Ai Camp 2007: 13). On the one hand, social groups enjoyed the representation of their interests within the government structure to the disadvantage of 'unofficial groups' or other actors competing for representation in society, such as big business. It was, in short, their form of political power. On the other hand, the party enjoyed the guarantee of political support of the 'masses' and would compensate such loyalty by meeting specific needs, while the position of the president as a representative of the people against foreign interests was strengthened because of his strong party base.

This corporatist structure created more problems than benefits to the masses. The commitment of Cárdenas 'to the social welfare of the less well-off has not been shared by most of his successors, who have responded to other concerns and groups' (Ai Camp 2007: 137) In a short period of time the PRI became more concerned with preserving its longevity and control over the state apparatus and the revenue it provided than with social justice (Harvey 1993). A

widespread system of patron-clientelism was used via the corporatist structure to help maintain their power in which leaders of the sectoral groups were granted status, financial gain, and other favours from the government in return for their support of the state agenda, particularly at times when the agenda did not serve the interests of the people. Support from sector leaders came in the form of either finding ways to keep down individuals and groups within their respective sectors when there were hints of resistance, or in finding ways to rally their public support for whatever political agenda or candidate was being presented. Such expectations created a structure of control all the way from the head of state to the individual worker or peasant, and became characteristic of Mexican social life. The irony of representation is that 'Ostensibly, a mechanism for popular input into the party and government, including selection of party candidates for office, the party in fact became a mechanism for controlling the member organizations' (Hamilton 2006: 309). A social order was thus obtained and buttressed by more or less steady economic growth from the 1940s to the 1970s. This gave groups within the corporatist structure little cause for opposition despite the manipulation and corruption to which they were exposed, while those not represented in the corporatist system in both cities and the countryside were largely ignored, silenced or oppressed.

3.4 Economic and political reforms

The period from 1940-1970, often referred to as the 'Mexican Miracle', was characterized by consistent economic growth and considerable political stability under the continued rule of the PRI. Economic development was based on an import substitution industrialization model (ISI) which emphasized urban industrial expansion and the growth of the domestic market for its own manufactures and was also intended to counter interference of the United States into the Mexican economy (So 1990). The state played an active role in protecting and subsidizing large industry, in establishing mutually beneficial collective agreements with labour, and in promoting economic activities among small and medium-sized industries (Cypher 1990). With an average annual GDP growth of six percent in these years, the Mexican government put resources into expanding the public sector including education, health, and other services (Nazmi and Ramirez 1997: 67). This led to the creation of a substantial middle class able to sustain domestic consumption with jobs as small business owners, small and medium-sized farmers, state workers, and professionals. The transfer of income to this group is indicative of its growth. Below, Table 3.2 indicates national GDP growth for Mexico from the years 1980-2010.

Table 3.2: Mexico National GDP/capita and Gini coefficient, 1980-2014

Year	Total GDP/capita (US$)	Gini Coefficient
1980	4541.6	-
1981	5277.5	-
1982	5438.7	-
1983	5289.6	-
1984	5551.1	0.49*
1985	5763.0	-
1986	5542.9	-
1987	5673.8	-
1988	5827.2	-
1989	6184.9	0.512
1990	6609.1	-
1991	6991.7	-
1992	7287.1	0.535
1993	7484.1	-
1994	7856.1	0.541
1995	7411.1	-
1996	7820.5	-
1997	8377.0	-
1998	8778.2	0.531
1999	9134.2	-
2000	9974.3	0.536
2001	1007.8	-
2002	10318.9	0.510
2003	10808.2	-
2004	11438.3	0.507
2005	12341.5	0.509
2006	13504.8	0.495
2007	14131.6	-
2008	14743.3	0.502
2009	14398.0	-
2010	15143.3	0.472
2011	16366.3	-
2012	16958.6	0.491
2013	16946.9	-
2014	18046.3	-

Sources: GDP data extracted from OECD (2016); Gini data from Esquivel (2008) and SEDLAC (2015).

While political stability was facilitated by the favourable economic context, it was also enforced by the ruling party which strengthened its power over social life with a reach that, by most accounts, cannot be underestimated (Dresser 1996). The authoritarian nature of the state

came to root in a more deeply entrenched form of presidentialism (Salazar 1998; Weldon 1997) likely not foreseen by Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), through which the president made and executed nearly all decisions regarding social and political development according to his own prerogative. Under the president's scrutiny, the corporatist system came to mostly serve the political benefits of the presidential office while the country's legislative branch, supposedly making up a system of checks and balances, functioned almost exclusively to provide approval for bills suggested by the president (Ortega 1997). Representation of the PRI in nearly all seats of the legislature and in nearly all state and local elected offices was part and parcel of the strategy used by the PRI to maintain its power. The PRI created a situation in which it could rely on the passive consensus (Salazar 1998) of the population to support the nominally revolutionary government. 'By controlling most organizations, regulating economic growth through public expenditure and using protectionism to keep business in check the system could handle regular elections at all levels without feeling threatened' (Salazar 1998: 13). However, under those circumstances when threats to the electoral power of the PRI did arise, there were also a number of available back-up strategies. These were usually based on ballot-box stuffing, thefts of ballots, intimidation and harassment of voters, multiple voting by single individuals, disruption of the voter registration processes, violations of ballot secrecy, and under very extreme circumstances, shutting off the electricity while ballots were being counted (Cornelius et al 1994: 58).

Before palpable resistance to the authoritarianism of the PRI emerged, the stability of the system and the state came under threat by the early 1980s when economic growth was not taking place as desired. In 1982, under president Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988), Mexico had to declare that it was no longer able to pay the massive amounts of foreign debt it had accumulated to maintain its ISI development model. The country was advised to restructure its economy in order to stabilize it and better service its debt; this led Mexico to be one of the first major developing countries to adopt export-oriented growth according to the neoliberal development model. In constituting a major break with the past, the neoliberal reforms required a significant retraction of the state in managing the economy and providing social benefits, the privatization of industry, flexibilization of labour, liberalization of trade, and deregulation of finance. These phenomena are well covered in the literature (Otero 1996; Wise 1998). Trade liberalization consolidated with GATT entry in 1986. Implemented under de la Madrid (1982-1988) according to the immediate needs and demands placed up on him, the reforms were carried much further and more comprehensively by Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994) in line with the conditionalities attached to the U.S. Brady plan. These reforms

not only affected the structure of the economy, but also launched major shifts in the relationships between the state and different sectors of society. While the position of business was enhanced (section 3.5), the position of labour and the public sector were put under serious strain as many of the labour agreements that kept labour loyal to the government were scrapped (section 3.6).

With some fluctuations throughout the decade, economic indicators suggested by 1992 that economic growth could be recaptured under the neoliberal model and that the new forms of wealth coming from the promotion of non-oil exports and, in particular, foreign investment could sustain the economy. However, one of the most notorious legacies of these reforms was the profound impact it had on the distribution of income and wages. As Pastor and Wise indicate, from 1982 to 1987 both the real minimum wages and the real industrial wages fell by more than 30 percent. Following this, there was a slight increase in real average wages up to 1991, though the minimum wage continued to fall. Following the 1994/1995 peso crisis, wages dropped even further and only started to climb up again in 1997, but remained 25 percent below 1994 levels, which were already lower than pre-1982 levels (Pastor and Wise 1998). According to Latapí and de la Rocha (1995), some of the new firms established during readjustment by foreign owners for the manufacture of exportable goods – the fastest growing sector of the reformed economy – paid wages which were 60 percent lower than older comparable firms. Meanwhile, distributional trends of the ISI era were reversed. Between 1984-1994, the share of national income going to the wealthiest 10 percent went back up to 41 percent. In general, precarious employment, decreased social expenditures, combined with rising food prices and general inflation during the first decades of economic reform resulted in an overall loss in real income for the bottom 40 percent of the population. Another important effect of this was the massive rise in urban informal labour market participation. From 1980 to 1987, this grew by 80 percent in absolute terms and expanded from 24 percent to 33 percent of the economy (de la Rocha and Gantt 1995; see Chapter 4), with the poor heavily over-represented in the informal sector (Pastor and Wise 1998).

Also significant to the economic reforms was the changing role of the state in the international arena. This era was marked by the growing influence of 'international policy networks' made possible by well cultivated relationships between the highest authorities of the Mexican government, representatives from the Latin American and Caribbean section (the LAC) of the World Bank, and representatives from the United States (Teichman 2004). Through these networks, the 'technocratic policy elite' within the Mexican government could link their aspirations for neoliberal reform with the rhetoric of international demands, while the

international actors could use them to further their influence and interests in the Mexican economy (Teichman 2004: 47). As a punishment for not foreseeing the 1982 crisis, in both the Mexican government and in the international institutions, 'statists' were increasingly marginalized or removed from their positions. In the same vein, contributing not only to social disillusionment, but to growing tensions within the PRI itself, Salinas (1988-1994) linked himself and the office of the president more closely with the international policy networks than with the traditional party leaders. Such links endowed him with the reputation for having 'propelled the market reform process forward in an exclusionary and authoritarian manner' (Teichman 2004: 48). Convinced that market reforms would continue to bring progress to the Mexican economy, and using his leverage in the international arena supporting globalization, Salinas was likewise able to sell the idea of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the Mexican public. At first enthusiastic in 1994 about the promised benefits that increased trade would bring, it did not take long before another round of disappointment with the results took over.

The Salinas Presidency (1988-1994) offered both disadvantages and advantages to the people, and some argue that in the absence of his ability to propose and enforce new legislation, some of the most important political reforms would not have taken place at the time (Cornelius et al 1994; Teichman 1994). For example, in the context of growing disillusionment during the reform years, Salinas sought to appease the poor with the creation of a new, World Bank funded, targeted poverty alleviation programme, the National Solidarity Programme (PRONASOL) in 1988 (Diaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2003). While the programme yielded some positive results justifying Salinas's argument that he had the poor's interest in mind, the programme could also be characterized as presidentialist in nature, which exploited the president's direct access to financial resources and, more importantly, reaffirmed centralized control over the population (Kaufman and Trejo 1997). PRONASOL was implemented almost exclusively in areas where there was a guaranteed base of support for the PRI, to the profound neglect of millions of additional poor (Parker and Teruel 2005), even though it was the poor who won the 1994 election for the PRI (Dresser 1996). At the same time, it was according to the president's will that the first serious policy reforms intended to promote democracy were implemented. Responding to a combination of international pressure to modernize, a simmering unrest among the population, a weakening corporatist system, the growing strength of the opposition parties, as well as, an informed understanding of what the retraction of the state would mean in the long run, Salinas (1988-1994) implemented a series of reforms in 1990, 1993 and 1994 that would reduce fraud in the electoral process by introducing new

technologies and allowing for external observers. Possibly the most welcomed legislation was that which created an independent Federal Election Institute (IFE), to be headed by a non-partisan citizen-president and made up of members elected by the Chamber of Deputies (Mexico's lower house). As it proved itself capable in doing, the intent of the IFE was to take control away from the PRI in counting votes, facilitate participation of minority opposition, and assure the public of legitimate election results.

Though deepening the split in his own party between the 'modernizers' or '*tecnicos'* and the 'dinosaurs' or 'políticos', the Salinas-led reforms contributed in 1994 to the most reliable presidential election since the time of the revolution in Mexico (Hamilton 2006; Ai Camp 2007). 'Dinosaurs' refer to the old-establishment members of the PRI who did not welcome any change to the system whereas 'modernizers' refers to both reformists and technocrats (Centeno 1999). José Woldenberg, the first president of the IFE observed later that elections in this new context represent 'an enormous change in our political customs and traditions: accepting the existence of others, dialogue, getting along and competing with others, knowing how to win and learning to lose' (Woldenberg 1997: 15). Under President Zedillo (1994-2000), additional reforms were put in place within his first week in office, and later again in 1996. These reforms continued the process of structural change, giving the electoral process and the role of democracy in both the PRI and Mexican society an entirely new character (Vargas 1996).

Among such structural reforms, those addressing forms of political representation included the provision that individuals could become party members without the requirement that they be part of organizations in the corporatist system (Cornelius 1996; Rodríguez 1997). Even in the context of no further reforms, this one alone substantially loosened the hold of the PRI and the state over its political base. Additionally, Zedillo brought an end to the long held tradition of incumbent presidents hand-picking their successor (Magaloni 2006). Rather, a primary election system was put into place in which even non-party members were allowed to vote. To this, Zedillo also stipulated that the mayoral election for Mexico City would be held by popular vote, and that the practice of presidential selection of the mayor would end (Davis 2002). Finally, and crucially for the potential success of opposition parties, the financing and media coverage of election candidates was re-distributed to provide both to opposition parties as well as the incumbent party (Davis 2002). One of the harshest critiques of the PRI regarded its hold over all competitive resources for winning elections. Making financing and media coverage available to other parties was an important step in responding to the potential

diversity in representation that was emerging (Klesner 1997). Nonetheless, the incumbent party still enjoyed a larger portion of public financing and media coverage.

One of the most striking outcomes of these reforms was a profound shift in representation following the 1997 mid-term elections. First, Cuahutémoc Cárdenas, the son of Lázaro Cárdenas, a representative of the newly consolidated Democratic Revolutionary Party (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*, PRD) was elected as mayor of Mexico City in a landslide vote (Chapter 5). Second, the PRI failed to capture a majority of seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The presence of representatives from the opposition parties of the National Action Party (*Partido Acción Nacional,* PAN), the PRD, and other smaller parties ensured that there was no majority rule and that future decision-making would demand party debate, an almost unknown concept up to that time, rather than automatic approval of presidential recommendations (Magaloni 2006; Davis 2002). The zenith of these reforms, however, came with the 2000 election of Vicente Fox (2000-2006) from the opposition PAN party, which threw the PRI out of the presidential office for the first time since the revolution (Paster and Wise 2005). Garnering widespread international attention, and showing the Mexican population how important their vote had become, the election confirmed that the PRI had lost its control over the state apparatus and would take on a new role of competitor in a politically pluralist society (Klesner 2001). Continuing in the spirit of political reform, in 2002 the Federal Law for Transparency and Access to Public Government Information was passed and signed into law, reflecting a fundamentally new character to decision-making and democratic ideals. This law 'emerged from an unusual convergence between civil society intellectuals and media leaders, congressional leaders and legal reformers newly embedded in the executive branch of government' (Fox and Haight 2011: 139). Following vigorous debate, 'the issue had gained such a remarkably broad base of support that Congress passed the final compromise version unanimously' (Fox and Haight: 135). The economic and political reforms put into place from 1982 on have created a Mexico that is vastly different from the one before.

3.5 The state and business

The relative influence of business in certain state functions progressively increased in Mexico since the mid-1980s (Thacker 2006). Differing views give different weight to both the reasons for why business has taken a more prominent role in the making of economic policy as well as the extent of its influence over such policy. Whether such influence was primarily facilitated by a policy gap that could not be filled by state leaders alone (Teichman 2004), by open invitation from the PRI elite (Schneider 2002), or by increased leverage of business over the

state due to an increasingly favourable international context characterized by an upswing in international financial integration (Thacker 2006), there seems to be little evidence to counter the observation that a fundamental shift in state-business relations, and concomitantly a change in the nature of the Mexican state itself, had occurred by the early 1990s. Since the first years following the revolution, the state had embraced an activist role in guiding the economy, though with periods of less or more dependence on the private sector for generating wealth. Kleinberg (1999: 72) conceptualizes this as an 'alliance for profit', but the alliance was controlled by state authority. The changes from 1982 on, however, had an important impact on business/state relations. Beginning with a fleeting moment of nationalization of private banks at the end of 1982, the mid-1980s were characterized by a period of reduced control of the state over business practices. This was followed by a period of dual public and private control from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, which was subsequently followed by, from the early 1990s on, the current era primarily characterized by the significant autonomy of business from the state (Thacker 2006). Moreover, through the course of these incremental but rapid transformations, the private sector – dominated by 'big business' – has emerged as a powerful social force next to the Mexican state apparatus, not only enjoying independence from the state to pursue its goals, but also considerable influence over the making of national economic policy.

In the post-revolutionary corporatist structure period, business had a presence from the start as a number of pre-revolutionary economic elites became part of the post-revolutionary government. Nevertheless, in (nominally) promoting the social justice objectives of the revolution, the political elite successfully constructed and pursued their own identity through which they also gained the legitimacy to control business, making specific business interests secondary to the overall development goals of the state (Valdés-Ugalde 1996: 131). Under such circumstances, the business sector as a whole did not have nor did it actively seek out the level of political influence it would obtain later in the century, but functioned more in the way of an interest group. By the 1940s, a mixed economy had emerged with a high degree of state participation in the private sector, reflecting the ISI-development model (section 3.2). In particular, the state offered a range of subsidies and protections to promote business in some of the key domestic industries such as telecommunications, railroads, airlines, electric power, steel mining, petroleum, and petrochemicals (Hamilton 2006). Further stipulations were made by the state to shield the business sector from the potential of foreign ownership. This came in the form of strictly prohibiting foreign investment in petroleum, mining, banking and finance. Some foreign investment was encouraged, but only in sectors not put off limits by the state.

Additionally, any foreign subsidiaries operating in Mexico were required to be at least 51 percent Mexican owned, and a majority of industrial input had to come from Mexico (Hamilton 2006).

While protection of business was important both in terms of upholding the legitimacy of the state and for generating wealth, such protection can also be interpreted as a way of controlling business interests to branch out and cultivate their role on the international scene, particularly necessary since the business sector was not part of the state corporatist structure. As Thacker (2006) shows in his study of coalition building between the state and business in Mexico, the interest and ability of the state to keep business in check through the 1970s reflected during this time not only a commitment to the ISI-model, but also a lower degree of dependence on business to sustain the national development agenda (Thacker 2006). As he explains, states in general go through periods of more or less dependency on capital brought in by the private sector and can adjust their policies to meet their immediate needs. Up until 1982, with some variation, less dependency on the private sector was made possible by two important factors: a steady flow of foreign aid made in part possible by the flow of petrodollars, and the discovery of oil reserves which substantially increased Mexican export earnings until the early 1980s. By the late 1970s, revenue from oil exports far exceeded that from all other exports combined (up to 80 percent). Even when overseas assistance slowed down considerably following the 1982 Mexican debt de-fault, oil revenues could sustain the state for a short time, but not indefinitely, particularly in light of the 1986 crash in world oil prices. Under these circumstances, the Mexican state found itself in need of finding new ways to bring wealth to the country. As Thacker clarifies, 'High levels of foreign lending to the state can insulate it from business pressures by providing policy makers with access to capital. Conversely, when credit is tight and when the burden of repayment of previous loans becomes onerous, the state becomes more dependent on private capital' (Thacker 2000: 67)

With, thus, an abrupt turn toward a far greater dependence on the private sector in early 1983, a structural shift in power relations between business and the state had begun to take hold. During the de la Madrid administration (1982-1988), new life was blown into the private sector while neoliberal policy priorities of international lenders, with whom big business often agreed, were put into place. By the end of 1983, the 'private sector was declared in various national plans to be the main agent of economic development' (Valdés-Ugalde 1994: 140). Acknowledging the mistrust towards the state that the brief re-nationalization of banks in late 1982 had generated among the private sector, de la Madrid quickly implemented a programme of providing sizable compensation packages to the previous bank owners and of auctioning off

all non-banking financial functions to the highest bidder in 1983. In this process, a powerful financial sector, unconstrained by the state, was able to take shape and function alongside the state-controlled banks. The power of this financial sector was increased by the advantageous international conditions in which it could enhance its networks and links to international capital, but very much at the expense of banks and small industrialists (Thacker 2006: 53). Another major boost for business during the de la Madrid administration came by way of their invitation to participate in the design of the 1987 Economic Solidary Pact (PSE). Not only was it the first time that business was invited to participate in economic policy design, but the final version of the PSE was decidedly big-business-friendly by, first, acknowledging that business confidence would be necessary to achieve economic stability. Second, the PSE policies reinforced the austerity measures already in place, called for wage caps on labour, price controls, and exchange rate controls to attract foreign capital, and signaled to foreign creditors that Mexico was living up to economic liberalization promises (Kleinberg 1999: 75).

The concerted efforts by the following president Salinas (1988-1994) to further the neoliberal agenda gave, 'business, specifically big business, more direct access to the state, more input in economic policy making and hence, more harmonisation of interests over policy choices' (Kleinberg 1999:71) and the growing political influence of big business during that time successfully 'transformed the character of state power' (Valdés-Ugalde 1994: 127) Several important steps were taken during the Salinas administration to make this possible, and were enthusiastically promoted by Salinas himself. The 1989-1994 National Development Plan specifically articulated that it would aim to attract foreign investment. To facilitate this, Salinas offered a reinterpretation of the Foreign Investment Law of 1989 and introduced a new Foreign Investment Law at the end of 1993. These new laws lifted many constraints off foreign investment into previously protected sectors and allowed private companies to be 100 percent foreign owned. Salinas also initiated the auctioning off the nationalized banking sector in 1982. The process through which the sell-offs took place played a pivotal role in determining whose interests would be making up the subsequently formed new class of economic elite. Rather than selling banking functions back to their previous owners, Salinas made the banking sector open to any and all highest bidders. Invariably, these highest bidders came from either the new financial class which had taken shape in the previously privatized nonbanking financial sector, or from abroad. In this, Salinas achieved his desired effect: 'Finally, the private sector, and particularly the large economic groups, have become more fully integrated with foreign and particularly U.S. corporations through joint ventures,

marketing arrangements, franchises, and technical agreements, which now encompass virtually every sector of the economy' (Hamilton 2006: 325).

A key action initiated by de la Madrid (1982-1988) illustrates a crucial shift in thinking about the role that business should play not only in the state, but in the party (Harvey 1993). While traditionally keeping business interests at a safe distance, since the economic reforms of 1982, de la Madrid and others actively encouraged the participation of the business elite in the party apparatus by contributing to PRI publications, providing financial support, becoming candidates for elections, and, in essence, cultivating a public relationship with the PRI. This trend was continued by his predecessors as big business, in turn, not only accepted this role, but sought to carve out its own normative place within the state. In 1998, during the Zedillo administration (1994-2000), the Business Coordinating Council of Mexico (CCE) put forward its own mandate beyond that of coordinating the activities of the business sector by including in it the task of doing what it can to lead Mexico to a 'full representative and participatory democracy with a socially responsible market economy' (Olmeda Carranza 2001: 65). They saw it as a moral duty to participate in the design of the new emerging Mexican state (Olmeda Carranza 2001). Following the massive change in party leadership after the 2000 presidential election, the business sector's position in Mexican society was strengthened by the election of Fox (2000-2006) as a former businessman. This is evidenced from a speech given at the Eleventh National Congress of Industrialists in 2000, by the then president of the CCE: 'Mexican business, together with other sectors, took upon ourselves the task of accelerating the democratic transition that Mexico had been going through for several years, confident in our conviction that the consolidation of democracy in our country would generate the appropriate political conditions for structural change in the economy that would spur a high, sustained growth' (Olmeda Carranza 2001: footnote 3).

In short, the role of business as a social force in Mexican society from before the debt crisis of 1982 to the early 2000s has transformed rather dramatically. While promoting the interests of business, yielding to its increased leverage, and articulating the ambition to be more fully integrated in the global economy, the state has endowed business with a pivotal role in the making of national economic policy, meanwhile also successfully managing its own withdrawal from guiding economic development (Valdés-Ugalde 2002). The change in power relations between the state and business is one outcome of this trajectory, but it can be seen that it also has the effect of reshaping civil society more generally. The implications of this on low-wage urban civil society organizations is further examined in Chapters 5 and 6.

3.6 The state and labour

While changes in the business-state relationship have arguably contributed to a new form of statehood in Mexico, the long-standing relations between the state and labour have also undergone transformation with implications for the democratic movement in Mexico. Having gone from a privileged position in the state since being drawn into the PRI corporatist system under Lázaro Cárdenes at the end of the 1930s, the official Mexican labour unions were in a state of uncertainty as they were challenged politically and structurally from both the inside and outside. The state experienced a similar uncertainty in its relationship with labour by the early 2000s, and more so since the election of Vicente Fox in 2000. Having had at one time a clear structural mechanism for controlling labour behaviour, those mechanisms have either been weakened or entirely undermined in the context of political and economic reforms. Different positions have been taken regarding the main factors that brought about these changes in state/labour relations. First, the corporatist structure through which client-patronage relations could take place was weakened due to democratic tendencies facilitating an increase in political pluralism in Mexico as well as declining presidentialism (Horcasitas 1996; Samstad 2002). Second, political changes played a secondary role to economic reforms: 'The changes in Mexican labour have resulted principally from the neoliberal economic agenda introduced by the PRI in 1982 and continued by President Vicente Fox of the PAN since his election in 2000' (La Botz 2005: 63). Third, a middle ground has been established by Teichman (1992) who argues that economic reforms affected the politics of the corporatist-clientelist relationship between labour and the state. She sees the neoliberal agenda not acting on labour directly, but through political reforms made by the state to better accommodate the requirements of economic reform (Teichman 1992).

The corporatist structures which cultivated a close relationship between the state and labour were held in place over time by the PRI leadership through three main mechanisms. From a technical perspective, the ISI development strategy was conducive to decent wage policies to promote domestic consumption, high levels of employment, and the promotion of collective bargaining agreements in state-run industries, all of which served workers' interests. From a political perspective, the state co-opted worker interests by exploiting the strong populist rhetoric of the Mexican Revolution. Such rhetoric maintained that the working class, as the prime contributors to the Mexican economy, should prevail above all in national politics and economic development and further portrayed the Mexican government as constantly working against any form of opposition to promoting labour rights (Davis 1994). From a social perspective, and more notoriously, the PRI leadership made extensive use of patron-client

relationships with union leaders. Those union leaders who most actively worked in the interest of the PRI leadership were generously rewarded with privileged status in the government as well as the opportunity to enhance their personal wealth (Murillo 2000). Through their own forms of manipulation, such union leaders were able to minimize worker demands, keep labour conflicts at bay, discourage strikes, and provide visible political support through the timely organization of demonstrations among workers showing their support for the PRI. Union leaders who resisted open support of the PRI were often forcefully removed from their positions and replaced by what are referred to as hand-picked favorites (Hathaway 2000). Furthermore, at those times when the co-optation of worker interests was not successful, non-official unions, opposition parties, and non-affiliated groups generally faced either non-recognition or neutralization by the state, or outright violent repression (Eckstein 1977).

Included among the many challenges to the state that came with the 1982 debt crisis was the sudden lack of available financial resources to sustain the patron-client relationship cultivated with labour thus far. This resulted from the combination of needing to channel whatever funds were available into debt repayment, the immediate implementation of severe cuts in public expenditures from 17 percent in 1982, to 8.5 percent in 1983 (Teichman 1992), and the selling off of public entities to the private sector. This did provide funds, but on a one-time only basis. It did not constitute a long terms source of revenue. Potential investors, however, were initially hesitant to buy public entities despite their interest in expanding private sector influence. The existing collective agreements with labour resulted in high productivity costs, something that the private sector prefers to avoid. In order for public entities to be interesting to the private sector, these collective agreements needed to be revised or eliminated. At the same time, the private sector did not trust, nor did they want to involve themselves in, the patron-client relationships that characterized the public sector entities. Elements of the 1983 National Development Plan were meant to address some of these concerns by establishing that economic recovery would require the modernization of the labour sector. Among such plans for modernization were the elimination of the worst forms of patron-client relations, an end to worker promotions based on party loyalties, the flexibilization of the workforce to ease the process of hiring/firing, cuts in social benefits for workers, a greater reliance on temporary workers, and the implementation of wage caps as recommended by the World Bank and IMF (Teichman 1992; Samstad 2002; La Botz 2005). Deepened further by the 1987 Economic Solidarity Pact, in which business (section 3.3), played an unprecedented role in influencing policy, this modernization process was meant to make foreign investment in Mexico more attractive while increasing global competiveness by holding labour down.

These economically motivated reforms in labour policy launched a long-term erosion of the tight relationship between the PRI-led state and its official unions through direct confrontation with the corporatists (Teichman 1992). Though it became more difficult for the major unions to control worker discontent during the early reform years, it remained in the interest of labour leaders to find ways of doing so in order to perpetuate their privileged status. Despite these effort to support the labour reforms, the major labour unions found themselves operating in an increasingly 'hostile political environment' (Patroni 2000) of private sector demands to further overhaul labour legislation. Salinas (1988-1994), moreover, did not hesitate to lash out during his term against even the most minimal forms of worker representation by the official and non-official unions. The obvious shift in loyalties from labour to business on the part of Salinas drove a number of official unions to withdraw from the National Confederation of Mexican Workers (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Mexicanos,* CTM). However, they did not withdraw from the party, and initiated the practice of negotiating labour agreements directly with the private sector. In most cases, however, workers were no better off because of it. Most union leaders, this time in a more autonomous role, continued to support neoliberal reforms to maintain their good standing in the PRI. The effects of this worked in favour of several interests. First, removal of the state from labour negotiations supported open market principles and reduced the image of corruption abroad. Second, direct negotiations which were not formally mediated by state interests reflected the desire among workers to implement more democratic procedures within the union structure, even if such negotiations still promoted worker-unfriendly Salinas-style economic reforms. Third, a closer relationship between union leaders and management on a company-by-company basis served to fragment rather than fortify a strong labour union sector, thereby adding another dimension to the growing relative power of business over labour (Patroni 2000: 2).

Further challenges to the position of organized labour in Mexican society emerged along with the nationwide democratization movements and the associated weakening political power of the PRI since the early 1990s. In short, the success of the corporatist structure depended on the preservation of centralized power by the PRI. A general push toward democratization and the willingness of the PRI to recognize such momentum in civil society eventually undermined the power it could hold over labour, and the support it could command in return. As the PRI began to lose in local and state-wide elections around the country to opposition parties in the 1990s, the corporatist mechanisms that had been in place for controlling the electoral behaviour of labour in those locations were immediately undermined, if not eliminated. The PRI, then, had to adapt and learn to compete for the support of labour just as the other political

parties. Labour would likewise have to adapt. Organized labour was weakened. In local and state elections, official union leaders lost their leverage over the local electoral process. Up until this time, union leaders had a say in who would run as the PRI candidates. Labour did not have an influence in this at the federal level – the president chose directly. Their endorsements were important to guarantee the public support of the unions, and would be rewarded with the usual pay-offs through patron-client relations. With the PRI out of power, labour leaders could not rely on obtaining the usual benefits provided through this system and had to learn to compete with other interests in society for the support of elected officials (Murillo 2001). This new competitive position was further defined by a 1999 Mexican Supreme Court ruling favouring independent labour organizing among public sector employees which went against a constitutional mandate. Private sector employees had always had the official right to organize independently (Marshall 2004). Another ruling in 2001was taken against provisions in the federal labour law which gave preference to the established corporatist unions (Ai Camp 2007: 154). Following the 2000 election of Vicente Fox (2000-2006) of the PAN to the presidency, these same trends took hold at a centralized level as the corporatist system was dismantled. As a result, the role of labour as a social force in society was transformed and would henceforth function 'more as a pluralist pressure group than a corporatist bargaining unit' (Samstad 2002:18).

Democratization initiatives did not just impact the experience and status of labour from the outside, but from the inside as well. As the PRI started losing local and state elections throughout the 1990s, labour leaders lost their hold over workers and could not secure their votes. While this had already started to be the case among workers who felt betrayed by those leaders who had succumbed to the pressures of neoliberal reforms, growing interest within civil society inspired many rank and file workers to resist the authoritarian hold that the official union leaders had over them. Some of these leaders who were motivated in the same direction began forming opposition groups from the mid-1990s onward. Some preferred to remain within the corporatist structure but demanded procedural reforms and more support from the state relative to business, while others chose to break away to form new union organizations autonomous from both the party and the state (Samstad 2002; La Botz 2005).

These trends led to the formation of a new independent labour federation called the National Workers Union (*Unión Nacional de Trabajadores,* UNT) made up of departing official unions from the CTM, several non-official, non-CTM unions, and importantly, several independent unions such as the Authentic Labour Front which were more closely linked to broader grassroots movements for democratic reform at all levels of Mexican society (see Chapter 6).

Likewise, in 1998 several unions which remained in the CT joined up with other non-official unions, peasant organizations, and movements among the urban poor to create the Mexican Union Front (FSM). While the FSM did not constitute a labour federation, it included a wide-range of social groups eager to confront neoliberal reform and create stronger ties between labour and civil society (La Botz 2005). Together the processes of economic reforms, democratic transitions, and internal divisions of organized labour have resulted in the reorientation of organized labour away from its position in the corporatist structure and toward a more deeply entrenched role in civil society. While such trends have created uncertainty and may weaken the labour movement in the short-term, there is potential for it to be strengthened as it becomes part of broader social movements and consolidates itself as a new social force. These changes in labour have played a role in the overall political agency of the urban poor and will be addressed again in Chapter 6.

3.7 Closing

In line with the multi-scalar approach and a Neo-Gramscian interpretation of the state, this chapter has brought out the changing nature and relationships of the state of Mexico with both global and domestic social forces form the period of the early 1980s to the early 2000s. Within a relatively short period of time, and influenced by global ties, the deeply entrenched relationships between the state, business, and labour changed significantly by the early 2000s. In this vein, the chapter has highlighted how both economic reforms and steps toward a democratic transition were driven by, but also led to, new actors and influences interacting with the state. Central to this – and as both a cause and consequence of reforms – growing conflict within the traditional ruling party of Mexico eventually led to the formation of new opposition parties. With this, and all the enthusiasm that came with the potential they might offer for change, the population made more demands from the government to provide social benefits, deal with the disruptions in employment and wages, and confront poverty. The weakened corporatist structure made it more difficult for the state to reach and control the population, thus newly targeted social policies were put into place which would reach the poor directly. While these policies aimed to pacify the population and increase the popularity of the PRI, the longer term impact was to further impair clientelist relations and fundamentally change the relationship between the state and the rest of society. From these ruptures, it is argued that new social configurations emerged within Mexican civil society generally, and urban society specifically, facilitating new forms of political engagement among the urban poor. This will be looked at in Chapters 5 and 6.

4. Mexico City as Globalizing City

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an historical account of how Mexico City has transformed since the era of neoliberal restructuring beginning in the early 1980s. Since this time, urban economic development in Mexico City has largely been characterized by the establishment or enhancement of links with global processes (Aguilar et al 2003; Parnreiter 2002). While historically prominent in Mexican national growth, Mexico City took on a new role in the national context by becoming the most important center for driving market-led growth on a national level (Aguilar et al 2003). Promoting, and also spurred by, foreign and domestic investment, the city grew as an attractive site for corporate headquarters, and achieved a more significant role in the global economy. As such, this chapter focuses on the historical transformative processes that were associated with the deepening of neoliberal principles, and provides data illustrating the divisive and polarizing transformations within the city that have been correlated to its growing global orientation (Parnreiter 2002).

Importantly, this chapter serves as a bridge between the shifting global and national context presented in Chapter 3, and the ways in which city-level politics (Chapter 5) and urban based civil society organizations (Chapter 6) have responded to and resisted such changes. The purpose of the chapter is not to theorize urban governance or urban transformations in themselves, but to interpret Mexico City as a site in which global, urban and local dynamics can be observed as interacting and influencing each other. As such, Mexico City is viewed as a 'container' in which multi-scalar dynamics unfold, as the city itself is characterized by the ever-growing presence of global forces. This chapter relies on secondary literature which has offered insights for interpreting the role of Mexico City in its national and international context. That literature is used here to draw conclusions about the meaning of Mexico City for the multi-scalar analysis. The chapter also draws on existing data to show how the economic structure of Mexico City has changed since the 1980s, and how this has had an impact on the working and living conditions of the lower wage urban populations.

4.2 Taking stock of Mexico City: centralization, de-centralization, re-centralization

The primacy of Mexico City in the Mexican urban system – as well as the economic, political and social significance of Mexico City to the nation as a whole – has been largely undisputed, despite some minor fluctuations in its relative status over the last few decades (Connolly 1999; Portes and Roberts 2005). Perhaps generating the most widespread attention over the years for

its mega-city characteristics and startling population size reaching nearly 20 million in 2005,[1] various attempts have been made to reduce the concentration of its urban population (Ward 1998; UN Habitat 2010). Beginning as early as the 1940s, and intensified in the 1970s, regional policies prioritizing urban industrialization under the ISI-model (Chapter 3) were combined with the expansion of necessary infrastructure to steer the population in the direction of multiple urban centers. This partially succeeded in what would later become a more polycentric urban system, but not in easing the growing pressure on Mexico City itself (Garza 1999). Political and economic expediency under the ISI-model in locating the drivers of economic development – such as the growing durable manufacturing sector – in the nation's capital undermined other spatial and regional policy goals. In general, the national policy context favored urban over rural development (Richardson 1981; Aguilar 1999) as it would allow Mexico to experience quicker economic growth. The budding manufacturing sector increased employment opportunities, and the massive population influx to Mexico City took root as people came in search of an income and better social services (Villa and Rodriguez 1996). By the early 1980s, as economic liberalization was being implemented, the city was host to 30 percent of Mexico's urban population (Garza 1999) and 46 percent of all manufacturing employment in the country (World Bank 2005a), with 94 percent of such manufacturing located in the city-center itself (Aguilar et al 2003; Graizbord et al 2003).

The primacy of the capital city was common in most countries of Latin America (Portes and Roberts 2005: 110; World Bank 2005a), but the extreme concentration of population and economic activity in Mexico City by the early 1980s was, by all standards, exceptional. Under these circumstances, Mexico City became the largest metropolitan area in the Western hemisphere (Graizbord et al 2005). This has remained the case even as immigration rates to Mexico City have declined in the last two decades (Izazola 2004) and as formal semi-skilled job opportunities associated with manufacturing have moved to other regions. Nonetheless, movement of economic opportunities away from common destinations in the greater metropolitan area of Mexico city did not reduce pressure on the city as a whole. Rather, it reduced population pressures in specific locations within the more heavily populated Federal District, but this was balanced out by increased growth in the urban periphery (Aguilar et al 2003). For this reason, it is hard to conceptually separate the geographical categories of the metropolitan area, despite the long distances between them, and the tendency in the literature to do so (Graizbord et al 2005). As the peripheries grew, they captured some of the most

[1] 5.4 million in 1960, 13 million in the early 1980s, 16.1 million in 1990, 17.9 million by 1995, 18.4 million in 2000, and 19.2 million in 2005 in the greater Mexico City area.

important dynamics associated with neoliberal trends such as the liberalization of trade and investment and the flexibilization of labour, even as most wealth continued to be generated at the center (Aguilar and Ward 2003; Graizbord et al 2003 and 2005).

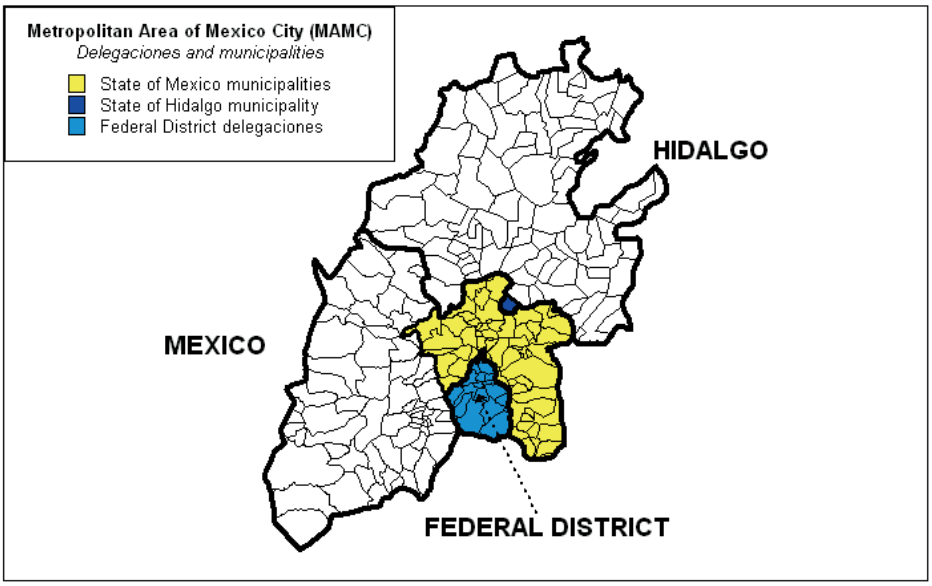


Figure 4.1: Map of Federal District and surrounding areas making up Metropolitan Zone
Source: OECD 2004

Moreover, the movement of people, products and capital between the city center and the periphery also strengthened the economic dynamics between them (Graizbord et al 2003). Trends in the de-concentration and/or decentralization of Mexico City materialized in the economic inclusion or integration of the closest rural peripheries, and this process was intensified with the opening of the national economy to foreign investment and foreign imports (Aguilar and Ward 2003). Under these conditions, small and medium sized firms located in the outer rings of the city were exposed to new forms of competition. Regional trade agreements into which Mexico entered, such as NAFTA in 1994, included export standards that some domestic firms were not able to meet (Chavez 2002). For this reason, Mexico City became even more important since the 1980s as a domestic market of last resort (Graizbord et al 2003). Given its population size, consumption habits, and diversity, as well as numerous entry points to the ever expanding informal market, domestic producers were eager to get their products to the nation's capital and remain domestically competitive (Graizbord et al 2003). As

such, even with a transfer of population from the urban core to the urban periphery, and even with a growing export sector in the border states of Mexico which has drawn away some investment (Jordaan 2008), the privatization of the economy and its opening to global markets more deeply consolidated, rather than reduced, the central position of Mexico City in the nation's economy and made it the most important node in the polycentric urban network (Graizbord et al 2003; Parnreiter 2002).

Just as the 1982 economic crisis served as a pivotal moment in setting Mexican development into a new direction (section 3.4), it also can be seen as the primary driving force behind the continued centralization of Mexico City in the Mexican economy, up to the present day (Garza 1999). When the crisis took hold, the Mexican leadership made strong commitments towards implementing neoliberal reforms which included market-driven development. For Mexico City, this would not only mean that foreign direct investment would play a large role in boosting economic growth, but that the retraction of state-led development would allow for 'the gradual disintegration of federal policies on territorial matters,' (Garza 1999: 159). As such, private sector actors would have a stronger influence over how territories were used to promote economic growth, simply by their power of investment. This process was reinforced with the 1990 National Programme for Urban Development (Garza 1999) which called for the inclusion of the private sector to provide services to facilitate urban reorganization. While this would offer financial support to urban leadership, it also provided private sector actors with leverage over how urban space would be used.

4.3 Mexico City as globalizing city

In short, by the mid-1980s, the importance of Mexico City to the national economy was indisputable. Several processes took place simultaneously. The national economy re-oriented toward the global market, urban development shifted toward market planning over state planning, and foreign investors were attracted to the centralized role of Mexico City in driving national economic growth. In this context, the global prominence of Mexico City grew as well (Sassen 2000). For instance, the economy of Mexico City in 2012/2013 made up the fifth largest economy in Latin America, and the eighth largest urban economy in the world (Flannery 2013). According to the Globalization and World Cities Research Network, Mexico City had moved from Alpha minus status in 2000/2004 to full Alpha status by 2010 (Taylor et al 2010). According to the GaWC, alpha minus status and alpha status both refer to cities that are very important and 'link major economic regions and states into the world economy' (Taylor et al 2010). In terms of measurement, alpha minus and alpha status are determined by

the relative amount that they serve global capital, in comparison to the ideal-type global city, London. On a scale from 0 to 1, where London expresses 0.988 connectivity, an alpha-minus city expresses 0.46 connectivity, and an alpha city expresses 0.58 (Taylor et al 2010). This status of Mexico City is shared by cities such as Frankfurt, Amsterdam and San Francisco. Likewise, the AT Kearney Global Cities Index 2008 listed Mexico City at number 25 (out of a listing of the top 40), based on five categories including business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience and political engagement (AT Kearney 2008).

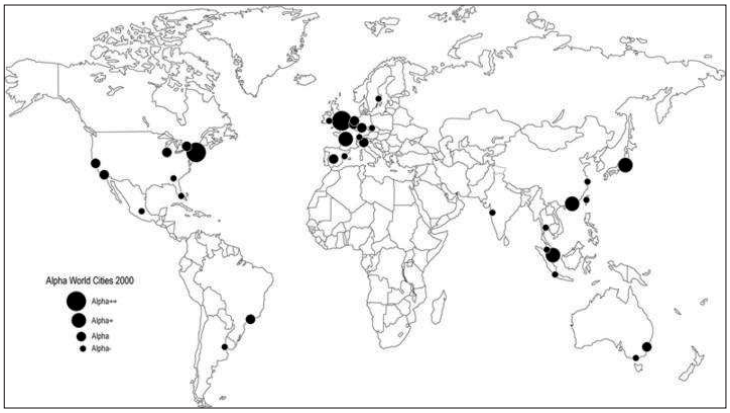


Figure 4.2: Cartogram of Alpha Cities, The World According to GaWC 2000

4.3.1 Increasing global connectivity

The increased embeddedness in international flows and global city networks that brought wealth into the city also resulted in structural changes that have disadvantaged large parts of the population. Mexico City's economic recovery following the 1982 economic crisis thus took place alongside a more generalized decline in social welfare, growing labour insecurity, inequality, and social dislocation. This will be considered here in terms of the transformations and re-location of manufacturing in Mexico City, the rise of low-skilled services, urban wage and employment dynamics for low-income workers, the expanding informal market, and migration patterns. These patterns illustrate that, '[o]ld industrial centers have been almost completely transformed under the pressure of a more competitive international environment.' (OECD 2004: 45).

4.3.2 Foreign direct investment

Much of Mexico City's growth came from the relative amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) that started entering into Mexico City's Federal District and the wider metropolitan area in the mid-1970s. By 1998, nearly two-thirds of all FDI in Mexico was being directed toward the Federal District and the wider metropolitan area – an amount double to that of all FDI directed toward the six northern border states which are home to most export production (Parnreiter 2002), with the United States being the country from which most FDI originated (Angeles Villarreal 2015). Mexico City thus enhanced its national position as the primary host to both domestic and foreign corporate headquarters. Two-thirds of the headquarters of the automobile, petrochemical, and electrical equipment industries in Mexico – those considered to be among the top five industries with the highest productive gains – were also located in the wider metropolitan area. Meanwhile, the rise in the advanced service sector headquarters from foreign investment made a strong appearance starting in the mid-1980s (Parnreiter 2007), and played a pivotal role in the recovery of Mexico City in the years following the economic crisis (Parnreiter 2002 and 2007).

4.3.3 Manufacturing

Manufacturing had been an important sector in the occupational structure of both the Federal District and the greater metropolitan area since the 1970s to the time of research in the early 2000s. However, manufacturing output of Mexico City declined significantly between 1970-1988, by a full 20 percent, as did the relative importance of manufacturing to Mexico City (Garcia-Verdú 2006). The reduced presence of the manufacturing sector in Mexico City not only led to job losses in Mexico City, but to declines in social welfare as well as working classes faced cuts in their incomes. The declines in the manufacturing belt around the Federal District, beginning just before the economic crisis of 1982, contributed to weakened unions and unfavorable wage policies (section 3.4), thus creating insecurity among lower income groups. Some movement of manufacturing to areas outside of the Federal District came about from those policies attempting to limit pressure on the city by drawing residents and migrants toward jobs in other locations, while additional movement of manufacturing to the Northern border with the United States was in line with the deepening commitment to trade liberalization as part of neoliberal transformations (Garcia-Verdú 2006).

4.3.4 Jobs in manufacturing

Jobs in manufacturing followed a similar pattern. In 1980, Mexico City claimed 47 percent of all manufacturing jobs nationwide. This dropped to 26 percent by 2002, while the relative

importance of employment in manufacturing went up in the states adjacent to the greater metropolitan area of Mexico City (34 percent) and the northern border (26 percent). In the period leading up to and just after the debt crisis, just over half (51 percent) of formally employed individuals in Mexico City worked in manufacturing, followed by trade (26 percent) and then services (23 percent) . By 1998, this level had dropped to just 31 percent in manufacturing, and rose in trade and services by 31 percent and 39 percent, respectively. Importantly, 26 percent of jobs among the extreme poor were provided by manufacturing in 1991, and this dropped to 19 percent by 2003. This trend continued through the 1990s, with the OECD (2004: 2) review finding that 'the most defining characteristics of the metropolitan economy are the consolidation of the tertiary sector as the driving force of the regional economy...', with 26 percent working in the secondary sector, and 73 percent in the tertiary sector (OECD 2004: 50).

The decline of manufacturing played an important role affecting the livelihoods of low-wage and low-skilled workers in Mexico City around the time of the first debt crisis for several reasons. The movement of manufacturing out of the Federal District did not necessarily imply a movement to other parts of the country, but also to the urban periphery. Manufacturing firms rationally made use of the advantageous terms to relocate to areas of cheaper real estate and cheaper labour. However, this did not result in more wealth being generated or re-invested in those areas, nor in an increase in government spending or oversight in those areas. The peripheral regions to which some manufacturing industries moved were characterized by much of what is included in general descriptions of urban poverty – overcrowding, a degraded environment, irregular settlements with limited access to utilities, poor roads, insufficient transportation, insecurity and vulnerable living conditions. The result was that individuals and families seeking available job opportunities in manufacturing were also subject to a lower quality of life, even in the context of stable employment. The degraded environment and inadequate housing of these areas contributed to the deteriorating health of many residents, with up to 50 percent of the urban poor suffering from some kind of illness associated with unsanitary living conditions at any time (Sattherthwaite 1995; Connolly 2003).

4.3.5 Population changes

A combination of migration to Mexico City and the movement of the low-income population from the Federal District to the peripheral areas where more jobs were available resulted in population density shifts throughout the wider metropolitan area. While, for instance, the Federal District experienced a negative 2 percent population growth from 1970-1990, the

peripheral areas collectively experienced an astounding growth of 30 percent, with the highest portion of that going to areas located furthest from the center (22 percent of the total). Meanwhile, per capita government spending on services and infrastructure in the peripheral regions of the city was far below spending in the Federal District (Connolly 2003). The State of Mexico and Hidalgo (two regions included in the wider metropolitan area) received approximately a third of what the Federal District receives despite the rapid growth of these areas and the need to fund the lacking infrastructure and services (Connolly 2003) For example, on average between 1990 and 2000, 55 percent of the population in the peripheral areas had indoor piped water, compared to 72 percent in the Federal District, with similar patterns in other services (Connolly 2003). Moreover, it is not only a matter of neglect. Under Mexican law, the irregular or illegal settlements of the urban periphery were not entitled to receive city-provided services. As migration increased to those areas, 60 percent of the city's population was residing in irregular settlements by the year 2000, and Mexico City could be characterized as having a more profound spatial segregation of poverty than ever before (Marcuse and van Kempen 2002).

4.3.6 Growing informality

In 1984, official labour unions covered approximately 30 percent of the workforce in 1984, but this dropped to 20 percent of the workforce in 2000. As the reach of official labour unions declined, more workers turned toward the informal market to generate income (La Botz 2005). Low-wage service sector jobs grew as a consequence of the failure of the formal labour market to provide alternative employment options, and thereby contributed to Mexico City's growing informal sector. As Parnreiter (2002: 163) described, the 'traditional factory worker, who lost his job during the crisis of the 1980s, [was] very likely to be unable to find employment in the advanced service sector,' while '...an increased share of poor workers now work in construction, commerce and personal services – sectors characterized by lower-than-average wages, high informality, slow growth and a tendency to decline sharply in recessions' (World Bank 2005: 13). Overall, throughout the 1990s, more than half of the labour force in greater Mexico City was informal, and over 65 percent of the informal sector output was attributed to services and trade (Garcia-Verdú 2006). Participation in the informal sector took on an increasingly 'involuntary' character. (World Bank 2005: 11), though there remain different perspectives on whether informality is a choice (Günther and Launov 2012; Biles 2008; see also section 6.4.2). However, as reported by La Jornada in 2003, even involuntary entry was becoming increasingly difficult in Mexico City as informal market participation was becoming

saturated because of the higher levels of open unemployment as more workers were losing their jobs and as new job-seekers were entereing the market (Baltzar 2003).

The official definition of the informal sector is that it encompasses non-agricultural goods and services which are intended to be delivered to the domestic market. They are produced privately and within the household sector (Garcia-Verdú 2006). Informal workers do not have access to social security benefits that employers are required to provide according to national labour legislation, though enforcement even in the formal labor market is difficult (Garcia-Verdú 2006). In addition to formal definitions, characteristics of informality in Mexico City usually include a generally low wellbeing among workers, a low level of schooling, few household assets or capital, a higher proportion of migrants than other sectors, and both physical and social insecurity and vulnerability in the settings where they work (Satterthwaite 1995; Connolly 1999). This is also exemplified in the 2005 World Bank study, in which it was found that in the 1990s, 66 percent of participants in the informal sector received less than two minimum wages and 64.4 percent had no access to job related healthcare coverage (World Bank 2005). Moreover, throughout the 1990s, up to 72 percent of those working in the service sector did not earn enough income to keep them above the poverty line (World Bank 2005).

Informality is further associated with the relocation of manufacturing into the peripheral regions of Mexico City. While this helped to disperse the population out of the city center, it resulted in an accelerated population growth just beyond. More than half of this dispersed population was characterized by its irregular residential status, low-wage informal labour, and poor living conditions. In fact, there was a higher share of informal employment in the greater Mexico City area than would be expected by the size of its general population (Garcia Verdú 2006). This has been explained by the low skills and lower levels of wellbeing among low-wage Mexican workers. These characteristics translate into low-worker productivity. In the formal sector, this is problematic for the competitiveness of Mexican manufacturing on a global scale (OECD 2004; Garcia-Verdú 2006), and leads to higher levels of worker dismissals as manufacturing firms seek to increase productivity levels. This, in turn, drives more individuals into the informal sector, consolidating low-skills, low wellbeing, and low productivity in the informal sector as well (OECD 2006).

4.3.7 Income and wages

In reference to earnings, it is necessary for a household with two parents and two children to obtain at least three minimum wages per day (INEGI 2002). Anything under this amount means that a household is likely living in poverty. In 2002, 68.6 percent of the population of

the ZMCM obtained less than three minimum wages. Of this, 8.4 percent received no income, 12.3 percent received less than one minimum wage, 30.3 percent received between one and two minimum wages, and 17.6 percent received more than two minimum wages, but less than three (INEGI 2002). These numbers do not directly translate into poverty rates (section 4.4.8) as it is possible that multiple members of a household are earning minimum wages, however they are quite suggestive by implication. Incomes of less than two minimum wages a day in Mexico City were heavily concentrated in irregular settlements where the quality of life is generally low (Garcia-Verdú 2006). At the same time, the 2006 OECD Policy Brief highlighted that approximately 95 percent of the (entire) Mexican population experiencing income poverty lived in households where people work, and not in households where all members are unemployed. This suggests that income remained insufficient even if multiple members of the household are working.

Obtaining a sufficient income is the key source for staying out of poverty in an urban setting (Amis 1995), a challenge which has become increasingly harder to overcome. Whether taking the formal or informal sector into consideration, since the 1982 debt crisis the purchasing power of wages has dropped steadily, and by 2003 had not shown signs of returning to their pre-crisis levels (Connolly 2003; Lopez-Acevedo 2003). In a broad context, the downward pressure on wages reflected a contradiction between the macroeconomic transitions of structural adjustment, and the lack of vision for modernizing salaries of Mexican workers (Sánchez 1990; Adelman and Taylor 1990). In a policy context, the inability of wages to more closely meet the needs of rising prices was due to wage capping policies which were implemented in 1977 and enforced since 1983 as part of the IMF mandated reforms (section 3.6). Wage capping calls for the direct intervention of the National Commission on Minimum Wages (*Comisión Nacional de Salarios Minimos*) to set a maximum percentage at which minimum wages can increase each year. Since 1983, moreover, the cost of a basic needs basket went up by 663 percent, while nominal salaries only went up by 375 percent. After 1996, there was an increase in real wages, but by 2003 they had not yet recovered to the levels they were at in 1991 (World Bank 2005: 10). Nominal wages for all industries also declined in Mexico City since the 1990s, particularly in 'industries overrepresented by the working poor such as construction, commerce and personal services,' as job growth was overwhelmed by demand (World Bank 2005: 10). To see it in relative terms, workers in Mexico City earned wages that were six percent higher than those of workers on the northern border in 1993. By 1999, formal workers in Mexico City obtained wages that were 10 percent lower than those in

the north, while in smaller firms with less than five employees in Mexico City, the pay was 24 percent less (López-Acevedo 2003: 23).

By the early 2000s, low-wage workers in Mexico City were working more, but are earning less (Mexico's urban poor 2011). As such, measures have had to be taken by the poor workers themselves to fill the income gap. Such measures not only refer to the number of hours worked by each individual, but also to the number of members working in a household. The need to supplement household incomes included sending more household members into mostly the informal market, also referred to as the 'added worker' strategy (World Bank 2005: 24), which have allowed households to compensate for short-term losses and survive crises. Nonetheless, there is a negative long-term impact as increasing the number of workers per household also means sending children and youth into the labour market. In most cases, this means that some children in a household will not attend school at all or only irregularly (Latapí and de la Rocha 1995; World Bank 2005). At the same time, as more women joined the labour market, they experienced the extra burden of providing income as well as maintaining their households, according to demands put on them by their traditional roles in society (Connolly 2003). It is worth mentioning that while the World Bank has stated in the past that urban poverty reduction is possible by improving productivity at the household level (Wratten 1995), others argue that household resources are already being maximized to their fullest, often at the expense of other types of social wellbeing, including food consumption and healthcare (Latapí and de la Rocha 1995 and 2001).

4.3.8 Unemployment

Being able to send multiple members of a household into the informal sector may suggest that finding a low-skilled job need not be difficult and that there is a constant demand for labour. Indeed, unemployment levels in Mexico City have traditionally been very low, at an average of about 5 percent over the last 30 years. At the end of 1995, open unemployment was at a high of 7.4 percent (compared to 6 percent nationally) and had fallen to 3.1 percent (compared to 2.8 nationally) at the end of 2001 (INEGI 2002), with the higher rate for 1995 reflecting the circumstances of the 1994 peso crisis. However, it is crucial to understand the terms of labour force participation and unemployment in Mexico. Firstly, to be in the labour force means to be economically active, that is, it does not make a difference if economic activity is in the formal or informal sector. Both groups are included meaning that some are employed with benefits and others are not. Secondly, the terms for open unemployment are extreme. It refers to anyone who is the age of 12 years or older, who did not work for one or more hours in the

prior week, and who did not do any unpaid work for their family or household (Martin 2000: 16).

To clarify, this means that anyone age of 12 or older who 'worked at least one hour for barter or money', or 'did any work at all as unpaid family or nonfamily worker' is officially considered either self-employed or employed (Martin 2000: 16). Underemployment, moreover, continues to be a problem in which workers, either individually or in a household, have jobs which have insufficient hours or provide insufficient income to provide subsistence living. This means that while being employed according to official categorizations, the employment does not provide a means of living. In this regard, it is possible to overlook the hardship encountered by the urban poor when focusing on employment rates alone, instead of on the conditions of their work which is increasingly informal, of poor quality, and in many ways insufficient for decent living (World Bank 2005). As argued by Estévez García, 'low open unemployment only masks the high level of employment in the informal sector' (Estévez García 2002: 20).

4.3.9 Poverty in Mexico City

The significance of changing occupational structures and spatial differentiation for understanding and explaining persistent poverty in Mexico City over the last 30 years are partially captured by the following statement in a 2004 OECD policy brief:

> '*The MAMC has relevant growth potential linked to the concentration of headquarters and of education and research facilities, as well as rich cultural resources and high flows of foreign direct investment (FDI). However, potential growth is constrained by low levels of human capital, inadequate infrastructure and widespread acute poverty and insecurity*' (OECD 2004: 2).

Whereas the statement above suggests that the potential for growth and the persistence of poverty are parallel, but separate, phenomena, others see it differently. They view such growth through the neoliberalizing imperative of global city ambitions (section 2.5), and view the persistence of poverty not as a parallel process, but intrinsically linked to the accumulation of wealth and exclusion (Sassen 2001; Castells 1998; Keil 1998). As such, the following statement by Parnreiter (2002) expresses a different interpretation of the same observations in Mexico City:

> '*A critical issue is the fact that economic recovery [in Mexico City] in the late 1980s and in the 1990s happened at the expense of most of the city's inhabitants, […] the last two decades were a time of impoverishment of large segments of the urban population, and they were also a time of growing polarization of earnings and labour market structure.'(Parnreiter 2002: 164*)

Furthermore, the passage from which the first statement was taken continues by highlighting the need for the different municipalities of Mexico City to coordinate their efforts in order to more effectively reduce poverty. While better policy coordination at the urban level is most certainly part of a bigger solution, the approach does not take into account the possibility that increased occupational polarization reflects a more deeply entrenched disparity of power and economic outcomes within the city that more urgently needs to be addressed than the symptoms of poverty directly. The latter interpretation not only reminds one of the high incidence of urban poverty in Mexico City, but suggests that a solution requires a more direct look at how growth and the accumulation of wealth occur in line with demands of global competition.

Table 4.1: Mexico Poverty Statistics, 1984-2012

	Extreme Poverty (% below $2.5/day at 2005 PPP)		**Moderate Poverty (% below $4/day at 20005 PPP)**	
Year	Individuals	Households	Individuals	Households
1984	22.5	-	53.0	-
1989	22.7	-	53.5	-
1992	21.4	16.4	53.1	44.5
1994	21.2	16.1	52.4	43.6
1996	37.4	29.1	69.0	60.2
1998	33.3	26.3	63.7	55.7
2000	24.1	18.5	53.6	45.7
2002	20.0	15.6	50.0	42.4
2004	17.4	13.8	47.2	39.7
2005	18.2	14.1	47.0	39.6
2006	14.0	10.7	42.9	35.7
2008	18.6	14.6	47.8	40.6
2010	18.8	14.7	51.1	43.5
2012	19.7	15.6	52.3	44.9

Source: SEDLAC (2015)

During the time of import-substitution industrialization, the development of Mexico City was a priority to the Mexican government. During that time, household poverty dropped substantially from 80.7 percent in 1963 until the onset of the debt crisis (Boltvinik 2002a). There are important implications to this. The first is that, despite instability associated with the growth model (section 3.5), the social welfare principles mandated in the ISI model clearly resulted in different, better, fates for domestic workers. Secondly, the sense of national solidarity that came with a domestically driven development approach also had the effect of motivating productivity among workers (Caulfield 2004). Thirdly, during interviews at the time of research, respondents often replied with one word – 'neoliberalism' – when asked

about the causes of poverty.[2] The collective public memory thus deems the dramatic shift from ISI to neoliberalism as the moment in which they contextualize the occurrence of poverty at that time (section 6.2.1).

Even though poverty measurement and perceptions of poverty in Mexico City (ZMCM) since the 1980s are high, actual measurement has led to different conclusions. One of the most prominent and widely cited economists in Mexico, Julio Boltvinik, found that poverty in Mexico City has shown a net increase over the last 40 years, particularly since the 1970s (Boltvinik 2002a and 2003). Boltvinik's popularity in poverty assessments rests on his commitment to expanding understandings of poverty beyond income indicators and forms of deprivations such as health, education and mortality rates, which made up the expanded Human Poverty Index[3]. Rather, Boltvinik has attempted to, firstly, apply a more complex measurement system, and secondly, to make it specific to the Mexican context[4]. Taking the second point first, he ties what is called the 'macro-social level' (Boltvinik 2003) in with six indicators. The macro-social level refers to the specific political and economic context in which welfare is denied or distributed, and problematizes the principle of measurement most linked to the development model (Boltvinik 2012). This means, for instance, that if development is market-driven, poverty (and inequality) measurements will also be constructed according to market-based concepts. Through a complex process, he tries to transform these into more socially determined concepts (Boltvinik 2012). The six indicators are i) current income; ii) basic assets which include housing and consumer durable goods; iii) non-basic assets such as household borrowing capacity; iv) access to public provisions such as infrastructure, health care and social security; v) free time; and vi) knowledge (Boltvinik 2003 and 2012).

This approach is called the Integrated Poverty Measurement Method (MMIP, Boltvinik 2003 and 2012), and has been increasingly adopted not just by academics but have taken into consideration by the government of Mexico City in more recent years (Boltvinik 2002b). The outcomes of poverty based on these indicators in Table 4.2 are higher than the official numbers (Table 4.3) and are relevant because they try to include the lived experiences of poverty according to the multitude of ways in which individuals and households are deprived,

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[2] Interviews 5,7,8,9/10,12,13,14,15,16,20,21,22,23

[3] This was used at the time of research before the more recently designed Multiple Poverty Index was implemented.

[4] However, his methodology is meant to be applicable to more than just the Mexican context using the features described (Boltvinik 2003 and 2012).

marginalized and excluded. Since this dissertation does not include anecdotal accounts of poverty that come from the poor themselves, this form of measurement is particularly informative. Below are two sets of data, income poverty and MMIP poverty. The income poverty is based on a re-calculation of poverty rates according to what Boltvinik calls the 'minimum income question' (Boltvinik 2012). In this approach, he does not measure income poverty against a standard income-based poverty line, but against subjective answers to what people are able to obtain with their income. As can be seen, the MMIP poverty rates are higher than the income rates. What is also important is the jump in poverty following the 1994 peso crisis, and the fact that poverty rates have never gone below what they were in 1981, just before the 1982 debt crisis.

Table 4.2: Poverty Measurements in the Federal District According to Boltvinik, 1992-2010

Year	Income Poverty (Percent)	MMIP Poverty (Percent)
1981	52.5	--
1992	63.7	74.5
1996	71.5	78.7
2000	61.3	--
2004	56.4	67.9
2008	55.4	67.2
2010	57.4	66.7

Source: Extracted from Boltvinik 2012

The 'official' poverty statistics used by the government of Mexico City come from the National Council for Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL). These measurements show high rates of poverty in the Federal District, but are significantly lower than those calculated by Boltvinik. In this approach, one is considered to be living in poverty if they are lacking in social assets including education, access to basic services, social services, housing, health care, and sufficient nutrition. It also is also based on income indicators, and includes those who do not have sufficient of income to obtain the goods and services required to satisfy basic needs (CONEVAL 2012). The poverty rates here (and above) refer primarily to the Federal District and not the greater metropolitan area.[5] In addition to

[5] It has been surprisingly difficult to gather comprehensive data on poverty rates that include both the Federal District and the surrounding Metropolitan area. Since the majority of field research was carried out in the Federal District, these numbers are appropriate. However, having a better picture of the metropolitan region would also be very useful.

what is in the Table 4.3 below, the OECD also measured poverty rates at 50.4 percent in the Federal District in 2000, and 70.9 percent in the surrounding State of Mexico.[6]

Table 4.3: Individual Poverty and Inequality, Mexico City, Federal District, and National Level

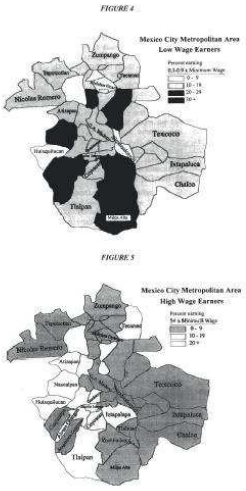
Year	Gini Mexico city	Gini National	Percent of Poverty Federal District (Official)	Percent of Poverty National
1989	0.417	0.512	-	22.7
1990	-	-	34.6	
1992	-	0.535	-	21.4
2000	0.517	0.536	28.0	24.1
2005	0.560	0.509	31.8	18.2
2010	-	-	28.5	-
2012	-	0.491	28.9	19.7

Sources: UN-Habitat (2013); SEDLAC (2015); CONEVAL 2012

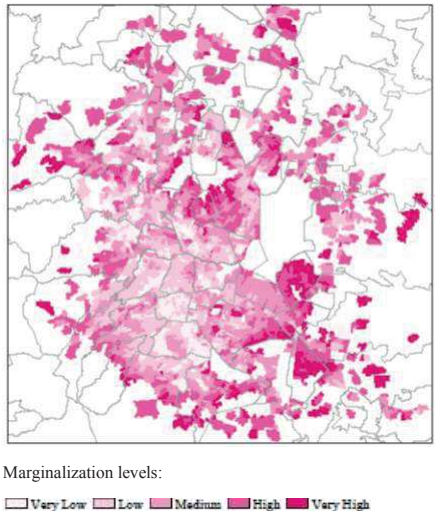
4.3.10 Inequality

Global city scholars are concerned with inequalities (section 2.5). As the high finance sectors grow, attention goes to how wealth is distributed through the city, favoring some sectors over others. As would be expected, wealth and income inequality in Mexico City is higher than it is nationwide (though not as high as in some other major cities of Latin America) (World Bank 2005a: 18). From 1989-2000, the Gini-coefficient for Mexico City was in between 0.417 – 0.516, and 0.406 – 0.461 nationwide during the same period of time (Sanchez 2008: 113-114). In the next period from 2000-2005, these numbers went up in Mexico City to 0.50 – 0.56. Briefly focusing on the national level, the OECD published a report in 2014 that found that while income inequality in nearly all OECD countries had increased, Mexico represents the most extreme case (Cingano 2014). There were two further important conclusions. Firstly, growing wealth inequalities have negatively impacted overall economic growth in OECD countries. Secondly, opportunities for impoverished groups experiencing low levels of social capital have less chance for upward social and economic mobility than they would under conditions of lower levels of inequality (Cingano 2014). The policy implications of this are significant and suggest that interventions cannot only be addressed at the lowest income groups, but must also mitigate extreme wealth accumulation.

[6] In general, this is meant to show the wide spectrum of poverty rates in Mexico City based on different methodologies and indicators.



Source: MacLachlan 1998



Source: OECD 2004

Figure 4.2: Maps portraying spatial and wage inequality in Metropolitan Area.

Taking another perspective, the literature has shown two key features of inequality in Mexico City associated with wages and with spatial differentiation. Spatial segregation of the poor also became more deeply entrenched in the ZMCM leading up to the time of research. As mentioned earlier, migration to Mexico City up until the 1980s resulted in vast areas of land being occupied by irregular, but now permanent settlements around the city. The farther each 'ring' is from the city center, the lower the living standard generally is, or the higher the poverty level (Sanchez 2008). Despite this general trend, the poor have traditionally resided in all parts of the city (except for the very wealthiest), building homes or carrying out their business in a more heterogeneous environment (Portes and Roberts 2005). The lower and middle income classes reside in the same areas, with both the lower income classes finding homes in middle class neighborhoods and the middle income classes moving to the poorer areas to increase their potential for savings. This pattern was observed in both formal residential areas and in the irregular settlements (Sanchez 2008). It started to change, however, in the early 2000s with the increasing polarization of occupations and incomes in Mexico City, as those with higher education and better working conditions are able to afford the increasingly higher cost of living in the Federal District (Sanchez 2008; Portes and Roberts 2005). The flip side of this is that an increase in the cost of living in the Federal District creates more challenges for those in the lower income brackets and forces them to take up new residence in cheaper areas in the peripheries of the city.

4.3.11 Migration and poverty

As is well understood, migration of impoverished rural residents to urban centers was a common feature of developing countries during the 1960s and 1970s (Gilbert and Gugler 1982). The same holds for Mexico City when the pull factors for urban migration were based on the expansion of the industrial base and in increase in the demand for labour. People chose to migrate to Mexico City to find employment, obtain access to better facilities, and to have more opportunities for both educational and occupational advancement. This trend contributed to rapid urbanization in Mexico, to the stress put on Mexico City to accommodate millions of new residents yearly, and resulted in an increase in the number of urban poor (Connolly 2003). However, to the surprise of many, this massive trend in rural-urban migration reversed itself by 1990 when out-migration had taken over in-migration as occupational opportunities appeared saturated and living conditions had deteriorated enough to drive people from instead of to Mexico City (Camposortega Cruz 1991). By 1995, a sort of equilibrium had been established between in-migration and out-migration.

Research at this time indicated three main reasons why migration patterns had changed. These were the impact of the trade liberalization model which pulled labour toward the export-processing zones in the north of Mexico; the growth of more medium-sized urban centers around Mexico offering similar job opportunities as Mexico City; and, as was mentioned above, the decreasing quality of life (Izazola 2004). As migration equilibrium is still a general trend, there are two important features of this. Firstly, the primary destinations of migrants leaving the Federal District are to the peripheral areas marked by some of the highest poverty rates, the lowest levels of infrastructure, and the lowest provision of services in the ZMCM (OECD 2004). Moreover, those migrating from the Federal District to the peripheries come from the low- and very low-income population. This is explained by the differences in higher costs of living, higher housing prices and higher land prices in the Federal District compared to those of the periphery (OECD 2004). In short, push-factors seem to play an important role for those migrating to the periphery. There is little indication of pull-factors.

A second important feature is that there are only eight states in Mexico from which more migrants go to Mexico City (the Federal District and peripheries) than leave. Six of them are the poorest states in Mexico[7] (Izazola 2004). The most frequent characteristics of these migrants to Mexico City is that they are young, usually women, and with low levels of schooling (Izazola 2004). Once migrants reach the city, they work longer hours (between four

[7] These are Oaxaca, Guerrero, Veracruz, Chiapas, Puebla, and the State of Mexico (Izaola 2004)

and six hours per week more than non-migrant low-wage workers), and that a higher proportion of migrants earn less than two minimum wages than non-migrant workers. That is, in 2000, 78.4 percent of female in-migrants received less than two minimum wages, compared to 57.8 percent of female non-migrant workers. For men, the percentages were 53.5 percent and 47,9 percent, respectively (Izazola 2004: 227-228). The implications of this data is that migration to Mexico City is still inextricably linked with poverty, and exacerbates general poverty in the city and contributes to the deepening of poverty in the outer rings.

4.4 Closing

This chapter has provided an account of the changing economic and demographic characteristics of Mexico City since 1982, and presents the implications of top-down changes in the globalizing cities for the urban population. Referencing the transition of the urban development model from state-led to market-led growth, it considers the impacts of this on changing economic opportunities within the city, and for the role of the city in the national economy. As Mexico City grew economically, the influence of market-led growth was felt throughout the city as negative externalities on particularly low-income groups. This was shown in terms of the transformations and re-locating of manufacturing, the rise of low-skilled services, urban wage and employment changes for low-income workers, the expanding informal market, and migration patterns. The chapter demonstrates that overall, the effect of Mexico City becoming a more attractive location globally, has resulted in dislocation and impoverishment for large parts of the population. The social political implications of these changes will be explored at the level of city politics in the next chapter.

5. Urban Politics and Policy in Mexico City

5.1 Introduction

Couched in the economic and demographic changes described in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the argument that the changing political landscape for the residents of Mexico City and their opportunities for engaging in urban political processes should be understood as emerging out of two historical transformations. These transformations took place at different levels of governance, but were closely intertwined partially shaped by the same forces. The first set of changes (1970-1990) started at the national level (Chapter 3). These were initially made up of minor reforms to facilitate the participation of opposition parties in elections, and then reached its peak with the decision to allow the residents of Mexico City to directly elect their own mayor. The second set of changes begins within this context. The first direct election in 1997 brought an opposition party into power at the city level, an experience unknown to both the national government and the urban population of Mexico City up until this time. The election platform of the mayor-elect was based on a new set of principles regarding the role of the urban government, new policy ideas to improve the lives of the urban poor, and a new political agenda to promote the long-term social and political rights of the poor. Though no longer a marginalized opposition party, the new urban government chose to maintain such a posture against the national leadership and based its legitimacy on solidarity with CSOs, reflecting the potential for a true shift in the city's political culture.

In exploring this argument, I answer the question of how has the political landscape of Mexico City changed and what has this meant for the poor since the early phases of neoliberal restructuring up to the early 2000s (section 1.5). I tie the approach into the lower left box of the conceptual framework (section 2.6) and highlight how structures and discourses of representation of the urban poor have changed at the city level, by formally elected representatives. This chapter is thus a descriptive analysis and is organized in the following way. In section 5.2, I describe, through the lens of political interests and economic incentives, the driving forces behind democratic reforms within the city government. Section 5.3 explores the changes that both promoted and followed the election of an independent mayor, and the evolving relationship of the mayor with new city-level representative bodies. Section 5.4 takes a much closer look at the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) and its role in city politics. To do this, it looks at the character and discourse of the PRD (section 5.4.1); the goals, challenges, and contradictions faced by the PRD (section 5.4.2); and PRD initiatives put into

place to enhance representation and support of the poor (section 5.4.3). In section 5.5, I provide some conclusions regarding the nature of changing formal political opportunities under changing forms of urban representation and access.

5.2 Democratic reforms

Popular discontent with the repressive political regime of the PRI, as well as with the impacts of economic decline, became vocal in the early 1980s. Even before this, and probably fuelling such voices later, opposition parties in Mexico began to forcefully demand representation in the country's legislative bodies. The timing can be understood as a response to the evidence of economic decline in Mexico and the PRI's seeming inability to respond to it effectively. At the same time, the PRIs electoral support in national elections, and especially in Mexico City (Davis 1994), was steadily dropping. Given that voting is a requirement among citizens of Mexico and not only a right, the drop in electoral support (largely attributed to abstentions in voting) represented a growing willingness to openly reject the PRIs domination in government and society (Klesner 2003). Over time, the PRI recognized this and introduced reforms to facilitate the participation of opposition parties in elections, but these reforms occurred in an environment of intra-party conflict and hostility in the PRI (Davis 1994; Gibson 1997; Klesner 2001). While the early reforms of the 1970s opened the door for more drastic changes later, most of these reforms were symbolic and constituted no real threat to the power of the PRI, and merely 'tinkered' with political reform (Davis 1994: 255). This was made possible by a series of complex changes in the voting and election processes starting at the local level that would nominally increase public participation in the political process, but still make it very difficult for other parties to weigh in on policy outcomes (Eckstein 1990).

Assessing the relevance of the 1970s reforms requires a bit more history and a short look at the complex system of representation set up by the PRI within Mexico City. Following the Mexican Revolution, the territory of the Federal District/Mexico City was carved out by the national government which would not be subject to state (province)-led governments (Ward 1998). In order to guarantee control, a president-appointment *regente* (commonly translated as 'mayor') was put into place. Within this territory, thirteen municipalities were eventually established, each with their own local councils. In 1929, seeking to bolster the power of the national government, the then-president, Alvaro Obregón, abolished the local municipalities and put Mexico City under the control of the national government (Hall 1981). For administrative purposes, an advisory council called the *Consejo Consultivo de la Ciudad de México* (CCCM) was also established (de la Isla and Wirth 2001). It was made up of a wide

spectrum of government-appointed participants including peasants, women's representatives, renters, as well as business representatives, professionals, and industrialists (Davis 1994; de la Isla and Wirth 2001). The CCCM was to supervise and provide guidance to the president-appointed mayor and what became called the *Departmento del Distrito Federal* (DDF), made up of what had been the thirteen municipalities, but had now become administrative districts (*delegaciones*), each of which also had their own *consejo consultivo* (advisory council) (de la Isla and Wirth 2001: 27; Davis 1994).

The system allowed the national government to dictate urban policy through the CCCM down to the local level with the false impression of promoting democratic participation (Eckstein 1990). Likewise, the make-up of the CCCM was crucial for promoting the façade of a true representative body (Davis and Alvarado 2004; de la Isla and Wirth 2001). The diversity of its membership was meant to generate support and loyalty for the PRI among the urban population, as it suggested that a wide range of views would be taken into account when advising urban policy (de la Isla and Wirth 2001). Nonetheless, the effect of this structure was to manipulate the views of local populations to favour PRI-guided leadership through the influence of the local leaders and through small material compensation (Magaloni 2006; Shefner 2001). In time, such rigid forms of control could no longer hold, especially as the economic downturn began to plague the PRI-run country (Klesner 2001). Though opposition parties had not been banned with the usurpation of Mexico City, the system of representation that the PRI put into place made it very hard for them to participate in government (Lawson 2000; Magaloni 2006). Even so, their demands for more fair representation, especially in the early years of the PRI-crisis, were answered. The first reform (*Ley Orgánica)*, was put into place in 1977 which lowered the minimum amount of electoral support opposition parties would have to have to be elected to office, changed the membership of the CCCM, reorganized the city into 16 instead of 13 districts, and provided for a system of neighbourhood-based election of block presidents processes called *juntas de vecinos* (Aguilar Martinez 1986; de la Isla and Wirth 2001).

The *juntas de vecinos* were at the most local level in a more complex chain of representation and were intended to provide assurances to local populations that their voices were being heard (Davis and Alvarado 2004; de la Isla and Wirth 2001). After local populations elected the block presidents, they in turn elected a president of their particular sub-district (*colonia)*, who subsequently elected a president for the district (*delegación*). With the 1977 reform, each of these district presidents would now make up the CCCM membership, which would continue in its advisory role. Their central mandate was to be the top voice in a chain of

communication that could articulate concerns and demands of their respective communities, as well as compete for financial and other material resources in the Federal District. Seriously challenging the effectiveness of this structure in establishing true representation is that it remained advisory and had no legislative function nor enforcement mechanisms (Davis 1994). Crucially, this body acted alongside another so-called representative body of which the members are directly appointed by the mayor. This body is made up of 16 *delegados*, each representing the 16 districts of Mexico City. Because expectations of the appointed *delegados* were that they promote the interest of the party, they were neither willing nor able to offer true representation. In fact, local communities had often never heard of the appointed *delegados* as they were not from their own communities, and in some cases had never even visited (Eckstein 1990).

Despite this democratic 'fix' for local communities to bring their immediate concerns to the attention of higher authorities, they were not in a position to bring about structural change and get beyond the provision of compensatory benefits, or 'hand-outs' so often used to keep them quiet (Domínguez and McCann 1998). Among other things, this disillusionment resulted in low participation rates in the *juntas de vecinos.* Another factor pushing the national government toward a serious consideration of reform was their inadequate response to the needs of the urban poor following the 1985 earthquake, undermining their legitimacy even further (Davis 2014). These trends and events likewise strengthened calls within the PRI to implement democratic reforms in order to rescue their image (Davis 2014). More and more, real attention was given to the possibility of establishing a popularly elected legislative body for Mexico City and for a popularly elected mayor (Davis 2002). Though it would still be several years, and following several rejections, the first change in this regard came in 1988 when the national congress voted to create the Federal District Assembly of Representatives *(Asamblea de Representates del Distrito Federal*, ARDF) (Labourde 2001; Hernández 2001). This body would be the first of its kind for the residents of Mexico City, allowing them to directly elect those representatives who would advise the mayor, and would replace the body of advisors appointed by the mayor. In the first open elections, the PRI won only 24 of the 40 districts where they had a representative, an indication of the low confidence the public had for the PRI. This did not become a trend, however, and in the following two elections, the numbers for the PRI went back up to 40 of the 40 seats in 1991, and 38 of the 40 seats in 1994 (Wirth 2006).

Side-stepping real democratic change, the ARDF was an elected body which only partially responded to the demands of Mexico City residents, opposition parties, and opposition voices

in the PRI (Wirth 2006; Enríquez 2005). The actual power of the ARDF was limited, and no provisions were made for legislative power, enforcement powers, or budgetary powers. In the first version of the ARDF, the mandate for its activities included agenda setting, providing a forum for public debate, and establishing an ombudsman to hear citizen complaints, especially those among the powerless (de la Isla and Wirth 2001). Through collaboration with national ministries, the ARDF were also able to influence policy on security and on land use for urban development. An important component of ARDF activities was to address a range of violations, including those carried out by public officials. Added to this was the establishment of the Federal District Human Rights Commission in 1994 (Solomon 1999). This body was set up to act parallel to the national Human Rights agency, but only focused on possible abuses taking place within Mexico City. Nevertheless, surveys of ARDF members in 1993 reveal that ARDF representatives were not satisfied with the level of their authority and hoped to accomplish more from their elected positions (de la Isla and Wirth 2001: 34-35). The three most represented parties in the ARDF – the PRI, the PRD and the PAN – pushed the national government to grant the ARDF more powers, though each with eyes toward promoting their own political agenda. After several years, the ARDF mandate was extended to include more oversight powers in the national legislative process and in setting the budget, to initiate policies for the national government, and – crucially – to legislate on a limited range of topics in urban justice, urban service provision, security, land use, and the urban natural environment (Enríquez 2005; Salazar 2001).

There are some crucial implications for the urban poor and lower economic classes in these processes of transition. Since the time of its inception the PRI set up a corporatist system made up three pillars representing the labouring class, peasants, and middle classes that would channel the interests of these groups up to the national government, but also allow for the regulation and control of the interests of these same groups (section 3.3). Of particular importance in Mexico City, the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (*Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares*, CNOP) played the most important role in negotiating the interests and demands of the urban poor, and lowest economic classes (Salazar 1998). While providing a forum in which urban CSOs could interact, the effect of this corporate system – and this pillar in particular – was to de-link the interests of the separate classes from each other thus undermining the motivation for different classes and groups to mobilize together around shared interests (Enríquez 2005; Salazar 2001; Davis 1994). For the PRI, this system worked well to avoid major political fall-outs. As such, it must be understood that for many decades, the political opportunities of the urban poor were severely limited

and/or controlled due to the self-preservation instincts of the reigning party, and by the coincidence of them living in Mexico City. In this setting, national interests took precedence over not only urban governance, but the needs of the urban population as well. The modes of social control through the corporatist system were thus more symbolically linked to the corporatist structure than in other parts of Mexico, displaying a close – again symbolic – link between the national government and its population. In this way, there was greater incentive to build bridges between the national government and the populations represented by the pillars, rather than taking an interest and addressing more comprehensive issues of the urban poor (Enríquez 2005; Salazar 2001; Davis 1994).

Though the initial reforms toward enhancing democratic principles in Mexico City were limited in scope, the establishment of the ARDF in particular would have lasting effects on the way in which city politics would play out, and in the way the urban poor would see themselves represented. Amid accusations that the *juntas de vecinos* were manipulated through patron-client relationships to impact the outcome of the votes and that the CNOP inhibited true citizen mobilization (Davis 1994; Enríquez 2005), the opportunity for the urban poor in particular to step outside of these structures to vote *individually* for their government representatives meant that they could be in a position to express interests shared with other social and economic classes on more general urban issues (Enríquez 2005). Thus, the *scale* and *scope* of the political agency of the urban poor shifted both downward and upward from class interests controlled by the party, to individual interests, as well as to urban collective interests which would widen their views on a range of urban development issues in Mexico City. At the same time, the ARDF created new incentives for opposition parties and for some members inside the PRI, to push for even more radical reforms now that it appeared within the range of possibility. The establishment of the ARDF did not take place according to purely democratic principles only. In fact, by relegating a number of issue areas to the ARDF, the PRI-led national government granted themselves more 'maneuvering room' and budgetary space (Davis 1994: 287, 294) to push through tougher economic reforms, while relinquishing responsibility for fixing the social unrest they might cause to the newly elected city representatives.

5.3 Mayoral representation

As the economic and political center of the nation, Mexico City (section 4.3), President de la Madrid (1982-1988) was eager to use the advantages of Mexico City to assist in national economic recovery, and much less so for the wellbeing of the urban residents. Cognizant of

both the economic and political demands that neoliberal transformation brings, and fully committed to such a transformation, de la Madrid became a prominent voice in the debate in favour of an independent mayor for Mexico City (Davis 1994; Grayson 1998). First, were the economic motivations (Grayson 1998; Eisenstadt 2003; Enríquez 2005). It would give the national government more political and budgetary freedom to pursue other objectives including the re-orientation of the national economy toward the global market. Second, were the political motivations. It would provide de la Madrid in 1982 (and Salinas beginning in 1988) distance at an early stage from the popular opposition that neoliberalism was likely to create (Grayson 1998; Eisenstadt 2003; Enríquez 2005). In this vein, it was already understood that the retraction of the state in the provision of subsidies and other services would be a blow to the livelihoods of lower income groups and the poor. In the same way, it represented a contradiction to the principles of the Mexican Revolution and countered a commitment to social solidarity. Third, the PRI-initiated democratic reforms, based on a discourse of the principle of democracy, would increase their general popularity and, thus, their chances for longevity. In this way, in an interesting irony, the PRI *técnicos* (section 3.4) had similar objectives for political reforms as the more left-wing opposition groups, but – in large part – for different reasons (Grayson 1998; Eisentstadt 2003).

Table 5.1: Regents and heads of government of the Mexican Federal District, 1970-2006

Regents (Heads of the Federal District Departments)		
Period	***Name***	***Party***
1970-1971	Alfonso Martinez Dominguez	PRI
1971-1976	Octavio Gomez Senties	PRI
1976-1982	Carlos Hank Gonzalez	PRI
1982-1988	Ramón Aguirre Velázquez	PRI
1988-1993	Manuel Camacho Solís	PRI
1993-1994	Manuel Aguilera Gomez	PRI
1994-1997	Oscar Espinosa Villareal	PRI
Heads of Government of the Federal District		
1997-1999	Cuauthémoc Cárdenas	PDR
1999-2000	Rosario Robles	PDR
2000-2005	Andrés Manuel López Obrador	PDR
2005-2006	Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez	PDR

These ideas were firmly resisted by the then-mayor of Mexico City, Aguirre Velázquez (1982-1988), reflecting the growing rift between the *políticos* and the *técnicos* within the PRI, a rift which would later be important for the consolidation of the PRD (Centeno 1999). Aguirre Velázquez's reputation was contingent upon broad PRI support and exploitation of the corporatist structure to maintain his good favour among the popular classes. In his view, not

only would the neoliberal transition undermine this stabilizing power structure, but its impact would undoubtedly result in the mayor's widespread unpopularity (Davis 1994). Indeed the reforms would not be seriously considered until much later, thus being of no threat to Aguirre's career. When Salinas took the Mexican presidency in 1988 (and held office from 1988-1994), he appointed a new mayor of Mexico City, Manuel Camacho Solis, who fell in line with Salinas' own aspirations for economic reform. Camacho – like Salinas – identified himself with the *técnicos* of the PRI who, committed to an outward oriented market-based development model, based their political legitimacy on the early (and what would be temporary) boosts to national and urban economic growth that came with the neoliberal reforms. As such he was not threatened by the prospect of the weakening corporatist structure and also saw possibilities in re-orienting loyalties among the corporatist patron-client relationships to maintain his position (Davis 1994).

Central to Camacho's agenda was a significant withdrawal of government responsibility from city planning, while inviting more private sector participation (Hernández 2001; Grayson 1998; see also section 4.2). He had ambitions to generate urban redevelopment at a rapid pace to attract even more foreign investment and tourism, while displacing local street vendors and lower income residents into other neighbourhoods (Cross 1998; Crossa 2009). Some of the immediate effects of this new orientation in urban development was an increase in inner-city rental rates and in the prices of urban services that had been privatized (Portes and Roberts 2005). Key to this process was, much in the way that the president would have more room to implement his favoured policies and could deflect political backlash with an independent city mayor, Mayor Camacho's ability to exploit the same situation with a relatively weak, but democratically constituted, ARDF (Salazar 2001). The fact that the *Asamblea* was devoid of real decision-making powers meant that Camacho still had the formal powers to fall in line with national development goals even if the *Asamblea* tried to challenge them. In the same vein, any critique or opposition formulated by local populations were directed toward their local *Asamblea* representative. As a result, this new structure actually served to isolate the mayor from direct accountability (Salazar 2001; Davis 1994).

As was mentioned, the *Asamblea* gave city residents the opportunities, for the first time, to act collectively instead of being parcelled into class-oriented corporatist structures (see also Chapter 6). However, there is a crucial flip-side to this new form of political agency. Because the ARDF also weakened corporatist structures as well as dismantled the CNOP, the traditional sources of access to the mayor's office (even if weak in practice) were gone (Davis 1994; Grayson 1998). The mandate of the CNOP, as a corporatist structure, was to channel

class-based discontent and demands to the mayor with the intent of either being able to influence policy goals, or (in a spirit of 'anti-democracy') generate at least some compensatory measures (Ramírez Saíz 1990). After the establishment of the ARDF, urban residents wanting to bring attention to their issues logically turned to their locally elected representatives. However, the ARDF had no substantial powers to offer solutions, meaning that many local concerns were simply left hanging with no available mechanisms to make them be heard (Grayson 1998). At the same time, the 'localizing' of issues also had the effect of partially undermining a collective effort among ARDF representatives to challenge mayoral or national policy objectives, and disintegrating ties between communities sharing similar characteristics (Wirth 1992). Thus two conflicting currents in the changing political opportunities for urban residents could be observed in which new political opportunities for low income urban residents materialized while other opportunities were taken away.

Within the ARDF, frustrations continued to mount in regard to the disproportionate amount of power the mayor enjoyed, the political support the mayor could claim from the national government, and the more vocal citizenry responding to the deepening of neoliberal reforms (Espinosa 2004). By the mid-1990s, these frustrations consolidated with both the *técnicos* commitment to follow the decentralization tenets of neoliberalism, as well as with the views of the new president Zedillo (1994-2000) who more than any of his PRI predecessors, expressed what some argue was a sincere commitment to democratic reforms to bring about change in the interest of the Mexican population (Section 3.3; Labourde 2001). As such, in 1996, the national congress brought about a new set of important reforms. First, the ARDF became a legislative body and was renamed the Legislative Assembly of the Federal District (*Asamblea Legislativa del Distrito Federal,* ALDF). The ALDF was granted new powers to enact laws and regulations for the city (Espinosa 2004; Wirth 2006), though their powers did not extend to the important job of initiating new programmes for the city which could more directly respond to the needs and demands of the lower income groups. Thus real autonomy from the national government remained elusive (Wirth 2006). Second, and with great meaning for the city, the decision was made to establish an independent office of the mayor (to be called the *Jefe de Gobierno*) who would be put into office via direct election. As a direct result, the first direct elections for the mayor of Mexico City took place on July 17, 1997 (Davis 2002; Labourde 2001; Salazar 2001).

While representing an important step toward formal democracy in Mexico City, this last set of reforms gave life to a new claim on substantive democracy (Eckstein 1990) for the urban population. Though it did not come as a surprise to them, the PRI had to brace themselves for

the reality that the urban population had been ready and waiting to bring in a new political party with a very different set of principles of governance and goals for the city. Wasting no time in voicing their preferences, the people elected the new mayor, Cuauthémoc Cárdenas of the PRD, with over 70 percent of the vote, while 38 of the 40 district seats also went to the PRD (Rabasa 1998). This amounted to a substantial transformation in the nature of urban leadership. Even with the presence of opposition parties in the past, such opposition parties were not strong enough to challenge the over-represented PRI in the ARDF, alongside a PRI-appointment mayor. Thus, neither the mayor nor the ALDF representatives had to contend with any serious challenges to their policy initiatives. However, with new electoral preferences being actualized in favour of the PRD, the potential for actually matching these preferences with substantive changes in representation emerged. Notably, in the same election period, the PRI lost control of the lower house in the national congress. Indeed, there remained limitations to the office of the mayor, including budgetary discretion, which challenged many of the goals that the PRD had in mind (de la Isla and Wirth 2001; Espinosa 2004). Nonetheless, within a short time the PRD mayor and PRD-led ALDF proposed a set of reforms that were in support of enhancing citizen participation and creating a more direct relationship between the city government and the urban population, but they did still face political obstacles from the other parties in having them passed (de la Isla and Wirth 2001).[8]

In closing, this section has discussed the democratization reforms for Mexico City that were initiated at the national level since the 1970s to show how new space for political opportunities emerged, particularly in relation to growing electoral power and choices. While undoubtedly reflecting important shifts toward procedural democracy, what comes next is a look to if and how this new governance structure has created the conditions for substantially transforming the relationship between the city leadership and its residents. Crucially, not only was this new structure created, but it was immediately inhabited by a political party, the PRD, which promoted as one of its central mandates, the deepening of democratic principles even more into society and with particular attention going to the needs and voices of the urban poor. In this way, the potential was created to give the urban poor a sense of political agency and opportunity that had not been experienced in the past, as well as new avenues to pursue their goals. Despite this, formal and informal restraints on the mayor as well as on the ALDF inhibited the ability of the PRD to pursue their own policy ambitions, forcing them to yield on certain principles, and compromise their integrity and political legitimacy.

[8] Interview 2.

5.4 The Democratic Revolutionary Party

This section provides an account of the character and discourse of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (the PRD). From the start, it is important to highlight the symbolic role the PRD played in the eyes of urban working classes and urban poor, as well as the sway that PRD rhetoric had.[9] Before turning to an account of the initiatives pursued by the PRD, a brief look will be given to the structure of constraints the PRD encountered due to the PRI presidency as well as expectations and demands generated in the private sector. As will be seen, such constraints are interlinked with moments of both compromise and betrayal to the cause of the PRD (Hilgers 2012). This will be followed by a closer look at the Department of Social Development, set up in the city government by the PRD. Here, it will be observed how their mandates and goals have been developed and articulated around the needs and interests of low-wage urban workers and civil society organizations[10]. This will be followed by a brief discussion about the attention of the PRD to citizen participation. This section shows that the PRD, in its initial years, attempted to open the political space made available through the national democratic reforms to enhance representation and engagement of the poor. However, it has come with both serious challenges and with no guarantees for the future.

5.4.1 The character and discourse of the PRD

The PRD took shape as an opposition party under the leadership of Cuauthémoc Cárdenas following his break with the PRI in 1987, though the elements making up the PRD had been present among Mexico City's opposition parties and social movement sector for some time (Mossige 2013). As the party started to take shape, it was based on a consolidation of several smaller left-wing parties, grassroots leaders who became more energized as a result of the 1985 earthquake and the surge of social movement activity which followed (de la Isla and Wirth 2001; Harbers 2007), as well as the steady inclusion of labour unions (Murillo 2000). With such a mix of different actors, it has been difficult to identify the party's core identity. While making no public statements linking itself with pure leftism or socialism, the spirit within the party captures this posture. Attesting to its socialist leanings, the PRD was voted into the Socialist International in New York in 1996. However, there are several *corrientes* within the party who reject this position outright, and others who make no vocal claim to it, though also do not deny the links (Mossige 2013). Alongside this division are those who participate in the PRD as a reform party, seeking to broaden their electoral base to keep out the

[9] Interviews 2, 3, 8, 9, 18, 19.
[10] Interview 2.

traditional leadership (Magaloni 2006), and those who see it as a social movement party, aiming to engage meaningfully with civil society with electoral success being of little relevance (Hellman 1995).

Setting divisions aside, some core principles have remained present in the PRD discourse since its first campaign and through the mayoral term of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) from 2000-2005. The most deeply rooted idea around which all strands coalesce in the PRD is its unshakeable opposition to neoliberal reforms (*Declaración de los Principios* 2001) and the conservative political parties for adopting such reforms under international pressure and in their own personal interests. This is captured in the following statement by Cuauthémoc Cárdenas during his mayoral campaign, the first PRD mayoral campaign, in 1996:

> *'The urban policy of neoliberalism, proposed, defended and orchestrated by the PRI and the PAN and on the basis of which the capital has been developing in recent years, has resulted in a rising cost of living and things getting more and more difficult daily. Only those who can meet the rising costs are supposed to live here and endure. As for the rest of the people, neither their future nor their existence seem to matter.'* (Cárdenas 1996).

In the same vein, López Obrador (2000-2005), reflecting a consistency in the views of the PRD through three mayoral administrations later stated:

> *'...those who think they are masters of this country, the leaders of the PRI and the PAN parties, who want to sell our petroleum and electric industries, who have put our financial institutions into bankruptcy, who have created a nation plagued with inequality. They have delivered this country into the hands of the greediest minority. They want to tax food and medicines but they exempt their protectors from paying taxes. They have ruined the productive capacity of this country and obligated millions of Mexicans to go to the United States to earn a living.'* (López Obrador 2005)

These statements reflect the commitment of the PRD to social solidarity, equality, and restoration of a strong state to protect these values (Özler 2009). As they claim, neoliberalism undermines these ambitions while facilitating policies which actively impoverish large parts of society (Shadlen 2000). The PRD also collectively rejected the PRI and PAN, due to unfair claims to power, their history of corruption and scandal, and their betrayal of the revolution with their support of neoliberal market-based development (Bruhn 1999; Domínguez and McCann 1998). PRD members share common ground on basic principles of political rights, women's rights, children's rights, social welfare, employment, fair wages, education, and ecological protection (Özler 2009). In regard to poverty, PRD members maintain that true solutions to poverty are structural. It cannot be fixed, in the words of Rosario Robles during

her 1999 bid for mayor by, 'distributing crumbs' (Visions of Mexico's Future 1999). Rather, they see freedom from poverty and inequality as grounded in the basic foundations of society which should be guaranteed as a constitutional right (Visions of Mexico's Future 1999; *Declaración de los Principios* 2001). How that constitutional right can be actualized takes place through long-term dialogue and interaction between government and civil society (Mahon and McDonald 2010). This discourse of inclusiveness were very welcome to the urban poor as observed in the electoral success of the PRD.

Nevertheless the mood among those interviewed during field research – in both informal and formal interviews – regarding the wellbeing and political opportunities for the poor and lower-middle classes was one of growing doubt.[11] The power of the PRD rhetoric was diminishing as internal contradictions were becoming known. Without negating some important advancements that the three mayors of Mexico City had made during their respective terms, the population was becoming weary. The then-mayor, Manuel López Obrador (AMLO, 2000-2005), had been in office nearly three years and a number of his promises, as well as those from the previous PRD mayors, still remained unfulfilled. Newspapers reported on agreements made by both Cárdenas (1997-1999) and AMLO (2000-2005) with private sector interests (see section 3.3) – going so far as to strike a deal with the notorious Carlos Slim – that went against both the principled arguments of the PRD as well as the immediate wellbeing of the poor (Sullivan 2003; Mossige 2013). Civil society groups were frustrated with the continued exploitation of patron-client relations by the PRD to generate support for their less popular urban development plans (Hilgers 2008). Such relationships opposed the stated commitments of the PRD to enhance the organizational power as well as participation of the poor in decision-making processes (*Declaración de los Principios* 2001). Likewise, at different times, Mayor Rosario Robles (1999-2000) and AMLO (2000-2005) were both the target of scandal investigations bringing about a lingering sense of betrayal among those who had had such high hopes (Gugelberger 2005). Nonetheless, following his term, Cárdenas (1997-1999) remained respected for his honesty even if he was not very successful in bringing about substantive change (Mossige 2013). Supported by diminishing electoral returns, the cumulative effect of these disappointments lessened the general esteem for the PRD, however there was not evidence that the urban poor nor CSOs had given up on the PRD just yet.

[11] Interviews 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, in addition to numerous informal conversations and group discussions.

5.4.2 PRD goals, challenges and contradictions

The PRD entered the mayoral office with an ambitious plan for transforming both the quality and style of governance. Though still somewhat abstract, their ambitions showed a blending of the basic principles described above with ideas for how to link them to the urban population. They also addressed weaknesses in the previous style of governance, most particularly in the way it turned citizens into clients, and undermined the potential of the population for meaningful engagement and personal development (*Declaración de los Principios* 2001; Harbers 2007). For the PRD the condition of poverty was inexorably linked with the causal effect of political and social disempowerment and confronting this was their priority. They were also willing to include the higher estimates of poverty, such as those by Boltvinik (section 4.3.9), in their official documents to highlight the extreme economic impact of neoliberal reforms. Expressing their concerns succinctly for the public, for instance, was the campaign slogan of López Obrador (2000-2005) declaring, 'For the good of all, above all the poor' (Grayson 2007).

In his bid for the mayoral office, Cárdenas (1997-1999) clearly articulated what the main programme of the PRD would be. It was made up of seven main guidelines including: (a) Decentralization: of the population, economic activities, jurisdiction, and resource management; (b) Democratization: 'of all spheres of political and economic activity, culture, planning and daily life;' (c) The qualitative transformation of government functioning: ending favouritism, corporatism, corruption, and the use of public office for personal gain; (d) The construction of a state with social responsibility: using constitutional powers to end all forms of marginalization, and building social pacts including the majority and minorities; (e) Implementation of an alternative form of urban economic growth: focused on wellbeing and the preservation of natural resources through sustainable and equitable distribution of wealth; (f) Shared responsibility between government and society: based on mutual trust and respect, openness, public participation, and living up to agreements; and (g) Governability based on democratic practices: ending violation of rights caused by abuse, guaranteeing safety, transparency and honesty, sharing burdens and gains of economic and social development, and 'getting at the root of problems to solve them.' (Cárdenas 1996). While this chapter does not address each of these guidelines specifically, it is included here as a reference point. Insofar that the principles were betrayed by certain PRD decision-making, this has also played a role in how social groups among the urban poor have configured their own goals (see Chapter 6).

It was discovered quickly that some of these stated ambitions would be thwarted by the limitations of the mayor's office and the ALDF. Among the mayor's powers and duties were appointing (and removing) department heads, initiating budget plans, using the veto over ALDF legislation, and publishing laws and regulations of the ALDF. The mayor also was given the authority to establish new departments and institutions within the city government (Wirth 2006) and to decentralize administrative functions to lower city levels. The mayor's office and the ALDF faced two significant constraints in pursuing their goals. First, they did not have formal authority in initiating nor in voting on structural change, such as is suggested by point (d) above, though they could implement city-level policy to enhance participation. Second, while the mayor had the sole duty to initiate the budget, it would be the national congress and the president who would allocate the budget. Regardless of the setting, those who held this administrative authority were able to wield (and abuse) a significant degree of influence over policy outcomes. This tool was strategically used by the PRI-led, and later PAN-led, national government to force the mayor and ALDF into urban development plans more in line with their own national development objectives (Eisenstadt 2003).

The first PRD administration was thus in a very tight spot. They were firmly situated in a context of a market-based neoliberal national development strategy and had to find room for manoeuvre within that space (Eisenstadt 2003; de la Isla and Wirth 2001; Davis and Alvarado 2004). From their first day, they were strapped with a debt burden generated by the previous PRI administration, the payment of which had to take precedence over other spending priorities of their own. Second, in the national congress, the PRI and PAN limited the fiscal resources that would be made available for Mexico City and excluded the city from earmarked funds for improving infrastructure and services (Davis and Alvarado 2004). This pattern of budget cutting continued through Cárdenas's two years in office (1997-1999), and can be seen as the ongoing attempt for the PRI and PAN parties to keep the PRD under their thumb, but also as the logical process of deepening neoliberal reforms. Third, critical sources of income for urban development projects had been provided by international institutions such as the World Bank. While the project money is usually welcome, the national government must go through the formality of approving the programmes to be funded. Once the PRD dominated the urban government, the PRI and PAN stalled the approval process, thereby preventing the money from entering the city government and putting the PRD into an even more difficult position (Davis and Alvarado 2004).

These restrictions, generated both politically and economically, forced the hand of Cárdenas (1997-1999), and later AMLO (2000-2005), to find alternative ways of generating the

necessary funds (Erikson 2005) to carry out their goals. Their only options at this time were to follow the dictates of neoliberalism and engage more with the private sector (Alemán 2003; see also Chapter 4). For Cárdenas, this meant allowing major projects to be put into motion to stimulate downtown development and attract business, tourism, and wealthier inhabitants. These included the restoration of historical buildings, the building of a new convention centre, the building of higher-end urban housing, and upscaling the downtown to attract more tourism (Ward and Durden 2002). These projects were taken further by AMLO who, in signing a deal with Carlos Slim, added new commercial and hotel properties to the deal, also in other parts of the city (Mountz and Curran 2009; Becker and Müller 2013). This was a striking move on the part of AMLO given his previous criticism of Slim when he purchased the national telephone company, Telmex, in the early 1990s (Grayson 2007).

Moreover, the effects of these projects were not only that they stimulated downtown growth, but they also severely increased congestion in those areas and displaced low income street vendors and residents (Crossa 2009). AMLO's additional support to real estate and construction industry giants included building bridges to the Santa Fe commercial zone and building a second level to the city's freeway system which generated a great deal of backlash from lower income and marginalized populations (Weiner 2002). When asked about these negative externalities coming from the kinds of urban development projects being pursued, the respondent at the Department of Urban Development explained that while they would like to reduce such externalities, they nevertheless 'have to think about the future.'[12]

While generating necessary revenues for the city, it is not difficult to miss the contradictions in these PRD actions, beyond the simple reality that they served to work against the interest of the lower income residents, in favour of the interests of wealthy domestic and foreign investors (Ward and Durden 2002). This contradiction had undoubtedly added to scepticism among civil society organizations (Enriquéz 2005; Crossa 2009). Interviewees argued that these decisions felt like a slap in the face to those believing in the rhetoric of citizen participation.[13] Indeed, some of these decisions were not only made without consulting the affected parties, but also sometimes despite the outcomes of such consultations (Davis and Alvarado 2004; Harbers 2007). The challenges facing the PRD must also be viewed in the context of a globalizing city. National development policies had tied the hands of the urban leadership long before they took office (Ward and Durden 2002). The national level decision-

[12] Interview 3.
[13] Interviews 8, 9, 25.

makers expected that Mexico City's growing global participation in high finance sectors would continue to serve Mexico's overall economic growth (section 4.3) and necessary measures such as those mentioned above were put into place to make sure that happened. The seven holistic goals for the city lost their potential to be realized as different paths in urban development had to be taken for different reasons (Özler 2009). The PRD leadership left many urban development decisions up to negotiations between real estate, land developers and contractors and abandoned any of their own long-term development goals for land use (Garza 1999). However, the PRD was still in a position to move forward with some important reforms and policies.

5.4.3 PRD initiatives

Despite the context of challenges described above, the early PRD administrations carried through on some of their goals by taking formal steps to offer more direct support to the city's residents. These are reflected in the establishment of new government offices including the Department for Social Development and the Department of Labour at the city level, which had not previously existed, and the promotion of citizen participation initiatives. This section will not give a very technical description, but demonstrate the intent of these initiatives and how they reflect the discourse of the city government to provide more meaningful representation. To begin, the Department for Social Development had only existed three years prior to the time of research. It was created at the same time as the city-level Departments of Economic Affairs, the Environment, and Health, respectively, all of which had been previously under the control of one office. At the time of research, it was explained that all of these offices made up what was referred to as *Progreso con Justicia* (Progress with Justice) within the city government. This was to reflect the PRD platform to create a government more prepared administratively to promote social justice issues, and develop new relations with citizens to fight against the increases in poverty that the city had been experiencing since the 1980s (*Gobierno del Distrito Federal* 2001).[14]

The Department for Social Development was responsible for carrying out twelve separate programmes ranging from the official provision of social services to enhancing community development, the nature of which had not previously existed at the city level. Among the most relevant was the *Programa Integral Territorial (The Integrated Territory Programme),* implemented in 2000, and was one of the key attempts to restrain the growth of poverty in the city. Using a range of indicators based on income, education, family structure, and housing

[14] Interview 2.

(*Cuenta Publica del Distrito Federal* 2001), urban zones were classified according to levels of marginalization[15], and those with the highest level of marginalization were prioritized for targeted interventions (*Gobierno del Distrito Federal* 2001). Such interventions included provisions for the elderly, the disabled, and children at risk. In addition to the targeted programmes, there was a school breakfast programme, a programme to provide credit for business start-ups, programmes to enhance employment potential, housing subsidies, and milk subsidies. Finally, community based programmes in the most marginalized zone were also put into place to combat violence, provide better security in schools, and enhance forms of communication, particularly for the youth (*Gobierno del Distrito Federal 2001*).

The Department of Social Development received a good deal of rhetorical support from the city government and was also considered a budget priority.[16] Nonetheless, budgeting had to take place within an environment of both deepening austerity at the national level, and also growing resentment from the ALDF (Ward and Durden 2002). Party politics seemed to play a role in how much support social programmes would receive from the legislature. At the time of research, the PRD was a minority in the ALDF, and when budget matters were up for a vote, the leading PRI and PAN parties usually voted together and against any increases in the social development budget for the city (Davis and Alvarado 2004). Even within the PRD, there were some disparities in their voting patterns as different groups supported different interests based on their specific civil society ties (Ward and Durden 2002). As was explained, much of the social budget came from 'sacrifices' made at the city level. Where city officials once enjoyed government cars and other amenities, the PRD government (in the early years) eliminated such luxuries, making work for the government less 'glamorous' than it once was[17]. Nonetheless, the mood at the Department of Social Development during the time of research was one of optimism and did not display resentment regarding the change in social status that working for the government had come to entail. This came from the sense that the mayoral administration had made social problems and social policy a central concern, and for that reason those working in the Department of Social Development felt that their work was prioritized and important.[18]

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[15] Interview 2. When asked how the government defines marginalization, …..did not have an answer, and also could not find it in the documentation.
[16] Interview 2 and 3.
[17] Interview 2 and 3.
[18] Interview 2.

In terms of the relationship between the city leadership and labour, the mayor of Mexico City – according to Article 123 of the Constitution and Articles 13 and 14 of the statute of the Government of the Federal District – was to play an important role in regulating and overseeing labour rights (*Gobierno del Distrito Federal* 2000). The implementation and observation of labour norms were to be carried out through the Department of Labour. Within this framework, the PRD took the initiative to qualitatively change the relationship to the labour sector. In the opening pages of the 2000-2006 Programme for the Department of Labour, there is explicit reference to the desire to fulfil promises made with the first PRD mayoral election in 1997 to support workers and worker solidarity, reflecting the intent to consolidate a close connection not only between workers and the government, but also between worker-interest and other resident-interests in the city (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social* 2000-2006). It emphasizes that workers in the Federal District are the most important to the Mexican nation and states several ways that workers have been exploited and must be guaranteed better protections.

While this could be construed to resemble the populist rhetoric towards official labour unions in earlier eras of Mexican politics (section 3.6), there are important differences. This is first found in the list of crises facing workers of Mexico City which includes mention of chronic unemployment, lack of a minimum wage to satisfy the needs of a family, the high cost of living in the city, a public health system which is mediocre and inadequate, and a failure to observe higher quality labour norms (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social* 2000-2006). It further recognizes a range of hardships that fall out of the reach of labour policy, but which affect workers nonetheless. They include the pressures specific to Mexico City including poor housing, poor infrastructure, poor services, poor transportation, high levels of pollution, water shortages, and poor educational support (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social* 2000-2006; *Gobierno del Distrito Federal* 2002). In short, the language of the city-level Department of Labour offers a much more holistic picture that supports the worker as person and citizen with rights. This is in contrast to the discourse of previous (national) administrations traditionally characterizing worker interests in terms of the national interest (Harbers 2007). This language also reflects the close relationship that PRD representatives had with both labour and civil society in bringing about democratic reforms (see Chapter 6).

Perhaps even more profoundly, and certainly more radically, the report also provides key frameworks in which to consider future labour policy and reforms. It emphasizes the negative impacts on workers as Mexico City becomes more globally competitive in the production of goods and services, reflecting another important shift in the character of the discourse under

the PRI. It claims, moreover, that as increased participation in the global market has meant to enhance national wealth, it has rather only created new relations of power and subordination through market forces that have not relieved, but replaced historical exploitation of workers by the government (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social* 2000-2006). With this, it is remarkable that it uses an official document to place culpability for worker dissatisfaction in the hands of the government. It thus maintains that workers have not only been subjected to a system which privileges economic growth and the interests of capital over work, but specifically to the policies of the federal government of the previous 18 years that have prioritized the payment of debt to foreign banks and governments, facilitated the destruction of natural resources, promoted the privatization of industry and services of the social sector, encouraged the subordination of national concerns to international priorities, and created the conditions for threats to national sovereignty (*Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social* 2000-2006).

In addition to the creation of the Department of Labour as a concrete measure, the first mayors of the city outwardly expressed their support of labour and maintained relations with labour leaders (Grayson 2007; Gugelberger 2005). When AMLO took office as mayor (2000-2005), he praised the work that Cardenás (1997-1999) had been able to carry out on behalf of labour, including recognizing and promoting labour rights within specific programmes, but wanted to take them forward even more (Baltzar 2003). On behalf of labour, AMLO also came out in defence of raising the minimum wage and creating wage laws specifically for the city, and bypassing federal laws. His goal was to recover the purchasing power of salaries, and create comprehensive laws that would consistently support wages that permit workers to support their households. In voicing his support of wage increases two percent above the level of inflation, he called anything less than that in the context of the difficult demands of living in Mexico City, 'a joke' (Baltzar 2003). Moreover, in promoting the rights of workers to organize in their own interest, he referred directly to the corruption of previous labour arrangements in which workers would only find security by participating in the corporatist structure, succumbing to the pressure to sign illegitimate contracts, and by being victimized as ghost unions willingly signed away their rights (La Botz 2005).

Finally, the attention to citizen participation for the PRD government was both a key feature of their campaign platform, but also something they tried to formally acknowledge in municipal-level documentation (Gobierno del Distrito Federal 2001, 2002) and legislation, including the Citizen Participation Act of 1998 and the Integrated Territorial Social Programme. As stated in their Principles on Social Policy in the Federal District (Gobierno del Distrito Federal 2002),

citizen participation is regarded as key to building the strong relationship between government and society that the PRD desired. Reflecting the continuing role of the PRD as the opposition to traditional forms of power, there is explicit mention of the need to overcome previous structures of manipulation by the government along with the need to build new relationships 'that have nothing to do with the past' (Gobierno del Distrito Federal 2002: 48). Expressing even deeper solidarity with the poor, government documents explicitly state that citizen participation is closely linked with the need to provide sufficient social safety networks, in order to ensure that citizens have fulfilled their basic needs sufficiently giving them both time and energy for more active participation. This is referred to as the 'politics of social development' which must, first, reach the most vulnerable groups in the city and, second, be informed by their own input and demands (Gobierno del Distrito Federal 2002: 49)

The Citizen Participation Act and the Integrated Territorial Social Programme are evaluated with mixed views (Harbers 2007; Mahon and MacDonald 2010). The Citizen Participation Act allowed for a new organization of neighbourhood and community level groups across the city which would act as small discussion forums for citizens to 'get together, discuss, evaluate and supervise the government's job' (Gobierno del Distrito Federal 2002: 49). The structure, however, did not serve the purpose well with over 4000 small groups that had to be coordinated and hold elections for local leaders (Harbers 2007). Minimal participation and the default role of the small groups to inform the public of government decision-making undermined the political effectiveness. As part of the Integrated Territorial Social Programme, new avenues for communication were implemented including opportunities to express opinions through direct dial phone lines. While this encouraged some citizens to voice their views (Mahon and MacDonald 2010), participation was very low and it did not serve the overall objective of creating a stronger sense of informed, public debate (Harbers 2007). Without a suitable forum in which this could take place in a massive urban setting such as Mexico City, the general goals of the PRD to enhance citizen participation from the top-down were rhetorically powerful, but fundamentally unsuccessful. From this perspective, it becomes interesting to see how civil society groups promoted their own forms of participation under the new PRD leadership.

5.5 Closing: urban politics and policy

This chapter has tried to give an account of the changing urban political landscape in Mexico City and how this may have been important for low-income residents in Mexico City. By taking an historical perspective of the iterative relationship between political interests and

economic incentives, it has shown how the nature of leadership, structure of representation, and city-level government objectives changed in a short period of time. It has added a layer to the national setting analysis (Chapter 3) by showing how interests are articulated by different groups at the city level in relation to changing national and international processes and goals. In this way, it contributes to a multi-scalar understanding of social forces that will be discussed again in Chapter 7. It has also highlighted different official responses to the changing needs and demands of the poor as they were impacted by globalizing city trends (Chapter 4). While rhetorically addressing the needs of the poor, neither the traditional nor oppositional parties lost sight of the predominance and relevance of Mexico City to the nation, and promoted continued global competitiveness even with the parallel processes of exclusive growth for some, and impoverishment and marginalization of others (Chapter 4).

At the city level, this chapter has described how the PRI was forced to change its strategy of providing compensatory benefits to the popular and working classes of Mexico City through corporatist structures and patron-client relations in order to guarantee their support. Rather, over time, they had to adapt to new structures of political competition and new notions of public service, and finally accept the victory of the opposition party. Despite the victory of the PRD to the mayoral office, the still-maturing party encountered many obstacles in consolidating its position and promoting its own agenda. Nonetheless, with examples of their successful attempts to reform city-level government to be more in tune with the poorer residents, this chapter has highlighted the creation of new city government departments that deal with the needs of the poor, and that have the interests of the poor as a central feature in their policy plans and programme reports. Additionally, it has looked at the role that the new government played in promoting public participation and engendering new forms of political agency through new discourse promoting holistic social justice. This discourse was closely in line with the oppositional and activist CSOs, reflecting the close relationship that PRD officials has had with civil society before becoming formally elected. In the next chapter, this will be explored as contextualizing political agency among the urban poor.

6. Informal Political Engagement of the Urban Poor in Mexico City

6.1 Introduction

This chapter takes an historical look at the questions of how, why, and to what effect the informal political engagement of the organizations of the urban poor changed under the circumstances of economic restructuring and democratic transitions from the early 1980s to the early 2000s. As explained in section 2.7, the word informal refers to the modes and discourses of political engagement that are generated in civil society, and are not based on formal structures or arrangements of political representation. In the previous chapters, the formal contexts in which to explore these questions were developed. In Chapter 3, the changing national setting was explained. Crucially, changes at both the national and international level facilitated the emergence of new social actors (section 3.7). This serves as an important reference point for the present chapter. In Chapter 4, global city formation was discussed in terms of the drive toward achieving global city status for Mexico City, the impact global city ambitions have on the political clout offered to and obtained by different social groups, and the polarization of classes between an increasingly wealthy elite and the growing masses of low-income groups. Chapter 5 has addressed the politics and policies of Mexico City, described how they have changed in relation to the national democratic transition, but also the pressures of neoliberal transformations, and presented the changes in formal structures for political engagement.

This chapter deepens the understanding of political transformation by looking at civil society. Through describing the discourses of agency and modes of political engagement based on interviews during fieldwork, it refers back to section 2.3, and will discuss some of these findings in terms of 'collective images' and their emancipatory potential further in Chapter 7. It likewise hopes to tie together the multi-scalar approach down to the bottom-level of the conceptual framework (Figure 2.1). Section 6.2 offers a birds-eye view by consolidating the key political transformations from the literature reviews in the previous chapters to simplify the historical context. Section 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 present and discuss the fieldwork data. The data is based on information collected from civil society organizations and academics who address the issues and needs of the poor. From their perspectives, section 6.6 will tie these empirical findings into a general conclusion about the changing political engagement of the urban poor in Mexico city.

6.2 The historical context for new social actors and relationships

As has been shown through the previous chapters, the era of economic and political reforms from the 1980s until about 2005, relationships between the state and other social actors had taken on a very new character. The corporatist, one-party state which harnessed control of the population through the co-optation of their interests had been replaced by a more competitive pluralist electoral democracy with a growing civil society by the early 2000s (section 3.3). State intervention in an inward-looking and widely protected domestic economy had been replaced by a retracted state and increased global presence in a market-driven economy. In this changing context, both economic and political actors had to re-define their roles with the state, international actors, business, labour, and new and existing civil society groups. Some actors resisted these changing relationships, but traditional access to forms of power was no longer available. As President Zedillo (1994-2000) tried to maintain a 'healthy distance' (Escalante Gonzalbo 1996) between the party and the government, others lost the political leverage on which they depended. However, still others were waiting for the system to open up so that they could freely express their reformist ideals, their electoral conscience, or organize without fear of repression around political and economic changes necessary for their wellbeing.

6.2.1 National transitions in party politics and electoral processes

Expressing enthusiasm for new political opportunities among the Mexican population, the most direct outcome of the political reforms in the 1990s was the steadily increasing electoral success of political parties other than the ruling PRI in local, state-wide, and later, the presidential elections of both 2000 and 2006. Though there has never been a time since the Mexican revolution when opposition parties have not existed, the era of reform allowed such parties to come to life by virtue of having more access to sources of support, by having facilities to improve their organization, and by being able to reach out with alternative messages to the Mexican people. By 2000, the three-party system had emerged constituted of the PRI, PAN, and PRD (section 5.1). The PAN had emerged as the first opposition party to the PRI in 1939. With a conservative leaning, it opposed the interventionist state promoted by Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), and supported the Catholic Church and business (Smith 2005). Largely because of its pro-business stance, the PAN has continued to be a party mostly supported by the urban middle and upper classes (Pastor and Wise 2005). In the early years of his administration starting in 2000, Vicente Fox (2000-2006) continued the PAN's support for business, but also adopted a populist rhetoric, which appealed to rural Mexicans (Pastor and Wise 2005). Unlike the PAN, the PRD grew out of an oppositionist strain within the PRI

which had first hoped to reform the PRI, but then moved to create a new party outside of it in 1987 (section 5.4.1). On the national level, the PRD is complex with an abundance of PRI cross-overs (section 5.4.2), blended with the former socialist and communist parties of Mexico, and supported by a network of smaller progressive parties, unions and organizations. After the initial enthusiasm about the PRD, its popularity waned amidst internal conflicts and cases of corruption (Morris 1999). However, it soon re-gained a strong base of support from Mexico's left, largely boosted by the widespread popularity of Andrés Manuel López Obrador, former president of the PRD and mayor of Mexico City from 2000-2005 (Hilgers 2008; Semo 2006).

6.2.2 Situating civil society organizations in the national and urban political context

One of the factors giving strength to the electoral success of the PRD has been its 'organic' links with civil society (section 5.4.1). Some PRD members who have either been elected to office or serve in close advisory positions have their roots in community organizing (Hilgers 2008). The growing influence and power of civil society, however, has an earlier history than its relationship with the PRD. Just as there have 'always' been opposition political parties, there have been opposition civil society organizations, though their messages and activities have likewise been stifled (Olvera 1997). This notwithstanding, following the student massacre in 1968 as well as the massive earthquake in Mexico City in 1985, civil society organizations (CSOs) have managed to acquire the necessary momentum and numbers to have at least minimal influence and inspire a more widespread form of this kind of political expression (Davis 1994). Also in the 1970s and 1980s, major organizations referred to as coordinating committees were created to draw together independent and regional groups representing the rights of the poor, teachers, women, public servants, and peasants, among others (Davis 1994). The uprising of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) in 1994 to protest the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and a wider range of social and economic injustices further pushed the ambitions of both radical and reformist CSOs by giving them a momentary sense of solidarity not controlled by the authoritarian government (Gilbreth and Otero 2001). In 2004, the formation of the Union, Peasant, Social, Indigenous, and Popular Front (FSCIP) out of independent labour unions, such as the UNT, and social justice organizations, such as the FSM, represented the converging interests of labour and other groups against the persistence of neoliberal policies to emerge 'as the real potential force of the Mexican left' (La Botz 2005: 1).

In this vein, the social and economic crises facilitated the voice of civil society while the breakdown of the corporatist system opened the political space in which they could participate

(Ai Camp 2007). This growth of civil society is 'one of the most significant political changes in Mexico since 1988,' with five thousand such groups by the mid-1990s, half of which were located in Mexico City (Ai Camp 2007: 162). However, the optimism about their potential has been balanced out by some lingering doubt about whether the growth of CSOs represented anything new, given the risk and the actual occurrence of the co-option of their respective interests into the corporatist structure (Cross 1998). To obtain their material needs, many CSOs sought to proclaim solidarity with the state, thereby undermining the power of radical opposition groups and splitting civil society more generally (Hellman 1994). Similarly, while the new emerging civil society represents a Mexican 'left', there is much discussion about the content and meaning of the left. While the 'parliamentary left' and the 'social left' share certain ideals, common loyalties and common enemies, which creates a united and powerful front, the two sides 'cannot be reduced to a common denominator. Neither one can come too close to the other without losing the essence of its historical mission' (Semo 2006: 85-86). The challenge is to find the ways in which the respective agendas of the left – both the elected political leadership and civil society organizations can come together to form a comprehensive alternative to the neoliberal project they oppose (Semo 2006).

As will be seen below (section 6.3), a position taken by nearly every organization that was consulted was that neoliberal policies implemented from the top-down, have been one of the most important sources of the impoverishment and exclusion felt in the city at the time of research. While there has been a great deal of activity to oppose the influence of neoliberalism in the city, it is useful to contextualize urban resistance in a wider context. It is argued that CSOs have been able to exert little influence over international policy-making processes (Teichman 2004). In the wake of their critique against the neoliberal structural adjustment programmes implemented in the 1980s, CSOs representing the poor demanded in the mid-1990s that they be included in guiding the reform process (Teichman 1996). While the World Bank responded partially to this and implemented procedures that would more fully include civil society organizations (Teichman 2004), their role remained limited. The Zedillo administration in 1994-2000 not only actively excluded the CSOs of the poor, but members of Congress and opposition parties as well, preferring to keep its dialogues with the World Bank closed (Teichman 2004). Even where civil society has had an impact on World Bank policies since the mid-1990s, it has not been welcome by the Mexican government (de Villegas and Adelson 2000). Nonetheless, the increasing political space for CSOs has been less contested since the election of President Fox (2000-2006) and the subsequent dismantling of the state-corporatist structure under the control of the PRI. The Fox administration's rhetoric was that a

strong civil society continues to further democratization of Mexico and should be supported (Ai Camp 2007: 164). Even so, doubts remain about the potential strength of civil society: first, if there is the potential that collaboration with the government falls back on old habits of co-optation and, second, if the poverty experienced by so many in civil society inhibits the achievement of their goals (Lawson 2004: 147; Dresser 1996).

6.2.3 Reaching out to the poor – what does it mean?

Finally, as relations have changed through multiple levels of scale – from the international, to national, to urban – so have the roles of individuals, particularly among the poor, as they reconstitute themselves as citizens of Mexico as opposed to clients of the party (Fox 1994). This means reconceiving their relationship with the state as well as the incorporated organizations which had nominally represented them. For the poor, with more or less acceptance or resistance, this meant discovering the meaning, and finding ways, of having their needs met through political and associational power rather than through the receiving of favours. Notorious for creating 'solidarity' with the poor, the PRONASOL poverty alleviation programme (section 3.4) under Salinas (1988-1994), dispersed goods to the poor in return for their support and loyalty to the president. While this created some sense of solidarity, it was based on the unspoken threat that without their loyalty, these same goods could easily be taken away. As Cornelius et al (1994) explain, the attempt to build solidarity with the poor reached unknown extents as Salinas encouraged the local Solidarity committees to build state wide and possibly national organizations with what he called the 'new mass politics of the Mexican state.' In contrast, in an attempt to match the democratic current in society, presidents Zedillo (1994-2000) and later Fox (2000-2006) revised the PRONASOL programme into PROGRESA-OPORTUNIDADES in 2002.[19] Through objective programme criteria, vigorous evaluation procedures, and relative success in pulling a number of households out of extreme poverty, these programmes gained a good reputation (Levy 2007), At the same time, while it seemed to be less politically targeted than PRONASOL was (Rocha Menocal 2001), there was some doubt if benefits reached those regions and people where political interests of the ruling party could not be established (Rocha Menocal 2001).

[19] This is a cash transfer policy to targeted populations in exchange for school attendance, visits to the doctor, and promoting good nutrition (Levy 2007).

6.3 Organizations of the urban poor

The following three sections try to give an on-the-ground illustration of how political engagement changed in the contexts provided above. In this section, I write in the first person to demonstrate what I learned as a researcher and to be clear about my own interpretations of the responses. As discussed theoretically (section 2.5.2) and included in the conceptual framework in Chapter 2 (section 2.6), the fieldwork data has been inductively organized into two main themes – discourse on agency (section 6.4), and political participation (section 6.5). The results are consolidated in Table 6.2 below. In the descriptions that follow, there is focus on specific organizations which best captured each theme. However, there is also significant overlap of their activities and approaches between themes. The two themes emerged inductively from asking the leaders of organizations, academics, and other members of civil society a range of questions regarding their interpretation of poverty in the city, the causes of poverty, the social and political obstacles to overcoming poverty, and the kind of steps being taken to address it. The organizations are listed in Table 6.1 below and the list of interviews is in Appendix 1.

In the interviews, questions also included whom the groups represent, with whom they have or hope to build alliances for change, and the messages they try to disseminate regarding the potential for change. Finally, interviewees were asked if they were optimistic about the future. As there was a good deal of agreement among their answers, I will include them here as a general context. Starting in 1997, and also in 2000, there was great optimism that came with the shift in urban leadership. By the time I conducted interviews in 2002/2003 with the organizations on the ground, that feeling had changed. There was persistent anxiety of not only 'business as usual' in terms of economic or political exclusion[20], but of a betrayal by the new urban leadership as it reached out to business interests (section 5.4.2)[21], and attempted to co-opt independent organizations in the city.[22] This does not mean that there was only pessimism, but that it was an obvious part of the story. For instance, one interviewee stated that 'government interferes with the ability of people to generate and use their own resources, and this creates poverty.'[23] Whereas another stated that 'there are huge contradictions in the city between major urban development and near rural living situations.'[24] Finally, the

[20] Interviews 5, 6,7,8,910,12,13,15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22
[21] Interviews 8,9,10,14,17,21,22
[22] Interviews 7,8,9,10,12,16,21,22
[23] Interview 17
[24] Interview 5

Table 6.1: Organizations and their Objectives

Organization (number of interview)	Objective	Representative of whom?
Instituto de Juventud (5)	Provide services, training and community building to enhance workforce options and leadership.	Young people (15-28) in poor neighbourhoods in outskirts of city.
Mujeres en Acción Sindical (7)	Develop projects and supports systems for women in the workforce. Share knowledge of women's rights in the workforce. Develop union and non-union coalitions.	Women in Mexico City (and other locations) working in low-wage formal sector industries.
Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT) (8)	Organize and empower independent unions. Build transnational links based on labour interests.	Low-wage and excluded workers in Mexico City, and throughout the country.
DECA Equipo Pueblo (9/10)	Research and disseminate knowledge about changing national and urban economic and political structures. Guide projects for poor communities. Develop networks across city for social and economic justice.	City-wide, all those interested in social and economic justice issues for the poor. Locally, worked in Iztapalapa to promote community development.
Vida Digna (12)	Create and share knowledge about the exploitative market system. Create and implement alternative forms of local exchange.	Poor and low-income goods and service producers who want to find more equitable markets for their goods within Mexico City.
Servicio de Desarrollo y Paz (SEDEPAC) (13)	Social, cultural and economic justice issues. Provide information to influence public policy to enforce rights. Peaceful transformation.	Indigenous, women, poor communities in outskirts of Mexico City
Red Mexicana de Acción Frente al Libre Comercio (RMALC) (14)	Resist free trade agreements in Latin America	Operates on a multi-scalar level. Uses support from organizations within city to share message, but focuses directly on coalition building.
Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento (COPEVI) (15)	Catholic supported organization focusing on the need for stable housing to overcome poverty.	Focuses on poor groups who earn only one or two minimum wages per day (poverty level wages).
Centro Nacional de Misiones Indígenas (CENAMI) (16)	Cultural and social development of indigenous, empowerment and community building.	Indigenous groups, women and youth in outskirts of Mexico City.
Comercio Justo México (17)	Provide market access for indigenous goods. Create new forms of exchange through network of small stores.	Indigenous populations, women within and around Mexico City.
Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia (18)	Promote civic participation, pressure government enhance democratic structure and processes.	Works with other organizations across city (not just focusing on poor) to help create more knowledge about democracy through strength of civil society.
Centro de la Vivienda y Estudios Urbanos (19)	Research institute and civil society organization. Provides information to the city government regarding conditions of poverty among women and informal workers.	Research and outreach for women, informal workers.
Witness for Peace (23)	Transnational organization promoting labour rights and peaceful resistance	In Mexico City, low wage workers in manufacturing industries. Provides communication between groups to share their issues, build solidarity.
Casa de los Amigos Discussion Group (25)	Quaker run organization to provide housing, counseling and meeting places for community discussion	Neighbourhood reach. Invites people from the neighbourhood to discuss political, social and economic concerns. Seeks to empower through knowledge.
La Otra Bolsa de Valores (26)	Organization promoting alternative economy. Creates and implements new forms of exchange.	Low-income neighbourhoods in Mexico City.
International Labour Organization, Mexico City Office (1)	UN Agency addressing labour rights and standards	Formal and informal workers in Mexico City
Academics	**Affiliation**	**Expertise/Focus**
Florinda Riquer (6)	Universidad Autónoma de México, Humanities and Social Sciences	Urban inequality and poverty among women
Elizabeth Gutiérrez (20)	Universidad Autónoma de México, Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte	Wage and labour inequality in context of globalization
Carlos Alba Vega (21)	El Colegio de México, Social Sciences and Economics	Inequality and Globalization Inequality in Mexico
Elaine Levine (22)	Universidad Autónoma de México, Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte	New urban poverty Labour migration

government strategy was accused of 'a little food, a little health, a little education….they are not concerned with overall change.'[25] As can already be seen, these views conflict with the optimistic discourse presented by the PRD in Chapter 5.

I first came into contact with the organizations through my residence in Mexico City, *Casa de los Amigos*. On a weekly basis, the residence held meetings for members and the more general community to discuss political and social issues that were pertinent at the time. Interestingly, these conversations often turned to the topic of identity in the city, reinforcing my own notion that a sense of political agency was shifting in the new political and economic climate. A topic they often turned to was of co-creation and co-responsibility in promoting progress[26]. Through these meetings, they wanted to promote knowledge and understanding so that people could become co-creators in their own settings. In addition to these first encounters, two organizations, *DECA Equipo Pueblo* and *Frente Auténtico del Trabajo* served as important anchors in framing the topics and in putting me in contact with more organizations. They also had ongoing discussions with academics who are also included in Table 6.1. Not every contact resulted in successfully arranging a meeting, but I was able to get a sense of the loose network that existed across the city. A major disappointment in regard to field work was a meeting which fell through with the Mexico City representation of the National Coalition of Urban Popular Movements (*Movimiento Urbano Popular*), frequently referred to as the CONAMUP. Active in both resistance and in building alliances with political leadership, its input would have been invaluable.

6.4 Discourses on agency

In this section, I describe and explore how interviewees expressed a changing notion of political agency. For the most part, the objective was to ascertain how they saw themselves and others as actors in the political spectrum. Did they see themselves as trying to obtain benefits for the poor from the state, did they see themselves as agents of change, as working with or against the state, or as bringing about new ideas for political transformation? At times, the discussion about the meaning of political agency was very explicit, and made reference to specific concepts and ideas already used within their organizations to express how they viewed themselves in relation to structures of political and economic power. Other times, the discussion was more subtle. Additionally, new forms of political agency were either expressed as a conclusion of how things had become, or more as an aspiration as the formal urban

[25] Interview 6
[26] Friday evening meetings, Casa de los Amigos

political setting was changing. In the account below, I will try to emphasize how some notions of agency reflect the previously discussed concepts of agency, though it is not necessarily an easy fit. Throughout, I will try to show how political agency is negotiated in relation to urban poverty in the globalizing city.

6.4.1 Agency as surviving

Perhaps the most straightforward discussion on agency reflects the tension between roles as survivalist or activist[27]. As mentioned by one interviewee at Epuipo Pueblo, when addressing poverty, 'sometimes people turn to [providing] services because they don't know how to take on the system.'[28] Because of harsher living circumstances, the poor make choices about how they can use their time and energy. In this case, as is recognized in survival strategies analyses of poverty (section 4.4.6), meeting the demands of daily survival undermine the opportunity to participate in political action to address their grievances.[29] Long-term gains are traded in for short-term gains. Referring to this as the 'power to' (section 2.4.3), the poor take actions for survival, but with little expectation or deliberate intention of bringing any change to the system. Nonetheless, the interviewees were uncomfortable accepting this as any form of power, and saw it as disempowerment of the poor by highlighting the unacceptable pressure put on the poor to survive.[30] As was expressed, 'the condition of poverty is the same for all men, women and children. It is dehumanizing for all.'[31] The constraints are caused by the overlap of different factors. This includes that the poor often live far from where they can find jobs with sufficient income[32] taking time away from any additional activities, and that the environmental and sanitation conditions of peri-urban areas undermines health and quality of life[33]. This also includes the fact that as real wages have fallen specifically since neoliberal reforms were initiated in 1982, more members of the household must work. While organizations and academics were pleased about the increased economic participation of women,[34] they also highlighted the pressure it put on entire families and in sustaining local networks[35]. 'The poverty of women is structural. It is not just globalization, or the political

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[27] Interviews 5,6,7,13,15,16,19,22,23
[28] Interview 9
[29] Interviews 5,7,13,16,19,22
[30] Interviews 5,7,13,16,19,22
[31] Interview 6
[32] Interviews 7,13,16
[33] Interviews 5,16
[34] Interviews 7,9,19,22
[35] Interviews 7,8,9/10,19,22

administration. They are always left at the margin and accept the worst conditions of life.'[36] However, cited as one of the most problematic sources of restricting the urban poor to the 'power to' is the policy framework in which unemployment is defined as less than one hour of work a week (section 4.4.7). To this, one interviewee expressed his profound frustration:

> *'Now [in 2003]…. it's basically impossible for an adult to be jobless. If they consider that you have a job when you work an hour a week, how can you manage? You have to do something. You can be a thief, you can be a prostitute, wash windows, or combine all of them. But, you have to do something to survive. Even though they have this figure of 1 or 2 percent of unemployment, that sounds small, but when you think of what classifies as employment, then it is a totally misleading figure. Why aren't Canadians coming to Mexico looking for jobs? That's why all the entrances are blocked to the subways because there are so many people trying to sell things. Ten years ago, they were even inside the subway.' (Interview 8)*

6.4.2 Informal economic agency as political agency

Despite acknowledging their limited resources, the organizations I met with were not involved in providing services to the poor to help them in their daily lives. Rather, some interviewees addressed survival in different ways in relation to political agency. For some, this meant conceptualizing political agency as economic agency, which could be expressed through participation in the informal economy[37]. 'Being in the informal economy does not have to mean that people are poor because they may also have access to a stronger social network. This is also important because people are not able to be in touch with social networks that might exist in other types of settings.'[38] This again may be seen as the 'power to', but added to this, in particular is the notion of 'power with', as there is a sense of solidarity that comes for both entrepreneur and consumer[39]. Similar to being a survivalist, participation in the informal economy is not new in Mexico City, but increased as low-wage sector jobs and working conditions became more precarious with the privatization of industry (section 4.4.5 and Williams 2003).[40] Therefore, as it has grown, my analysis of the responses of interviewees and printed editorials suggests that the informal economy has also taken on a new social and political meaning. As was stated in a La Jornada article from 1997, 'to seek economic

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[36] Interview 6
[37] Interviews 8,9/10,19,21; *Cuadernos de Cenvi, Serie; Economía Urbana, Comercio en Investigación, Enero 2003* (Provided at Interview 19).
[38] Interview 11
[39] Interviews 8,9/10,11, 21
[40] Mary Williams was the interviewee at the *Centro de la Vivienda y Estudios Urbanos*, and authored this document which she provided to me during Interview 19.

recovery by sacrificing the workers has only created a rip in the social fabric. The expectations that the society offers to its population is unacceptable.'[41] While it is impossible to know the perspective of millions of people working in the informal sector, I ascertained from the interviews that participation in the informal market was partly based on a shared recognition that there was a lack of political will among elected leadership, even with the optimism of the newly elected PRD in 1997 and 2000 (section 6.2), to help residents avoid precarious work, promote independent organizing, and to respect rights.[42] Participating in informal consumer and producer networks meant acting autonomously from the state (at least in part) and in association with others whose interests can be actualized beyond its control.

6.4.3 Autogestión

However, this raises the question of what does it mean to push forward a discourse on political agency in this way? Does it fundamentally change the outcome of the activity? While it is difficult to make claims about this, I did find that such ideas interact with the emerging discourse in independent labour organizations. As I learned from the independent labour organization *Frente Auténtico del Trabajo* (FAT), the organization is based on a notion of *autogestión.*[43] The direct translation of the word is 'self-management', but as was explained, this does not fully capture its meaning. Rather, it suggests a 'high level of self-empowerment, it's a very important unifying term.'[44] It is based on self-determination, but not in an individualistic sense. Self-determination is experienced collectively for the purposes of individual empowerment. The term also encourages a sense of trust in a community – with the idea that by acting collectively, one can actualize their own goals by supporting the goals of others. For the organizations which use this term, they explained that this translates practically into direct participation of workers in making decisions about their own labour conditions and in promoting a high level of social civil society empowerment.[45] This was observed as changing relations between the state and labour (section 3.6) gave space for independent labour movements (section 3.6 and 6.2). However, there is more to this than the empirical outcome. As independent labour movements have strengthened and also developed stronger ties with other independent organizations both domestically and internationally (Hathaway and Hotel 1997), it is the hope that *autogestión* will deepen not just as a principle, but as a right for

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[41] Given to me at Interview 21. My own translation.
[42] Interviews 6, 8, 11, 19
[43] Interview 8
[44] Interview 8
[45] 8, 9/10, 23

workers and civil society as a whole, with particular attention to including the poor who are limited in their political agency to be bolstered by it.[46]

6.4.4 The tensions in moving from client of the state to independent citizen

Another way of exploring political agency was by looking at trends in individual and group transformations under conditions of democratic transitioning since the late 1990s. One trend related to the condition of being a client of the state while the corporatist system was still intact. Though not endowing society with transformational power through association, it did endow society with a sense of power coming from a widely shared collective identity with the state (section 3.3). This idea of moving from a client to citizen is coined by Fox (1994), and was introduced by readings which, I was told, was required reading for all those working at Equipo Pueblo, an organization which deals with various aspects of community organizing and social justice. As the interviewee explained, based on the analysis by Fox (1994) as Mexicans historically were drawn into the patron-client system of the PRI (section 3.6), they also felt a sense of belonging, even if they resented state power.[47] As such, it was not a self-determined form of collective consciousness, but collective nonetheless. During the democratic transition, the sense was that the state organization of collective identity could be replaced by an independently organized collective identity, through the action of civil society organizations at particularly the grassroots level.[48] People could act independently within the political framework, making use of their vote to bring change to the system. As was explained, participation 'is not only about votes, it is about how citizens see themselves in relation to the state and government.'[49]

However, the effect of neoliberal transformations on the workforce, in particular, forced the population to become more reliant on themselves for survival and could encourage more competition in society. 'The liberation of the market,' one interviewee stated, 'has not liberated anybody, but made them have to fend for themselves.'[50] As the state abandoned its responsibility to the people,[51] poor populations especially needed to depend more on themselves. My interpretation of these trends is that two forms of individualism started to take shape. An individualism that was facilitated by the need to succeed in the market-based

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[46] Interview 18
[47] Interview 9/10, but also discussed in Interview 8,12,21
[48] 8,9/10,12
[49] Interview 9
[50] Interview 17
[51] Interview 8,12. The phrase is from a newspaper article given to me during Interview 8, *La Jornada*

economy was accompanied by an individualism that emerged from a sense of political independence. In interpreting the explanations of the respondents, it seems that the two forms of individualism were in tension with each other, each promoting different ways of structuring civic life. This even created conflict in organizations themselves. This was explained by the interviewee at Equipo Pueblo, 'the whole way that Mexico City has been and continues to be settled has allowed for different roles of different types of organizations. Community and "money-making" organizations that don't understand each other.'[52] In this way, organizations were trying to challenge the notion of individualism, even in its positive sense, to steer the democratic transitions toward the creation of a stronger civil society with more relative weight against the state. They wanted to avoid the eventual shift toward a more cut-throat version of neoliberal capitalist development that would undermine the ability of collective political activity to keep the state in check and that would undermine a general sense of social solidarity. As the quote above (section 6.4.2) points to the destruction of the social fabric, the remedy to this was to create a civic consciousness embedded in an associational network. There was the effort, if not yet the outcome, of facilitating a political identity within civil society.

6.4.5 Redefining political power

When asked if they felt that they had the power to make change, respondents made a point of explaining the way power is claimed in Mexico and Mexico City since the period of reform. This was addressed on two levels. First, in regard to the meaning of formal power, it was explained that under the PRI, power was wielded by those in office by being able to decide who would have access to programmes or benefits. This was based on the willingness of the population to agree to the political conditions of receiving benefits or favours, which means showing their outward support for their PRI representatives.[53] Neighbourhood leaders who encouraged their communities to show support for their elected representatives would often be rewarded by the PRI with additional social or material benefits, raising their status in their immediate community. This leads to a second claim to power – there was a sense of power among the general population when they could obtain favours in return for the political conditions. As was explained:

> *'[It] depends upon what you call political power. In PRI days, political power meant two things: being able to say who could and who could not have access to*

[52] Interview 9
[53] Specified in Interview 8, but also came up in Interviews 9/10, 12, 13, 16, 22

> *programs or benefits – that means power. Enormous housing program, but if someone wanted a house if you comply with PRI conditions, whatever they may be. Power meant making your dreams coming true, even if it came with conditions. It also meant personal access for leaders to have gains in money, if they can meet their quota of people they have to bring into the PRI, they'll be rewarded for that. Practical meaning of political power at that time. Nowadays, many people want that kind of power. That's the perception of what having power means for a lot of people, where they had some kind of access to something they wanted.' (Interview 8)*

According to respondents, this traditional notion of power unfortunately remains embedded in Mexican society.[54] It is a more direct route to experiencing a sense of power and remains attractive on both sides. Even as the PRI has moved away from being the only formal power, the practice continues among representatives from other parties.

The conclusion I was able to draw, then, was that 'power over' remained contingent on the exchange of favours in both directions. Moreover, from the experience of civil society organizations, the threat of coercion or co-optation of their interests was still strong even after the democratic transitions had taken hold (Villaseñor Gómez 2001). At a societal level, this undermines the power needed for change. Importantly, it was pointed out that the discourse over power and resistance is different within the civil society organizations with whom I met than it is for the general public.[55] As was expressed in frustration about the populations to whom they reach out, 'What is their role? People don't ask themselves this. There is a lack of a political culture.'[56] In this way, some respondents recognized that the ideas they had for bringing about change were not shared by a critical mass and emphasized that 'it is only for us'.[57] However, some showed cautious optimism about the potential for political empowerment ('power to') and citizen solidarity ('power with'), stating that, 'I suppose I am obligated to be optimistic about the future. It's getting easier to bring people together from different sectors of society. It is difficult to understand globalization, but when we do, it will get better.'[58] My interpretation of this is that they felt that real change was yet to happen in the public mind, especially as the historical conditions for political power were still so deeply embedded in the experiences of the urban poor. Moreover, highlighting the multi-scalar dimension (though the questions were not asked in this way), it was expressed that even with the potential of the democratic transition and the presence of the PRD in Mexico City, real

[54] Interviews 8, 9/10, 12, 13, 16, 22
[55] 8, 9/10, 12, 13, 16, 18
[56] Interview 5
[57] Interview 13
[58] Interview 17

change in the conceptualization and discourse of power must include participation at the national level.[59] According to the FAT, the city level government lacks the capacity to make any substantial change to the structure.

6.5 Modes of political participation

In light of the fluid definitions of political participation presented in section 2.5.2, this section will show how political participation was conceptualized and practiced in Mexico City in the early 2000s. Overall, I found four patterns woven throughout nearly all interviews. Firstly, I found that participation was closely linked to ideas about political agency – where organizations found that they were able to re-define their roles in Mexico City, this also motivated new ways to act on such roles. Secondly, organizations generally agreed that real change would come from the bottom-up, but that even where small successes can be found, they felt that their achievements in civil society were quite limited. Thirdly, rarely did organizations work in isolation. I did not find that there were strong functioning networks of organizations, but a deep consciousness and awareness of each other, along with the stated desire to work together. Finally, I found that there was often reluctance to talk about 'political participation', rather than just participation. It took me some time to understand this, but it finally became clear that to say something was political in Mexico City meant that it was associated with party politics and the party structure. As some organizations were trying to maintain a distance from party politics and the old way of doing things, they did not characterize their own work as being political, even if there was an underlying political goal. In general, the various forms of participation included here are those that were meant to address inequalities and poverty, and I have organized them according to their goals of inclusion and resistance (section 6.5.1), promoting independent labour (section 6.5.2), alternative forms of participation (section 6.5.3), and coalition building across issue areas (6.5.4).

6.5.1 Inclusion and resistance

The participation of several organizations in civil society was characterized by their goals of promoting inclusion of low-wage and marginalized groups and neighbourhoods. Without an explicit political agenda, they sought to bring change at a local level and give people the opportunity to overcome their circumstances to later become more politically active.[60] In this

[59] Interview 8
[60] Interview 10

section, I refer mostly to the Instituto de Juventud, DECA Equipo Pueblo, the Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento (COPEVI), and Comercio Justo. As they see it, inclusion must happen in two directions. On the one hand, 'the neighbourhood level is the most important level,'[61] and includes an ongoing process of 'fighting [the system], working [with the community], fighting, working, the cycle does not end.'[62] On the other hand, as was stated by one respondent, 'Small guys don't make any changes. It is important that politicians and big companies change, regardless of how much work the other groups do. If they don't have a socially responsible consciousness, nothing will change.'[63] From this view, despite efforts and small successes on a local level, without the participation of multi-scalar actors to facilitate such efforts, or at least refrain from interfering with them, the likelihood of making change is much smaller.

The activities of these groups are multi-faceted. Inclusion is promoted in the poorest area of Mexico City (called Iztapalapa) through educational programmes, individual tutoring, and specific attention to the needs of young men and women. There are also programmes to accompany young people through their daily lives to help them stay in school and take care of themselves. There is a strong emphasis put on 'communicating'[64] with the residents of poorer communities to find out not only what they need most, but also how they see themselves as residents and citizens. Other activities include organizing community resources to improve local schools, local infrastructure, public buildings, but also improve knowledge about health and the environment. Housing also forms the key objective of COPEVI, arguing that having a good home is the foundation of all opportunities to pull oneself out of poverty.[65] They use the knowledge and skills of young architects to come to poor communities to figure out and solve housing needs. Finally, inclusion is also pursued by organizations helping marginalized and often indigenous populations living at the outskirts of the city to have more economic opportunities. For Comercio Justo, there is a strong link between human rights and market participation. Their work involves promoting interactions between different poor communities in order to find ways of making the best products for the urban market (or beyond). They hope to move what is considered 'alternative forms of consumption' to the mainstream.[66]

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[61] Quote from Interview 5, but view shared by others
[62] Interview 10
[63] Interview 17
[64] Interviews 5, 10, 15
[65] Interview 15
[66] Interview 17

As was emphasized by all these organizations, their activities took place without (or with minimal) government participation, but also with the hope that a mutually beneficial relationship would emerge.[67] Through communities helping themselves, organizational leaders emphasized that they were also helping the local government and that it might lead to better forms of representation.[68] Nonetheless, even with such programmes in place, challenges remained, not only in terms of the number of people who needed to be reached by the programmes[69], but in acknowledging that, 'We try, and are optimistic, but we can't do much when the people we are helping have almost nothing.'[70] That is, despite small successes, the millions of urban residents lingering in poverty motivated organizations to stay active in the language of protest. Protest was broadly articulated toward neoliberalism, the previous and current presidential administrations, and at the acquiescence of city government to private sector demands (section 5.4.2)[71]. However, on the ground, genuine resistance was sometimes made difficult by existing relations with the PRD. This reflects the 'power to' create organizations for social causes, but also the challenge in translating that into 'power over' to make change. While not wanting to become agents of the PRD, leaders and members of organizations had ties based on the PRD's grassroots base. More problematic, as one interviewee noted, 'The community forms a sort of competition to the rule of the PRD. The PRD wants to make decisions for them.'[72] As such, there was a clear understanding that deeper inclusion of the poor and civil society in self-determination would have to be based on a relationship of resistance with the state.

Inclusion and resistance was thus promoted by the language of economic, social and political rights, to extend beyond any political agenda. As expressed by COPEVI, 'A basic point is that people stay, governments don't. People maintain stability and they need to know how to do so.'[73] This comment was made regarding the need for especially the poorest populations to be aware of their range of human and legal rights, so that they can organize their own communities around them and insist that they are respected. This crosses the line into the more complex battles and requires educating affected groups.

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[67] Interviews 5, 9/10, 15, 17
[68] Interviews 5, 6, 9/10, 17
[69] Interview 5
[70] Interview 5
[71] Interview 9: A constant frustration was the influence of the Mexican Chamber of Commerce over decision-making in the private sector.
[72] Interview 10
[73] Interview 15

I found that participation to enhance rights was facilitated in two ways. First were those organizations that had explicit projects to strengthen rights. The Movimiento Ciudadano Democracia (MCD) was in the process of designing five points of democratization present to the city government to enhance electoral rights of the citizenry, which they also used to galvanize support at the community level, thus building a bridge between civil society and the government.[74] Witness for Peace developed cross-national and transnational educational programmes on worker rights. Other organizations such as COPEVI, Comerico Justo and CENAMI taught their communities that indigenous rights and economic rights were combined. Relying specifically on the langue of the National Plan for the Development of Indigenous Populations (Federal Government 2001-2006), they were able to – at least in word – provide the tools for empowerment. Other organizations such as Vida Digna and the discussion groups at the Casa de los Amigos did not have specific agendas for community interventions, but held open discussions about the rights of the poor in the city, not just indigenous communities. While participation was often not more than 12-15 people at a time, the objective was to make those people aware so they could share the information with others.

Finally, the participation of women and gender issues in Mexico City was woven through discourse on inclusion and resistance, but will be briefly addressed separately here. As several organizations noted, the participation of women played an important role in organizing protest and solutions following the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City (section 6.2.1). This momentum raised awareness of both the contributions of women, but also their relative poverty and exclusion. It also highlighted the changing constitution of civil society during the era of protest, which has only deepened into the early 2000s and beyond.[75] Thus, the concerns of women have become a wider topic, and gained a new round of momentum with the observation that the success of neoliberal market reforms also rested on the use of women in the export-market workforce. Attention has thus gone in two general directions. The first was to the continued impoverishment and multi-burdened role of women in poor and indigenous neighbourhoods, with the observation that 'we are far from finding ways to break the vicious cycle of poverty for women. There needs to be a community and collective project to do so.'[76]

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[74] Interview 18. These were intended to strengthen democratic processes and support a new social consciousness surrounding elections and included facilitating the participation of independent parties, promote forms of trust by making credentials of candidates transparent, prohibit the use of public resources to favor specific candidates, promote equal use of mass media for candidates of all parties, and promote equal use of resources for different levels of campaigning.

[75] Interview 9

[76] Interview 6

The second was to the exploitative working conditions under neoliberal market principles. This raised attention to the particular vulnerability of women in the workplace.[77]

As such, organizations such as Equipo Pueblo, Comericio Justo, CENAMI, COPEVI, SEDEPAC and Instituto de Juventud provided special programmes and attention to the women in the communities where they work with the stated goal of increasing their participation in civic life. Nearly every organization interested in promoting social and economic rights in general, found a specific place for women and gender issues in their activities. Their activities included finding ways to help re-balance their obligations, provide support in confronting unequal familial relations, and education for both skills and knowledge about their own rights as articulated at the level of city government.[78] It seemed that for some groups, the enhanced role of women in civil society was inexorably linked to the emancipatory potential of civil society itself. The ways in which power relations constrained women's agency were reflective of the way power relations constrained civic agency. By conceptually linking these ideas, programmes of actions were designed to address both. Building on this, women's issues were also linked to independent labour movements (section 6.5.2 below), and approached in the same language of self-determination. Mujeres en Acción Sindical emphasized that while participation of women is high in manufacturing, it is low in social, political and cultural life, and is a feature of low-wage workers more generally in city-level decision-making. Generalizing their position, they explained that 'the opening of the market has forced unions to reinvent themselves. This is an opportunity to give women a new foundational place in the construction of labour relations.'[79]

6.5.2 Independent union organizing

The changing relationship of labour with the state (section 3.6 and 6.2) seems to have played an important role in the changing notions of political engagement in Mexico City. Organizations and academics that were interviewed who were not directly related to labour issues occasionally mentioned the momentum of independent labour organizing, under the auspices of the FAT, as being an important focal point. My day with the FAT also allowed me to understand how vast their own agenda is in relation to the workers of Mexico City. The interview was rich in detail and examples that help understand their form of political participation better. Therefore, in this sub-section, specific attention will be given to this

[77] Interview 7
[78] Interviews 5, 9,13,15,16,17
[79] Interview 7

organization. Part of what characterizes independent union organizing as a form of political participation, is their definition of independence. As explained, at one time, being independent meant any form of organization or activity that was independent from the ruling party, the PRI.[80] However, by the early 2000s, it seemed that vision was changing and there was momentum to explore alternatives:

> *'Now it is time to build independence with more meaning: we obey our own issues, we obey our own grassroots mechanisms for these issues, we follow our own program, and based on that, we establish relations with everybody. Some are conflictual, some don't happen, others end up being alliances.' (Interview 8)*

Two key examples that were described by the FAT are provided below. They may be translated into two types of political participation, 'opportunistic' on the one hand, and the attempt to create more coherence between worker participation and representation on the other. The self-proclaimed opportunistic nature of participation is demonstrated in a decision taken by the FAT just prior to my time of research. Following the election of Mayor López Obrador (2000-2005), a woman who had been part of the FAT for 20 years and was considered one of the most important and historic leaders was asked to join the city government as city comptroller. For the FAT, it presented as both a success and a conflict. As a success, it showed that the new city government was willing to include political views and positions of those who had been previously left out. It also reflected the social movement nature of the PRD, and that the party itself was not betraying its roots. With the perspective of an independent labour leader holding official office, the potential for real change for workers was enhanced. This is where FAT saw an opportunity. However, there was a concern that the FAT would lose its capacity to make claims on the city. To address this, they specifically stated that this would not lead to them becoming part of the PRD[81], nor allow PRD influence to shape their goals and actions. This was not only so that they would not submit to the local government, but also to not undermine solidarity with the rest of Mexico City's civil society. As such, the potential for strengthening formal representation and participation in decision-making at the level of city government was enhanced but this kind of participation came with the trade-off of risking long-term autonomy.

A second example shows the specific conceptualization of participation as being coherently linked to forms of representation. In this way, the concept of autogestión (section 6.4.3) is implemented as low-wage workers broaden the scope of participation through self-

[80] Interview 8
[81] Interview 8

determination. As I have interpreted it, this relationship is foundational for the independent labour movement. The example refers to an election among gasoline workers in Mexico City to create an independent union. It took place just days before my interview, and was won by the FAT. The election took place at the workplace where a clerk of the labour board, an 'official' employer representative, and a representative of FAT were present. One by one, each worker was to step forward and declare out loud their vote for or against an independent union. Unless a guaranteed critical mass of workers has been established prior to the voting day that is willing to vote for the independent union before the election takes place, then, as was put by the interviewee at FAT, 'if you vote for the independent union, you are an ex-worker.' The need for an independent union among these gas station workers was to redress the secrecy under which their previous union contracts existed and to provide them with the basic wages they were promised. With such lack of transparency, employers could avoid paying any wages at all, and also required gasoline workers to pay for their job placement through purchasing gasoline at the beginning of each day that they could then sell on their own. Anything they could not sell would be at the loss of the individual. According to FAT organizers, though an important step, the victory achieved in establishing an independent union for gasoline workers was actually quite minimal in that it only allowed workers to be able to enforce the contract they already had.

The FAT, or similar independent union organizers, must invest years of preparation before a vote takes place to assure workers of a successful outcome, and requires the active participation of FAT members, smaller independent unions and the workers to come to a shared vision and course of action. Votes such as these take place more often, but without the strong organizational efforts of groups such as FAT, they often fail and workers lose their jobs on top of losing the vote. The above example illustrates that the poverty of low-wage workers is not only a matter of economics, but of representation and party politics. As long as their political power is constrained, they cannot create the conditions necessary for obtaining higher wages. It has also shown how the independence of union organizers in Mexico City can contribute to political participation. As FAT pursues its objectives in independent union organizing, it is not only attempting to provide better recourse to workers, but it is also trying to contribute to broader transformations in the meaning of political power. As it reaches out to other independent union organizers in Mexico City such as the National Workers Union and the Mexican Union Front, or to other grassroots organizations with different targets but similar objectives, such as DECA Equipo Pueblo, FAT is attempting to bring about broad changes that will eventually offer protection to workers across Mexico City as a whole (section 6.6).

6.5.3 Alternative participation

In this section, discourse among some of the civil society organizations in Mexico is woven into new forms of agency. While I characterize it here as political participation based on their attempts to pursue alternative forms of political and economic cooperation, such agency may be better seen as political non-participation. To explain, participation here is defined by the views of those who see the source of urban poverty in the current era as being linked to structural forms of economic and political oppression, even under circumstances of democratic transitions, and they are seeking ways to become more autonomous in Mexico City and build associational power on their own. Four organizations play a role in this section. The first two are SEDEPAC and CENAMI, which reflected a more radical position in terms of helping the poor to claim their social and cultural rights, beyond the more common goals of including marginalized groups in political and economic opportunities. The other two organizations will be addressed below. For SEDEPAC and CENAMI, the outcome of being poor in Mexico City was not because of low income, or based on other indicators such as poor health and low levels of education. Rather, poverty was occurring because of the denial of social and cultural rights for large groups of people, particularly migrants. 'They have nothing that the rest of society wants and they cannot choose to live according to their own senses.'[82] The political participation of the organizations is characterized by their efforts to strengthen poor communities in the peri-urban areas of Mexico City by helping them to create stronger community networks based on shared values.[83] As expressed by SEDEPAC, the power of their work comes in helping people recognize themselves as 'new actors that can make change' in the context of their communities and civil society, and to 'fortify their role as citizens' who can pursue their own visions for their communities.[84]

For SEDEPAC, participation of the poor was facilitated through key processes focusing on women, youth, and community solidarity. To begin, they put a strong emphasis on the identities and participation of women and indigenous women. They designed bottom-up popular education workshops which made use of their knowledges and gave them a more central place in their urban communities. Their attention to women's issues went beyond their rights in their community and in the work place, but highlighted mechanisms of control in both the household and the workplace over women's sexual and reproductive rights. They

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[82] Interview 16

[83] As shown in the table, the work of SEDEPAC is much broader, but this is what we discussed during the interview.

[84] Interview 13, quoted and paraphrased from the original Spanish.

hoped to give women a new place in their community because they also supported the idea that women's leadership would contribute to greater solidarity, especially among the marginalized. In terms of youth, their focus was on the role of the youth in schools and communities, and on their future role as leaders in civil society. This occupied a great deal of their activity in Mexico City. Their intentions were not just to provide activities and opportunities for youth, but they highlighted the need to provide what they called a 'formative process' through which youth would recognize themselves as 'co-creators' in the outcomes of their communities. This process is marked by engaging them in popular education projects. Thirdly, SEDEPAC carried out solidarity building projects in Iztapalapa, one of the poorest areas of Mexico City. Their goal was to highlight mutual concerns within a community and find new ways of organizing around them, to protest both the government and the perpetrators of violence in these areas.

For CENAMI, participation was characterized by promoting indigenous participation in their own communities and creating access for their goods and services into the market.[85] On one hand, this took place by trying to help families build stronger bonds with each other at the neighbourhood level. On the other hand, this was facilitated by trying to develop stronger networks throughout the city which would support indigenous products. The office was located far from the city centre, in a remote and deeply impoverished neighbourhood, mostly populated by rural-urban immigrants. To illustrate the philosophical foundation for their organization, a key point was that 'urban poverty is not cultural poverty'.[86] With this, the interviewee emphasized that because the indigenous who have migrated to the city live in impoverished circumstances, the impression is that they are incompetent, or incapable of conforming to the mainstream ways of life in Mexico City. However, the problem with this perspective is that it ignores and undermines the reality that the indigenous have a cultural life of their own. The tendency to equate urban and cultural poverty thus exposes the indigenous to various interventions, based on the assumptions that they have no knowledges of their own, or that their knowledge and experience is invalid for progress. Furthermore, it undermines their economic opportunities – the kinds of products that the indigenous could provide were often undervalued or marginalized in the market. In the same vein, the respondent argued that

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[85] Their focus on indigenous participation is similar to COPEVI above (section 6.5.1). However, I have put them into different categories to illustrate the different goals. While COPEVI strives to draw indigenous products into the urban market, CENAMI strives to facilitate alternative ways of life. Nonetheless, it would be unfair to cast COPEVI as doing less for indigenous lifestyles than CENAMI. They simply have a different approach.

[86] Interview 16

despite the presence of political parties in their neighbourhoods, they could not claim to have any kind of political representation in decision-making bodies. The key objective of the organization was to facilitate indigenous ways of life that could persist independently of the demands of urban modernity, and eventually allow for an alternative society.

The second two organizations, Vida Digna and La Otra Bolsa de Valores, were attempting to resist forms of control that can be found through economic exchange. In their view, with the deepening of neoliberal policies that encourage less regulated flows of money, their cause has become more urgent. [87] It is important to provide the depth of their arguments here, even if they are radical or idealistic. They expressed that the form of money used by 'globalizing agents' has no relationship with people in general, nor with their community specifically. In their view, global money has no way of valuing goods and services with which it has no relationship. 'The imposition of global money on valuing the goods and services at the local level is a blatant form of control and oppression,' and gives predominance to the forms of transactions that most benefit those in control of trade agreements, financial industries, and the politicians who are linked with them (in whatever way that may be – financial contributions, personal investments, etc.).[88] In turn, this allows the global form of money to undervalue goods and services produced at the local level if these goods or services do not contribute to the growth of their own financial situations.

While this reflects a universal manifesto, these organizations were coming up with concrete ways to confront the system. First of all, the approach is based on a strong commitment to the strengthening of civil society, beyond the tendency to reduce solidarity in civil society to 'forms, events, lists, publications, or lobbying'[89]. In this way, they want to enhance the transformational role of civil society. Central to this is to subordinate economic transactions to social wellbeing. Economic transactions were seen as a mechanism to confront inequalities in social position, and which would equally value goods whether they be provided by independent persons, family workshops, groups or collectives, micro-, small-, or medium-

[87] Perhaps overstepping the parameters of what should be included in this chapter, I would like to add my own observation from my notes during the focus group at La Otra Bolsa de Valores: 'Sitting there and looking at these 8-10 people discussing their own ways of resisting globalizing, I couldn't help but think well, good luck. How on earth would such a small group of people with no resources, or very few, be able to make a difference when up against high powered and highly financed industries and politicians? They must also be very aware of their own limitations, but it does not seem to matter. They know what they believe in, and they'll make it work for themselves.'

[88] Quoted and paraphrased from focus group with La Otra Bolsa de Valores (26).

[89] Quoted from focus group with La Otra Bolsa de Valores (26).

sized enterprises[90]. Moreover, they regard it as important to carry out economic transactions in a way that reflects the understanding of communities themselves, 'whether geographic or functional, regional or national, that they can refer to their own needs first, then to the needs of their nearest fellow beings, and only then to money.'

Secondly, and more concretely, the organizations were overseeing the creation of economic exchange networks at a neighbourhood level and across the city, to promote an alternative economy. They were in the process of making, and had already implemented in some places, an alternative form of money to circumvent banks and other financial institutions, with a profound rejection of cyber-transactions[91]. At the time, the umbrella project (called *Tanguis Tlaloc*) was being extended through several low-wage neighbourhoods of Mexico City, and reached out to producers of dairy products, rice and beans, indigenous art, but also those providing services such as haircuts, house repairs, and car repairs. The alternative economy networks were quite extensive with dozens of products and services.[92] In brief, the alternative economy relies on paper money with a value attached. However, rather than exchanging just money, there are spaces on the backside of the paper where people can sign their names. They do this to indicate that they have made use of a good or service and are paying for it with their signature. Though the alternative economy was their main goal, within these networks, the organizations were also addressing other urban concerns, including transportation problems, pollution, and health by proposing the increased use of bicycles.[93] As was articulated, the ultimate goal was to create a 'sustainable society'.[94] In short, these organizations can be seen as participating in society and expressing political resistance by finding ways of achieving their goals by circumventing the state. In this way, it is conceived as alternative political participation.

6.5.4 Coalitions across issue areas

Despite their own efforts, there was a sense of pessimism among the organizations and academics who were interviewed that civil society participation was not strengthening itself

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[90] Paraphrased from presentation during focus group (26).

[91] In this last two decades, this has become much more common in urban conglomerates around the world marked by inequality. It is broadly referred to as 'Alternative Economies', 'Local Economic Trading Systems' (LETS), 'Alter-trade', or 'Social Innovation'. See Healy (2008) or Mulgan et al (2007).

[92] Dinero Comunitario en México, printed by La Otra Bolsa De Valores (2002)

[93] Bike days and extended bike lanes have since become much more common in Mexico City

[94] This was the term they used. Even though 'sustainable development' was present in academic circles, the concept of 'sustainability' was still not widely used. This reflects foresight on their part.

the way it could under the conditions of democratic transformations. Some felt that the grassroots momentum that came with the 1997 and 2000 elections for the mayor of Mexico City had been lost. 'There is more apathy now than before. We have a crisis.'[95] The general feeling was that civil society was not characterized by a strong set of networks and goals, but of organizations where 'good people can do good work,'[96] but without a rich context of more general civic participation. This was perhaps tied into the earlier observation that even as organizations were attempting to maintain inertia in addressing poverty and inequality in Mexico City, the population at large was separate from this. Nonetheless, it became apparent that being aware of each other's causes, and also being aware of the mutual issues and interests of their causes was important. Even in the absence of a consolidated network, they were eager to promote and support each other, and clearly felt a sense of solidarity based on their aspiration to deepen democratic principles (MCD), and promote indigenous rights (CENAMI), labour rights (FAT), and women's rights (SEDEPAC and Mujeres en Acción Sindical). From my observations, it was possible to generalize their mutual interest in three clear ways. They shared in interest in casting off the shadow and habits of the previous ruling party (the PRI), they wanted to deepen mechanisms for democratic representation through civil society participation, and they wanted to resist the pressures and damage of neoliberal market reforms re-shaping urban development goals in Mexico City. I could not find evidence that any of the organizations situated themselves outside of this set of factors.

An inclination toward coalition building seemed to be generated by the FAT. This came from both their notion of agency (autogestión) and the conditions for workforce participation. As explained above, autogestión means self-determination. As a principle, this extends beyond self-determination in labour relations, but in all social relations. In an iterative relationship between the self and society, trust emerges and people have the right to shape their own realities within them. Secondly, FAT recognizes that the categorization of being a worker, may actually mean that one works only one or two hours a week (section 4.4.7). This means that the label of 'worker' may be disconnected from the way the individual identifies his or herself, and also with the causes to which s/he is attached. While the traditional working class has associated with causes of wages and benefits, those 'workers' who are hardly attached to the labour market may associate with other sets of rights. The FAT and, as I was told, other independent labour unions (whom I did not interview), recognize these overlaps and try to

[95] Interview 5
[96] Interview 5

combine the interests of labour and the community to generate new forms of social protest.[97] In Mexico City, the FAT had opened its office facilities to other smaller labour unions within Mexico City and also from the rest of Mexico. In the early 1990s, FAT also expanded their agenda to include women's issues and supported skills classes and educational programmes for women in poorer parts of Mexico City. Their position was that as women increased their capacities, they would later be able to take leadership roles in labour and other struggles. In addition to this, the FAT was also deeply embedded in transnational networks extending into the United States and Canada, and also Europe.[98]

The most obvious example of cross-issue coalition building was between organizations addressing local issues and those addressing transnational issues. What often struck me was that in offices addressing local issues such as Instituto de Juventud, there was always a poster with the words 'NO ALCA' on it. At the time of my research, a new free trade agreement was being negotiated – the Free Trade Area of the Americas (or *Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas)* to extend NAFTA principles through Latin America. When I asked about this, interviewees indicated that the deepening of neoliberal market principles inherent in NAFTA was what they were collectively against, from the perspective of the poor, indigenous, or women. This illustrated the multi-scalar perspective that organizations had on their own causes, recognizing them as being situated in international, national and city-level driven forms of inequality, and were not only about the poor or marginalized people themselves. Of the organizations I interviewed, RMALC and Equipo Pueblo were the most present in the transnational coalitions.[99] In 2004, Equipo Pueblo presented the Mexican government with a review of its collaboration with Mexican civil society and argued that it was insufficient and did not result in favourable circumstances for Mexican society (Castañeda Bustamente 2004). With this, Equipo Pueblo clearly identified two key points. The chances for the urban poor

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[97] In the United States, this kind of coalition building is called social movement unionism. During the time of my research, I tried to find a similar use of the term in Mexico City, but was not able to at the time. Since then, it has become a more widely applied concept that refers to the linking together of labour, human, social, cultural and economic rights.

[98] Interview 8. I also had the chance to see my interviewee again when he came to Amsterdam in 2004 to take part in a conference on independent labour union causes.

[99] Much more work on the transnational networks of NAFTA, for instance, has been done (see Hogenboom 1998). However, the transnational links fall out of the scope of this research.

Table 6.2: Discourse and Modes of Political Engagement

		Description	Implications
Discourse on Agency	*Agency as surviving*	-meeting daily needs, trading off long-term for short-term gains	-'power to' act without seeking change or to have influence at a structural level
	Informal economic agency	-engaging in the informal market to compensate for the decline in formal labour market conditions -provides sense of social solidarity against mechanisms of state	-'power to' and 'power with' -not directly seeking change at structural level, but presence leaves impact on use of urban space which city and state must address
	Autogestión	-Self-management -Self-determination in association with others -based on principles of trust and seeking solidarity -promoted through independent grassroots activity	-Reflects 'communicative power' -illustrates 'agentic orientations' (section 2.4.3) and promoting deep transformation based on conceptualization of self, state, and historical development -motivates actors to challenge injustices collectively, and in their own interest
	Client to Citizen	-redefining identity as subject of state to individual actor -redefining self as self-reliant market actor -weakening links to established state-driven organizations	-Seeking 'power over' to make change, beyond 'power to' create organizations -Individual actor takes control of own experiences -Uses sources of power (such as vote) to enact change -Opposing incentives towards individualist or collective action
	Redefining Political Power	-power as trade-off between formal leaders and civil society -does not represent autonomous political agency, but ability to obtain certain favours -genuine political agency not understood in society at large	-'power over' through trading favours undermines potential for transformational change, maintains status quo -discourages populations from seeking political autonomy -limited understanding creates rupture between civil society organizations and general population
		Description	**Implications**
Modes of Political Participation	*Inclusion and Resistance*	-service provision, support for housing, public spaces, and infrastructure -knowledge and skills training -leadership training for women -market access for poor	-bring together short-term goals of meeting needs with new consciousness of civic participation -strengthen civil society by demonstrating what it can do
	Independent Union Organizing	-empower low-wage and marginalized workers through independent union organizing -communicate information and provide resources	-create counter force to official unions and distance from government control -deepen sense of autogestion in workplace and community
	Alternative Participation	-alternative economics -knowledge sharing -community building in low-wage neighborhoods -empower alternative/indigenous knolwedges	-facilitate alternate forms of social and economic progress -long-term of shifting economic and political power to local level -Political non-participation
	Coalition Building	-loose networks among locally based organizations - between independent union labour organizing and community organizations -transnational coalitions	-leads to weak forms of solidarity, but pushing to strengthen it across city -Strengthens links between labour and social and economic rights of community -Links local and global issues to promote social and economic justice -Deepen role for multi-scalar civil society

were linked in with the outcome of international economic policies, and these outcomes are shaped by the political strength of different actors. Civil society was not able to compete with other interests, turning poverty and inequality into the outcome of unequal multi-scalar power relations.

6.6 Closing

This chapter provided an historical reflection on some of the ways in which civil society organizations interpreted and responded to economic and political transitions in Mexico in the early 2000s, and analysed that activity according to discourses on agency and modes of political participation. The section on discourses on agency (section 6.4) tried to show how a sense of individual agency *and* political agency changed among the poor during the time of neoliberal reforms and democratic transitions in Mexico City (from the late 1980s to the early 2000s). It has shown that a sense of empowered political agency was starting to emerge in the early 2000s, but encountered obstacles of different kinds. The obstacles were material, social and political in nature and also reflected how agency is negotiated and challenged at multiple scales. At the local level, such obstacles include the prioritizing short-term basic needs over longer-term transformation. This contributed to the observation by organizations that where they saw positive change in articulating and actualizing political empowerment, they also recognized the limited reach of their ideas among the poor themselves. At the meso-level, state presence filtering through the urban and local level was based on historical legacies of co-optation and coercion and present challenges to individual and collective self-determination. These processes were most directly challenged by the independent labour movement, reflecting a changing relationship between labour and the state. Finally, neoliberal transitions, taking place at the macro-level, have partially restructured society and given new meaning to individual roles. Thus, balancing the conflicting forms of individualism as civic agent and a rational actor disciplined by neoliberal state retraction and market reforms has presented themselves as challenges to civil society.

The section on modes of political participation (section 6.5) tried to show that participation was perceived and carried out along a spectrum of ideas and goals. By drawing from the interviews themselves, the modes of participation were organized around inclusion/resistance, independent union organizing, alternative participation, and coalition building. Inclusion and resistance (section 6.5.1) showed two tensions. Despite longer-term goals of bringing about societal change, immediate needs had to be met. Secondly, there was resistance to cast activities as political for fear that they would be associated with party politics. This may have

undermined some of the power these organizations could have had, simply by understating their expectations. Independent labour organizing was considered a mode of political participation because of its clear agenda to empower the relationship of labour with the state and defend the rights of workers against exploitation. Their discourse did not only relate to labour rights, but to a broader range of social and economic rights.

Alternative participation was characterized by outright rejection of both the top-down political constraints that are felt in the city, but also the disciplining nature of neoliberal economic policies. In this sense, participation was conceptualized not as finding new ways to engage with the state, but to challenge it and ultimately find ways of fundamentally shifting power to the local level, where communities can make decisions most appropriate for them. Perhaps this can be seen as political non-participation. Finally, coalition-building was weak during the time of research, but there was a presence of loose networks with the potential for deepening the strength of civil society over time. More explicit was the intention of independent labour to connect with community issues, as well as the very clear and well consolidated coalitions against free trade. While not forming coalitions with local level organizations, the solidarity against global political and economic exploitation was clear. It must be noted that despite the enthusiasm which organizations and academics displayed and their ongoing efforts, in the early 2000s, following the election of mayor Lopez Óbrador (2000-2006), the overall mood for empowering civil society was not strong. It was perceived as disconnected and having a low level of organization for making change. These findings will be drawn in Chapter 7, to look at how multi-scalar politics can be conceived, to explore their potential for change as expressions of collective images, and make conclusions about the changing political agency of the poor.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will finalize the dissertation in the following way. Firstly, it will explore and comment on the social relevance of the dissertation, and asks why it is important for poverty to be addressed and theorized in academic and policy circles. Secondly, it provides an overview of the Mexican experience, and of the different scales that were investigated to find out if and how there is a multi-scalar politics that contextualizes civil society political engagement. Thirdly, the main research question will be answered. Following this, the conceptual contribution will be discussed in terms of an expanded approach to poverty. This will in turn be followed by a discussion of the theoretical contributions that can be made to International Relations/International Political Economy and to International Development Studies. Finally, additional reflections will be made on the implications of the findings and recommendations for future research will be offered.

7.2 Urban poverty and urban inequality – why it matters

This dissertation has focused on the topic of urban poverty for a number of reasons. Moving beyond the normative position that poverty is an undesirable condition for anyone living in it, there are also systemic reasons that extend into a wide range of issue areas. The increasing presence of poverty in already challenged urban settings deepens global uncertainties. On a social level, impoverishment and the upward trends in inequality facilitate social and economic dislocation of large populations (Shaxson et al 2012; Seery and Arendar 2014). Frustrations and resentment associated with poor living standards, housing, health and security may lead to social unrest, putting pressures and even inciting violence towards local, national and even global institutional leaders (Bellemare 2015). Indeed, governments may be limited in their capacity to address poverty on a structural level, and must rather make concessions to the poor or may choose to implement targeted relief (Williams et al 2012). While these steps may offer some relief and promote short-term economic growth, they may also undermine national goals of social solidarity and promote competition among social and political organization (Deacon 2007).

On an economic level, the expansion of poverty in the urban setting outpaces the availability of jobs and services, undermines access to jobs (Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2013) and creates incentives to participate in black market activities that can undermine other economic development goals (Koonings and Kruijt 2007). Moreover, we are moving in a direction in

which urban inequality may be outpacing reductions in extreme poverty (Seery and Arendar 2014). On an environmental level, the pressures from unplanned urban sprawl on infrastructure, land use, and water use can and will likely continue to create unacceptable living conditions for the poor, while water, air and noise pollution also undermine health and the quality of life (Solecki et al 2013). While the immediate impacts are felt largely by the poor, the fact that these circumstances are likely to worsen in the world's cities means that it is in everyone's interest to address them before they reach insurmountable levels. While appropriate policy interventions can begin to address such problems, there is need to interrogate social and political structural inequalities that cause the reproduction of poverty and inequality.

7.3 The Mexican experience

The first steps toward answering the research question were taken by developing the multi-scalar linkages for understanding urban poverty. To do so, in Chapter 3, I explored the changing development strategies of Mexico, with particular emphasis on the changing interests of national leaders according to shifting international and global demands. In providing an historical account of transformations since the early 1980s, the chapter specifically focused on economic and political reforms, the relationship of the state with business, the relationship of the state with labour, and the relationship of the state with new social actors. In the Neo-Gramscian sense, the chapter provided an account of how different international and domestic social forces converged around the state and changed the nature of the relationship of the state with global and domestic actors, and thereby transforming the state/society complex (Cox 1981). At the global level, this meant that as the state struggled through the debt crises, it was forced into, but also facilitated, new relations with global economic interests and fell in line with neoliberal principles of economic reform (such as selling banks and other financial institutions and changing the laws for foreign investment, in section 3.4). On the domestic level, this meant that the state changed from one in which an authoritarian government maintained control over its population through clientelist relations and populist rhetoric, to one in which at least a nominal form of more substantive democratic representation was consolidated (addressed in Chapter 5).

The chapter has argued that throughout the transition from authoritarianism to neoliberalism, the interest of the state was to strategically withdraw from its role in guiding economic development, by handing much of it over to private sector actors. This was done in order to partially shield itself from the political backlash that would come from lower wage sectors

who saw their living standards fall in the wake of harsh economic reforms, to enhance their own political status at the global level, and benefit from economic gains of newly sold nationalized industries. The new leverage of the private sector acting through the state succeeded in limiting labour rights, breaking down labour unions, and undermining relations of state with labour leaders. In this way, this chapter argues that the deepening of neoliberal reforms in Mexico has had two significant, and perhaps ironic, political effects. As the ruling party weakened under economic pressures, the emergence of opposition parties joined up with new labour movements and new social actors demanding change (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6). These processes helped bring about structural change to the electoral processes and facilitate democratic reforms. The gaps in civic life created by the withdrawal of the state created new spaces for democratic initiatives and civil society activity to emerge (Chapter 6).

In Chapter 4, I provided the next level to explore a multi-scalar analysis of poverty and inequality. The chapter is a descriptive and historical analysis of how the political and economic transformations in Mexico gave new shape to Mexico City, with a focus on how it altered the urban economic landscape. Importantly, I do not attempt to theorize the transformation of the city itself, but rather use it as a politicized space of major economic relevance in which multi-scalar phenomena interact. The chapter was anchored in literature stressing the inequalities associated with global city transformations (section 2.5.1) and should be viewed as a bridge between Chapter 3 and Chapters 5 and 6. This bridge facilitated the analysis of poverty and inequality according to the political and social imperatives of multi-scalar actors. Mexico City is thus presented as a 'container' through which global dynamics can be historically and dynamically analyzed in terms of their interrelating with city-level and local actors (in Chapters 5 and 6). Moreover, Mexico City is conceptualized as a globalizing city – a city in the process of enhancing economic growth through global networks, but with a set of development challenges not faced by the 'classic' global cities (section 2.5.1).

Chapter 4 began with looking at the historical role of Mexico City as the political and economic center of the Mexican economy prior to the 1980s, as much of Mexican development relied significantly on the ability for Mexico City to absorb rural populations and facilitate industrialization. I provide an account of the ways in which the city became more integrated in the global economy, and increased its own share of the national income. To this, I provided data showing how wealth in the city resulted in structural changes that have disadvantaged large parts of the population. This was shown in terms of the transformations and relocating of manufacturing, the rise of low-skilled services, urban wage and employment changes for low-income workers, the expanding informal market, and migration patterns. As

was found, the changing status of Mexico City from the center of state-driven national development, to a center of market-driven national development according to global demands has had important implications. The withdrawal of the state from guiding the urban development goals of Mexico City was significant for the urban lower wage groups and the poor. Their frustrations and shared interests within this context have shown that despite economic growth at the urban level, both the atomizing features of neoliberalism and the harsher economic conditions that come with it undermine the benefits of growth for many people.

In Chapter 5, I presented the implications of neoliberal reforms at the global, national level, and urban level for the urban political arena in Mexico City. I made the argument that the changing political landscape of Mexico City could be understood as emerging out of two historical transformations. The first started at the national level, based on minor reforms to facilitate participation of opposition parties in elections, and eventually led to more substantial reforms allowing the residents of Mexico City to directly elect their own mayor. The second began within this context, in that the first direct elections of the city mayor brought in an opposition party, along with a new set of principles and inspiration for low-wage groups, to make use of this new setting. Recognizing the hardships that neoliberal economic reforms had placed on the low-wage groups in the city, the new rhetoric of urban leadership was based on enhancing the economic conditions as well as the long-term social and political rights of the poor. In short, in this chapter I illustrated that due to the political and economic reforms taking place at the national level, formal political opportunities for political participation and agency among the poor changed, initiated by leaders at the city level who recognized the need to address new adversities faced by the urban poor. More specifically, this happened as new political leaders promoting substantive democratic change were elected to office (section 5.4).

The new approaches of the urban government were explored in this chapter by first providing an historical account of the ways in which the urban low-wage populations experienced their relationship with the city leadership through patron-client relations. It then turns to the changing role of the ruling party, the disputes within it, and the internal motivations for creating an opposition party. It shows how as the momentum was created for an effective opposition, new social groups including labour and other civil society organizations were drawn in to enhance its power. Of particular interest for this chapter was the emergence of the PRD, which brought in members of an activist civil society to forward its political ambitions, but also continued to serve interests of the existing economic elite (section 5.4.2). Overall, it demonstrated the tensions that came to exist within the new opposition party to fulfill its

promises of enhanced democracy and social justice, while also being weak against the existing culture of politics in Mexico City, the desire of some to enhance their own interests, and the power of the private sector. This chapter has shown that by taking an historical perspective of the iterative relationship between political interests and economic incentives, it becomes possible to see how the nature of leadership, structure of representation, and city-level government objectives changed according to the presence of various social forces, from both top-down and bottom-up. It has added a layer to the national setting by showing how interests are articulated by different groups at the city level in relation to changing national and international processes and goals and contributes to the multi-scalar understanding.

In Chapter 6, I explored the role of civil society organizations in Mexico City as they responded to both the changing political and economic opportunities in the early 2000s. This chapter links back to the transformations described in Chapter 3 in order to give a context in which new social actors and relationships emerged. As was seen, changing relations between the state and business (section 3.5) and the state and labour (section 3.6) created this context for change. Illustrating a link to changing state/society relations, the rise of independent labour organizing within and beyond Mexico City helped to transform both agency and participation in Mexico City, and facilitated opportunities for labour to consolidate its interests with other social groups in civil society. An underlying message in this chapter relates to an inherent irony of neoliberal transformations. As it has broken down a sense of social solidarity with the state, it has also generated new forms of social consolidation at the level of civil society, but also with the participation of elected leaders. While there are many challenges to be faced to resist the disarticulation of the state and the weakening of the normative function of the state, the responses of civil society and the newly elected urban leadership – even if weak – display how such resistance can take shape.

This chapter drew on fieldwork interviews that provided insight into how political engagement changed among the poor, and was organized according to two main concepts – discourses on agency and political participation. Discourses on agency were analyzed according to the ways in which different organizations in civil society articulated their own roles and goals in addressing the problems of poverty. There is no particular expression or exercise of agency that took prominence over another. Different approaches were spread across the organizations that were interviews. For some agency was absent of a political notion and reflected the ability to provide immediate relief to those living in poverty. For other organizations, political agency meant capturing the opportunities provided by the democratic transitions to promote both self-determination and deepen notions of citizenship. Still for others, discourses on agency meant

re-defining the entire understanding of political power away from the interests of political parties and political trade-offs, something deeply embedded in the culture of political life of Mexico. This last notion of agency was seen as a major challenge to still be overcome within the city.

Political participation was analyzed according to the different ways in which civil society organizations saw both the potential for, and acted upon, opportunities to make change in Mexico City. Political participation was seen as inclusion and resistance whereby short-term goals were combined with new ideas and initiatives regarding civic participation and provided inspiration for further enhancing the power of civil society. Independent union organizing was provided a separate category in the analysis because of its two-pronged role in distancing political and union organizing from historical clientelist structures, and for promoting a sense of self-determination beyond the scope of labour interests only. Alternative participation was discussed in terms of attempts made within civil society not just to resist government and market influence, but to circumvent both with alternative economic organizations. Finally, coalition building across issue areas was offered as another way of seeing changing political participation. The role of coalition building seemed to be less concrete than it came across in discussions about it. Nonetheless, the driving force behind joining forces for some organizations was the shared concern about the new free trade agreement being negotiated at the time. Recognizing collectively the first round of damage that had been done by deepening market principles, there was a concerted and collective effort to prevent more. In the end, the chapter was forced to make a disappointing conclusion in that while new forms of civil society participation were emerging, there continued to be pessimism about both the potential for future growth and the impact it would have on bringing about positive change.

7.4 Answering the research question

The main research question for this dissertation was: How have changing relations between the state and society under conditions of neoliberal transformations re-shaped the context and opportunities for political agency among the urban poor in the globalizing city of Mexico City? The objective was to theorize the social and political relations of poverty in the context of neoliberal global economic restructuring, and as they manifest at different scales. In terms of the structure of the dissertation, it has answered this question by highlighting the multi-scalar linkages between global economic changes, top-down political decision-making, urban level political decision-making influenced by top-down, bottom-up and city-level interests, and the existence and resistance of poverty at the city and local level. In order to build these

linkages, economic restructuring has been viewed in terms of the political and power interests that have motivated the kind of economic changes that have taken place in Mexico and Mexico City. Through this political lens, it becomes possible to explore how the poor respond individually and collectively to such changes, and the basis by which they take action to resolve their poverty through resistance and confrontation. By paying attention to the discourse of the poor and ways in which political participation has or can take place in the changing global economic environment, it becomes possible to understand the implications of multi-scalar economic and political dynamics, and thereby develop a politics of poverty.

The answer to the research question is that political agency among the urban poor themselves – conceptualized in discourse and participation – had not experienced a significant transformation by the early 2000s, or at least, it could not be confirmed or denied. While this answer leaves one disappointed, what sticks out are the ways in which civil society organizations representative of the poor were aware of their changing meaning, role and opportunities within the urban political arena. This realization was particular to, and would not have taken place without, the national and urban changes that took place in the years prior to research (1980s onwards). In the historical and geographical context of Latin American democratic transitions, civil society organizations learned from each other (Cannon and Kirby 2012). They did so by promoting citizen participation and by presenting tools, skills and knowledge to, firstly, grasp at the opportunities for change, and secondly, find ways of influencing how changes take place. In doing so the optimism and potential for structural change could increase. In a dialectal relationship, as opportunities for political engagement changed, so did new conceptualizations of individuals and groups in this context. These, in turn, contributed to new initiatives within civil society to continue to make change (see section 7.7.1 below). This is a clear conclusion from the research. However, less clear and more pessimistically, is how widespread and structural such changes are. While different manifestations of changes are visible within civil society organizations, the reality that poverty persists in Mexico City (CONEVAL 2012) and that inequality is increasing (Woody 2015; Esquivel Hernandez 2014), means that a change in political agency regarding urban poverty has not (yet) brought hoped for changes in the conditions of the urban poor (section 7.7.1).

7.5 Conceptual contributions: an IR/IPE definition of poverty

This dissertation has been largely based on the premise that there is limited knowledge about the social and political dimensions of poverty. Chapter 1 (section 1.2) provided a definition of poverty as the sub-standard living conditions caused by a lack of social and political power to

directly change one's own circumstances (paraphrasing from section 1.2). The definition was further enhanced to include the social and political causes themselves as part of the definition. It drew heavily on the idea that poverty is a denial of the 'freedom to be and do' (Harriss-White 2006, quoting Sen 1999 and Nussbaum 2000), and required that the social and political phenomena which deny such freedoms are also part of the definition (paraphrasing section 1.2). While this definition has been important in guiding what factors (including actors, process, and levels of analyses) have been supportive of exploring the research question, I would like to add two points to it. Firstly, moving beyond individual agency (Sen 1999), this dissertation has developed a notion of poverty as the denial of the power of collective agency or associative agency to be and act the way a particular group chooses either because of direct interventions by either political or private sector interests or structural constraints. As was seen, civil society organizations have drawn on different approaches to addressing actual poverty conditions, but have not been able to reduce the levels of urban poverty, nor gain more political power over decisions that affect the poor (section 7.7.1).

Secondly, it becomes possible to tie the presence of poverty into a Neo-Gramscian framework, thereby expanding the definition of poverty in a way that is relevant for International Relations and International Political Economy (IR/IPE). As came out in Chapters 3 through 6, multi-scalar factors became a factor in the interpretations of agency and in the associative power in some civil society organizations. Macro-level changes resulted in the withdrawal of the state in guiding development, and turned it over to not just market forces, but private sector interests. Meso-level changes meant that urban development goals succumbed to market pressures, while city leaders had to both respond to and resist this. At the local level, a tension emerged within civil society organizations to encourage solidarity, while also reinforcing the role of the individual in both a political and economic sense. According to the civil society organizations themselves, this tension has been one of the reasons that civil society had not flourished as a strong social force that could collectively resist market reforms and their social implications. A Neo-Gramscian definition of poverty would suggest that by accepting this as a reason for why poverty persisted in this setting, it becomes possible to argue that the hegemonic structure which filters through the state and society influences the associative power of political agency of the poor. The denial of associative power contributes to the persistence of poverty. Poverty becomes political, relational and subject to a multi-scalar lens.

7.6 Theoretical contributions

7.6.1 Why poverty and inequality matters to theory

A major goal of this dissertation was to show that the disciplinary limitations of both International Relations (IR)/International Political Economy (IPE) and International Development Studies (IDS) could be partially overcome by drawing on the normative, conceptual and theoretical contributions that each has to offer in order to develop a stronger understanding of the incidence and persistence of poverty. It argued that mainstream claims of IR/IPE, as well as the tensions and policy decisions made between states or via international institutions to promote certain goals fail to account for the livelihoods of millions (or perhaps billions) of people who are also affected by those decisions. At the same time, the approaches of IDS tend to focus on the limited living conditions of individual populations to seek ways of improving their lives. While such approaches serve a social justice component, and may be effective, they often overlook the broader social and political context in which such conditions of poverty take place. However, within both fields, the conceptual potential exists to draw on each other's knowledge to create a more effective approach to battling global poverty and inequality.

7.6.2 How has Neo-Gramscian International Relations Theory contributed to understanding of poverty?

The Neo-Gramscian model provided by Cox (1981) has been designed to create an understanding of how global hegemonic principles have come to take shape. In part, they are understood through the interaction of social forces, representing close or loose ties to different levels in the social relations of production. As the most powerful political and economic interests converge around a shared set of beliefs – regarding the role of the state, the function of the market, and the relevance of international norms such as sovereignty or human rights – they shape, but are also shaped by hegemonic thinking. Such a hegemonic structure defines the terms for war and peace, but also for freedom and oppression. However, the model is not limited to this. Social forces defining hegemony are not only present at the global or state level, but give shape to global, national and urban forms of governance – both materially and ideationally (Jessop 1997, 2002). Their presence at the urban level impacts political and economic decision-making, but also creates the conditions for, or interacts with, urban civil society. Civil society responses might address specific urban issues, but are often associated with a broader set of goals going beyond the urban setting and including transnational and global issues. In this way, Cox (1999), in response to the 1999 Seattle protests against the

WTO, reflected on how street level activity among a range of grassroots organizations and social movements can and should thus be integrated into understanding world politics. With this view in mind, the task becomes linking the different levels between the global and the local.

Showing how the interests of global level actors – either among the economic elite, or in international institutions, or a combination of the two – were able to exert both discursive and non-discursive pressure on national leaders to promote economic reforms is the first step we have to seeing how the different levels linked up. Additionally, by going beyond the idea that neoliberalism is embedded differently in different state or institutional contexts, this dissertation argues that neoliberalism itself must be re-conceptualized fundamentally as a social and political practice driven by certain preferences for how society should be organized. As mentioned in Chapter 6, one of the most frequent responses I received when asking about the sources of poverty in Mexico City was a clear 'neoliberalism'. For the poor themselves, then it was already clear that what was happening at the global level had direct impacts on their own lives. The task then came to show how the links were created. In each chapter, it was shown how actors at different levels supported, challenged, resisted, and undermined each other, created new forms of political activity and promoted new political goals. Down to the level of civil society, it became clear that in addressing limitations of the city government, those actors were keenly aware of both the incentives of the city government to prioritise private sector interests, and also that where there was progress in promoting social justice for the poor, the context was created by the social and political gaps that came with neoliberal transformations.

Another important contribution of the Neo-Gramscian approach is the conceptualization of civil society as being tied in with the hegemonic forces of the state (sections 2.3 and 2.5.2). I have tried to show how each group emerges either upward or downward from interests or processes at the state level. It could be argued that it does not matter whether one conceptualizes civil society as integrated with or autonomous from the state. However, the distinction is important for two reasons in this dissertation. The first is that to the extent that we understand social forces as being offshoots of, though not necessarily directly related to, the social relations of production, then actions taken by civil society groups must be understood not only in terms of their political ambitions, but ultimately how they constitute their own relation to the production process, and the generation and nature of growth. As their own actions reorient their relationship with the social relations of production, then we have seen how this brings about challenges to different levels of leadership and representation,

inspires new policies that inhibit or facilitate social justice, and thereby create or undermine opportunities for emancipatory change. If we fail to take the view of civil society as being linked to the state, then we miss the implications for how power transforms over time through the interaction of different social forces.

Secondly, as was seen in the transition from Chapter 5 to 6, key transformations in the participation and agency of civil society organizations took place as a result of the changing urban context. There is a very clear top-down and bottom-up process between the urban leadership in particular, and the range of organizations. At the same time, there is also a process of formal and informal transformations in political activity. Formal changes to political opportunities not only came about by presidential decision-making, but also by the president's reluctance to accept full responsibility for the negative impacts of economic reforms. In this way, a move was made to re-orient the relationship between the state and civil society as one that nominally shared in decision-making, rather than having decisions delivered from the top. Furthermore, city level decisions to enhance participation were taken with the same incentive, but also for genuinely (at least in the early years) promoting social justice and equality for the purposes of creating a stronger sense of social solidarity with the state.

7.6.3 How has IDS contributed to knowledge in IR and *vice-versa*: agency, structure and poverty

By establishing Neo-Gramscianism as a social theory of international relations, it has become possible to open up the theory to social theory of other disciplines. As explained in Chapter 2, there has been a transition in IDS, with particular attention to poverty, to see poverty not as a static condition of material impoverishment, but also as the outcome of social, political and cultural inequality and relationships. The poor in IDS literature have come to be recognized not as passive or incompetent individuals, but as social human beings who are subject to, but also actively resist, various forms of oppression and exclusion. This makes them amenable to social theory and as being conceptualized as social agents. By focusing on the agency of the poor and the various interpretations that were offered in Chapter 2, it becomes possible to recognize the actions of the poor – even without the kind of resources necessary for participation in mainstream society – as forming a loose social community. However, to be constituted as a social force, there are criteria based on a sense of shared interests, participation in activities to actualize those interests, and the expression of socially determined goals. This study was able to recognize some of these features, but also the significant ways in which they were lacking, as well as explanations for what was missing.

In acknowledging at least the potential for a consolidated social force, the Neo-Gramscian model is strengthened in its purpose of promoting emancipatory social change by bringing in the poor as social agents. Once this has happened, and in articulating the particular way in which groups are emerging from both the social relations of production and state driven transformations, they become relevant for the model. If we are rigorous enough in including their own ideas, pay attention to the way in which their own social institutions are formed at the local level, and thoroughly analyse their relationship to other social forces and the state, then we must consider the potential that this inclusion will change the interpretations of hegemony at any particular period in time. To the extent that hegemony itself is understood as the intellectual and material organizing feature of society, I have argued earlier in the dissertation that as certain experiences and knowledges – referred to as collective images (section 2.3) do not make it onto the radar of academics, then they will also not be able to play even a marginal role in helping to define features of our society. However, if we can draw on such knowledges and experiences to nuance our current understandings of hegemony, then we enrich our own ability to seek ways in overcoming the inequalities inherent in the now well-established neoliberal order.

Likewise, contributions from IDS, which highlight the structural conditions of capitalist development as the conditions for poverty (Harriss-White 2006), can be a fruitful entry point for IR scholars by making poverty integral to national interest and international politics. Once such structural conditions have been recognized, and the social nature of their existence, it is in the interest of IR scholars to make use of approaches that integrate the existence of poverty into their analyses of relations between states. As the presence of the poor may influence thinking upward through counterhegemonic collective images, and not just be constrained by downward flowing hegemonic ideologies, states may change their strategies and behavior to improve their conditions. In this way, Neo-Gramscianism is an important approach in the field, however its potential for understanding the social and political relations of poverty have not been fully explored.

7.7 Additional reflections

7.7.1 Mexico City today

An important question, beyond answering the research question, is what are the implications of new forms of political engagement? Do new conceptualizations of self as a political actor, and new forms of political engagement lead to substantive change in either the associative power of the poor, or their material conditions? While the research for this dissertation has

drawn on an historical moment in which economic and political reforms had become officially consolidated in the Mexican system, it is worth looking briefly beyond. Consolidation took place through both the implementation of reforms, and the responses of civil society to vote in favor of those representing them. As such, it promised to be the beginning of great change and progress for the Mexican economy and political culture. Since then, there is a mixed record. In terms of electoral politics, the conservative PAN party – promoting deeper market reforms – has held on to the presidency while the PRD has also managed to hold on the mayoral office in Mexico City. As such, while the population has moved away from PRI domination, a tension persists between the national and urban levels of governance. However, the fact that the electoral system allows for such tensions to emerge is a testament to the lasting democratic transition. Nonetheless, a presidential run by López Obrador in 2005 was lost to the PAN, and as would be expected doubts about the authenticity of the PRD commitment to social and political rights emerged as early as the 2000s. This came as the PRD only increased rather than loosened their commitments to private sector interests, were accused of numerous acts of corruption and deception, and were found to be indulging in the luxuries of political office, going against their early pledges to resist such temptations.[100]

Though there is some uncertainty because of the different methodologies used to measure poverty in Mexico City (section 4.3.9), the current data provided by the municipal government shows that at least since 2010, poverty rates have increased from 27 percent in 2010 to percent in 2012. It is not clear how to compare these numbers to the methodologies offered by other academics, but in any case, income poverty has increased (CONEVAL 2012). At the same time, the report indicates that income poverty is increasingly associated with marginalization and vulnerability in Mexico City, particularly among populations living in peripheral neighborhoods. While I do not make a well-founded judgment here, there is reason to believe that the decision to allow private sector interests to play a role in the territorial development of Mexico City (section 4.2) has been influential in this outcome. As the urban society organizes itself around market interests, patterns of poverty and inequality persist.

At the same time, and as a last point, the pattern of growing inequalities has led to much more frequent and heated debate on inequalities in Mexico and Mexico City since 2005 (Woody 2015; Esquivel Hernandez 2014). Though this comes after the time of research, it is important to mention how much media and academic attention has since gone to the polarity among Mexico's emerging millionaires and billionaires and compared to those of the lowest percen-

[100] Interview 3

tiles. While the direct relationship between the richest and the poorest in Mexico City is not analyzed specifically, it cannot go unnoticed that Mexico's billionaires have made a large proportion of their money from industries headquartered in Mexico City (Esquivel Hernandez 2014). It also appears that there is continued interest in promoting the increased presence of multinational headquarters in Mexico City to fulfill projections that Mexico City will become the seventh wealthiest city by 2025 if the current pattern of real estate driven growth can proceed (Flores et al 2016). Political articulations of injustice and impoverishment are discussed in this context in the next section.

7.7.2 International politics and the scaling-up of poverty

During the historical period on which this study focuses, the Millennium Development Goals had been in effect for just a few years, leading to early forms of both praise and critique (section 2.4). Some of the earlier critique already recognized foundational weaknesses in the MDGs in that they did not address societal issues, relational issues, nor an understanding of both ecological and natural resource limitations (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2011). Moreover, the targeted nature of the goals to specific populations having specific characteristics served neoliberal principles of institutional control and market interventions to solve societal problems (Deacon 2007), and presented the risk of breaking down important forms of social solidarity which, as some IDS scholars were aware, were often the lifeline for poor communities (Narayan et al 2009). In the period of time since this research, the MDGs have expired and the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted. Drawing on the analyses of MDG interventions, successes and failures, the SDGs attempt to fill important conceptual and practical gaps in the delivery of poverty reduction. In addition to this, the SDGs have moved beyond focusing only on the needs of the poor, but have come to recognize the relational nature of different sectors of society to each other, our mutual dependence on each other, and our generalized dependence on the natural environment.

In this way, the SDGs have adopted a general discourse and designed targets to promote inclusion for all in terms of participation in society, but also in terms of access to employment, health, education, security, and natural resources. The process leading to this new language has come from the active engagement of civil society representatives, scholars, economists, and policy-makers, but also because of pressures and ideas coming from the poor themselves about what they most need in order to come out of poverty (Linnér and Selin 2013). Drawing on these lessons, and applying them more generally, the discourse on development in the most current era has transformed from one of 'fixing' poverty or making poor countries less poor, to

collectively engaging in the guarantee of a healthy future (UN 2015a). This happens not only with the right policy interventions, but a new visualization of how global society should take shape, and with more intensive forms of communication between different groups.

7.8 Recommendations for future research

In reflecting on the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the dissertation can provide a general argument that the poor, without being integrated into theoretical models of International Relations theory, have played a role in international institutional policy-making, and thus international politics, by presenting new norms to society about how the quality of development should take place. It has been the work of civil society organizations and academics to bring this information to the point where it results in norm transformation (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). With these changes in international sensibilities, it is likewise compelling to think about 'scaling-up' poverty to play a role in international negotiations. In a multi-scalar analysis, it becomes possible to construe 'local' poverty as 'global' poverty, particularly in the context of a globalizing city, and despite the range of local factors that also come into play. In this way, urban poverty – particularly in the context of a globalizing city, and despite the range of local factors that also come into the equation – gains new conceptual meaning and theoretical relevance when assessing the benefits of the neoliberal model of cooperation and growth. This is not to homogenize the lived experience of the urban poor around the world, but rather to place at least part of the explanation for their poverty in a more complex context that draws in national and global phenomena as part of the cause. The motivations for doing this draw attention to global systemic links in the creation of poverty, the shared responsibility of the international community to address the extreme poverty of a third of the world's population, re-negotiate domestic solutions to poverty that coincide with needed global changes, and to seek out shared global resources that may help alleviate poverty in a variety of ways (Gupta 2014).

Furthermore, reflecting on the expanded definition of poverty above (section 1.5) and the conceptual framework for this research (section 2.6), it is clear that more attention needs to go to the relational dimension of poverty, and more directly scrutinize the quality of relations between multi-scalar actors in a range of settings. The mechanisms which contribute to the denial of associative power must be better understood for the interests of local communities. To the extent that this is possible, we can generate new models for exploring poverty in a range of settings. A Neo-Gramscian definition of poverty can make use of the multi-scalar approach to increase its analytical potential by including the interaction of ideas and social

forces on multiple levels to better understand the social and political drivers inhibiting the power of association. A corollary to this would then be to explore how much the political engagement of the urban poor can actually become a subject of international relations. In the language of Neo-Gramscianism, how present is counter-hegemonic discourse in the main global and national decision-making bodies? How much does it lead to change? A fruitful way to answer this question would be to implement a comparative approach. Is there a shared discourse among the poor across national (and traditional North-South) divides that can constitute a transnational counterhegemonic force? Do the features of hegemonic neoliberal principles filter through each society in fundamental ways driving the impoverished populations to make the same arguments and take the same steps to rectify their situations? Being able to take this comparative approach would give us the opportunity to better understand South-South relations, South-North relations, and allow us to see links that may help us better understand the way the urban poor are impacted by the constraints of a hegemonic order, and what knowledges and practices can lead to change.

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Annex 1. Interviews

Interview	type of organization	Name of Organization	Contact Name	position
1	government office	Delegación de Iztapalapa	Lic. Fernando Cuéllar Reyes	Dir. General de Desarrollo Social
2	government office	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social del D.F.	Lic. Gabriela Vazquez	Lead Project Coordinator
3	government office	Secretaría de Desarrollo Urbano del Gobierno Federal	Mary Claudia Martínez García	J.U.D. De Gestión Social
4	government office, D.F.	Contraloría General, Dirección Ejecutiva de Contralorá Ciudadana	Lic. Andrés Peñaloza Méndez	Director Ejecutivo
5	government-run org.	Instituto de Juventud	Oscar Reyes	executive director
6	individual		Florinda Riquer	academic/activist
7	labour organization	Mujeres en Accion Sindical	Melisa Villaescusa Valencia	Coordinator
8	labour organization	Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT)	Eric Quesnel	
9	NGO	DECA Equipo Pueblo	Susana Cruickshank	facilitator
10	NGO	DECA Equipo Pueblo	Jóse Luís Gútierrez Neti	community organizer
11	NGO	ILO/OIT	Leo Mertens	technical coordinator
12	NGO	Vida Digna	Luis Lopezllera	director
13	NGO	SEDEPAC	Roberto García Ramírez	
14	NGO	RMALC	Jose Luis Sandoval	
15	NGO	COPEVI	Mari Cuenca	
16	NGO	Centro Nacional de Misiones Indigenas (CENAMI)	Alvaro Salgado	director
17	NGO	Comercio Justo México, A.C.	Jeronimo Pruijn	executive director
18	NGO/community org	Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia MCD	Manuel Canto	executive director
19	research institute	Centro de la Vivienda y Estudios Urbanos, A.C.	Mary Williams	academic, poverty studies
20	University	UNAM/CISAN	Elizabeth Gutiérrez	academic
21	University	Colegio de México	Carlos Alba	academic
22	University	UNAM/CISAN	Elaine Levine	Academic
23	NGO	Witness for Peace	Nikki Thanos	Organizer
25	Residence/Community Center	Casa de los Amigos Discussion Groups	Elspeth Waldie	Coordinator
26	Working Group/ Grassroots Organization	La Otra Bolsa de Valores	Cristophe (last name not in files)	Coordinator

Annex 2.Interview Questions

Interview Questions with Government Officials

Introducción

1. Cual es la historia de esta Secretaría?
2. Cuales son las actividades diarias en esta oficína?

Globalización y la Ciudad de México

1. Cuales son las prioridades en la Ciudad de México en el contexto de desarrollo urbano, o en otras palabras, cuales son los objetivos más importante de la desarrollo urbano en la Ciudad de México?
2. Cuales estrategías específicas de desarrollo urbano en la Ciudad de México son necesarias para lograr sus objetivos?
3. Cuales son los problemas y obstáculos más grande de desarrollo urbano en la Ciudad de México?
4. Que es necesario hacer para superar estos problemas y obstáculos?
5. Hay esfuerzas en los processos de desarrollo urbano en la Ciudad de México para combatir la pobreza en la Ciudad?
6. Es una mejor distribución de ingresos y recursos un punto importante en el desarrollo de la Ciudad de México? Cómo va el desarrollo en la Ciudad de México a tratar con este asunto?
7. En el contexto de globalización, es muy importante que la Ciudad de México tiene un papel internacional muy fuerte?
8. En el nivel local, cuales cambios son necesarios en la Ciudad de México para fortalecer la posición de la ciudad al nivel internacional ó global? Pueden ser cambios políticos, económicos o sociales?
9. Cuales esfuerzas esta haciendo la Ciudad de México para atraer capital internacional?
10. Quién son los actores más importantes o poderosos en la toma de decisiones o en su influencia sobre la toma de decisiones sobre las estrategiás de desarrollo urbano en la Ciudad de México?
11. Ha cambiado la estructura de la toma de decisiones en la Ciudad de México con la presencia de intereses internacionales?
12. Hay actores que oponen las estrategías de esta Secretaría con respecto en la Ciudad de México?
13. Quién son y cual es la forma de esta oposición?
14. Yo he visto carteles en unas oficínas del Gobierno del D.F. de 'No ALCA'. Por que tiene el gobierno del D.F. esta posición y que es su opinión en este sentido? Tiene ALCA un papel especifico en los processes de desarrollo urbano?
15. Cual es la posición de esta oficina enfrente de ALCA o de otras formas de libre comercio?

El Futuro

1. Tiene Usted optimismo sobre los resultados futuros de la desarrollo urbano de la Ciudad de México?

Más Contactos y Información

1. Hay un centro de documentos aqui? Puedo verlo? Tiene Usted información sobre proyectos de desarrollo urbano actual en la Ciudad de México?
2. Conoce Usted otras personas con quién yo puedo hablar?

Interviews with Civil Society Organizations

Introducción

1. Cómo empezó esta organización?
2. Cuales son las actividades diarias de la organización?
3. Cómo establecen Usteden contacto con el público general?

Poder político de esta organización

1. Cuanto apoyo político consigue esta organización de miembros del gobierno? En cual forma?
2. Cuanto apoyo político consigue esta organización de otra gente? Por ejemplo, de sindicatos, de la iglesia, o de organizaciones comerciales? En cual forma?
3. Cuales formas de oposición tiene esta organización especifica y qué hacen?
4. Cómo describe Usted el éxito de esta organización en el alcance de sus metas?

Pobreza en la Ciudad de México

1. Cuales son las causas de la pobreza de trabajadores de bajos ingresos más importante en la Ciudad de México?
2. Cuales soon las problemas más grande de la pobreza de trabajadores de bajos ingresos en la Ciudad de México?
3. Qué es la importancia de participación ciudadana en el contexto de globalización contra la pobreza de trabajadores de ingresos bajos en la Ciudad de México?

Bajos ingresos/Salarios Minimos en la Ciudad de México

1. Cómo describe Usted la relación entre globalización y el disminuyendo del poder adquisitivo de ingresos?
2. Cuales son las asuntos más urgentes de trabajadores de bajos ingresos en la Ciudad de México con respecto a globalización?
3. Cómo articulan los trabajadores de bajos ingresos en la Ciudad de México sus argumentos a favor de una mejor distribución de ingresos?
4. Cómo caracteriza Usted el poder político de trabajadores de bajos ingresos en relación con otros actores en la Ciudad de México?

Oposición

1. Quien opone un aumento en el nivel de salarios minimos en la Ciudad de México o en México todo? Están ellos actores locales o internacionales?
2. Cómo articulan allos sus argumentos y qué hacen para lograr sus metas?
3. Tiene Usted información sobre proyectos especificos en la Ciudad de México de desarrollo económico en lo cual el debate sobre salarios es un punto importante?

Globalización y la Ciudad de México

1. Quién son los actores más importantes o poderosos en la toma de decisiones o en su influencia sobre la toma de decisiones sobre las estrategiás de desarrollo económico en la Ciudad de México?
2. Cómo describe Usted las esfuerzas de la Ciudad de México para atraer capital internacional?

3. Cuales actores en la Ciudad de México acomodan los intereses internacional?
4. Yo he visto los carteles de NO ALCA en oficínas del gobierno del D.F. Por que tiene el gobierno esta posición y qué es su opinión en este sentido?
5. En la era de globalización, ha cambiado la estructura de la toma de decisiones en la Ciudad de México?

El Futuro

1. Tiene Usted más optimismo o pesimismo sobre el futuro de la pobreza de trabajadores en la Ciudad de México?

Mas información y Contactos

1. Conoce Usted otras personas ó organizaciones con quien yo podría hablar sobre esta tema?
2. Tiene Usted algunos documentos sobre esta organización que yo podría tomar conmigo?

Summary

Introduction

As the global community approaches the tipping point in which urban poverty is to become the primary characteristic of global poverty by 2030, understanding the drivers, the contexts, and the conditions for urban poverty around the world is increasingly urgent. Likewise, as the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals have been designed with an eye toward the needs of promoting inclusive and sustainable development in cities, there must be continued exploration into the challenges in reaching such goals. This dissertation contributes to such needed understandings by carrying out an historical, multi-scalar analysis of the politics of urban poverty within the context of urban and global restructuring. In Mexico City, where vast wealth has been generated in some sectors, poverty has been nonetheless chronic and increasing. In an effort to explore the fundamental drivers behind poverty, the point of departure for this research is that the global institutional context of political and economic neoliberalism penetrates the context in which urban poverty is produced and resisted at the local level. It proposes that urban poverty is not the result of isolated urban phenomena, but is a reflection of the power relations that define neoliberal capital accumulation in general, reflecting a political relationship which needs a political analysis in order to contribute to new approaches for alleviating poverty.

Gap in Knowledge

This research brings together theoretical approaches from the fields of International Relations (IR) and International Development Studies (IDS). It develops a multi-disciplinary theoretical framework drawing from IR and IDS to study multi-scalar politics and the poor. This research speaks to a growing concern that the theoretical boundaries of both disciplines limit the ability to generate new knowledge about some of the world's most pressing problems, including poverty. Despite this concern, there has been little practical engagement between the two fields to explore how, and in what ways, they can be brought together. Hence, this research contributes to this gap first, by bringing Neo-Gramscian critical international relations theory into the field of International Development studies, demonstrating that it provides an essential framework to develop new ways in which poverty can be analyzed. Situating poverty within Neo-Gramscian conceptualizations of state/society complexes and social forces, this dissertation historically analyzes poverty as the outcome of multi-scalar unequal political and social relations. Constituting the poor as a social force in itself by recognizing their attempts to

impact political decision-making at both the local and national level, this research makes the unlikely claim that the poor are relevant to International Relations theories. To the extent that this can be shown, this research forces the lens of International Relations to widen.

Second, it expands the field of International Development Studies by contributing to a gap in knowledge about the relationship between international relations and politics, or the political agency of the poor. By subjecting poverty to the multi-scalar political and social relations that contribute to it through the Neo-Gramscian framework, it is also necessary to constitute the poor as political subjects, with political agency and political objectives. This research thus moves beyond approaches in International Development Studies that address the politics of the poor through concepts such as social capital and empowerment, limited both in scale and in capturing the political nature of poverty. It conceptualizes the political agency of the poor in terms of the ideas, discourses and actions that are taken as they engage and struggle in both formal and informal political processes, and – crucially – as they are defined and shaped in response to economic and political shifts linked to urban, national and international processes. At the same time, this research contributes to International Development Studies in another way. By extending the reach of critical international relations theory and situating poverty within a multi-scalar political and social analysis, this research may add to the relational analysis of poverty and development that is currently being explored in new paradigms of inclusive development. It argues that the relational aspect of inclusive development can be greatly strengthened by building upon Neo-Gramscian theory.

Third, this research fills a gap in global city literature regarding the ways in which political agency and participation of the urban poor are transformed in the context of top-down urban economic development policies, inspired by global city ambitions and neo-liberal capitalist theory. Global city literature has sparked interest in the way transnational relations between cities emerge and in the corresponding patterns which can be observed at the city level including squeezing out the middle class, insecurity of low-wage work forces, growing polarity between the wealthy and poor, and increasing low-income migration. While significant attention is thus given to the changing economic opportunity structures and the material conditions of poverty in the context of deepening neoliberalism[101] in global cities, not enough is known about how those who are marginalized by global city ambitions articulate new political demands and act upon them. In this regard, this research rectifies the claim that global city literature has the tendency to render the poor and marginalized as lacking agency.

Research Question

The research question for this dissertation is: How has neoliberalism re-shaped the context and opportunities for political agency and participation among the urban poor in globalizing cities? In order to operationalize this question, the global city framework has been applied as a useful approach for observing the ways in which global and transnational linkages are established, both with the support of, but also beyond the reach of the state. Through this model, space is given to understanding how neoliberal polices and ideologies pervade urban development goals and create negative outcomes for the urban poor. Taken in this way, the global city becomes a container for neoliberalism, and neoliberalism becomes a primary driver of urban poverty. Likewise, though the global city framework does not provide a set of assumptions for analysing the political outcomes for the poor, it does not preclude the accompanying analysis of how neoliberalism changes the political opportunities, agency and participation of impoverished groups.

The overarching research question has been answered through the following multi-level steps. First, to establish the international context, neoliberalism as a set of ideas and an ideology, as a global organizing principle, and as a set of policy instruments is described. This is followed by an account of how a nation-state, Mexico, has engaged with and resisted global processes, and according to the interests of which groups. Third, at the next level – a midway between the national and the urban – Mexico City as a globalizing city is explored to see how it engages in global and transnational interactions and how urban policies are geared towards shaping such global engagement. Fourth, the level of urban politics is examined. At this level, a wider range of goals among the urban elected leadership are taken account of in terms of the conflicts that take place between global city ambitions, the need to support social welfare and poverty reduction programmes, and the desire to promote or maintain the democratic process. Through analysis at this level, it becomes apparent how the room for political engagement between the urban government and the poor has been re-constituted over a period of time with the deepening of neoliberal principles. Finally, at the level of the civil society, the research question is answered by analyzing how urban poor groups have interpreted changing urban, national and international processes, reoriented their attempts at political engagement, claimed political agency, and participated in the political process.

This research aims to first solve the conceptual problem of how poverty is analysed and understood. It provides a clear framework, sufficient argumentation, and empirical evidence to illustrate that when local conditions of poverty are linked level-by-level to its global context, then it becomes impossible to deny that global forces – filtered through the national, urban and

local levels and defined by neoliberal capitalism ties the poor into global dynamics and allows 'local' poverty to be construed as 'global' poverty. When viewed in this way, urban poverty – particularly in the context of global cities and despite the range of local factors that also come into play – gains new meaning and relevance when assessing the benefits of the neoliberal model of cooperation and growth. Solving this conceptual problem ties directly into solving a practical problem. Insofar as it can be shown that the principles and policies of neoliberalism create obstacles to reducing certain forms of poverty, in this case urban poverty, then it makes clear that new ideas and policies for global cooperation need to be explored and implemented.

Data and methods of collection

The multidisciplinary approach developed for this research focuses on an historical moment in Mexican history – the years leading up to and immediately following the period of democratic transitions, first at the urban and then at the national level of government. During this time from approximately 1995-2005, major changes in political ideas, formal and informal political processes, the nature of political representation, and the constitution of both formal and informal political actors came about, providing the opportunity to explore how these different aspects were driven by, or responding to, multi-scalar pressures and transitions. Interpreting, as this research does, the Mexican democratic transition as being driven by decisions made at the national level to become more economically competitive on a global scale, it is possible to explore the interests and actions of a range of social forces in urban contexts in bringing about or resisting change, as well as from the global to the local levels.

As a qualitative, historical and multi-scalar study, this research has made use of a variety of primary and secondary data collection methods and sources. Key to the research findings were the results obtained through fieldwork in Mexico City. These likewise required firm grounding in the broader institutional, historical, national, political and economic context to better understand the implications of urban and local level outcomes and make links between the levels. In broad strokes, secondary sources such as historical accounts and analyses, current analyses from books and articles, biographical information, and institutional documents were used to carry out the historical research on national development, as well as to establish the global institutional context at the time of research. Literature reviews were used to give a descriptive analysis for globalizing cities, both in terms of the driving force behind ambitions for global city status, but also the particular implications of those ambitions at the regional, urban and local levels.

To study the politics of urban poverty, this research selected two main units of analysis. First, were civil society organizations among or representing the poor. Such organizations inherently have a political perspective and engage in various forms of politics. Given this natural inclusion in the political process, and the ease of access to speak with them, they contributed very much to the findings of this research. Data collection included interviews with organizational leaders and members, focus groups, newspaper articles covering their activities, participant observation at both regularly scheduled meetings and public protests, secondary literature which has analyzed the historical emergence of social movements and civil society activity in the city, and academic writing on the role of social movements, community based organizations and civil society organizations. Second, research on the city government and government representatives was carried out using a combination of government documentation (including official statistics, explanations of development plans, and minutes, and minutes from meetings), participant observation in public hearings on issues pertaining to urban poverty, interviews with government representatives, extensive newspaper coverage to provide alternative views on government policies, secondary sources providing biographical information about key leaders, and secondary sources charting the historical development of the urban government as well as current sources analyzing urban government and urban policies.

Findings

The Neo-Gramscian framework (Cox 1981) has allowed for an interpretation of the Mexican democratic transition that rests on the conflicts and compromises of different social forces interacting between the national and global levels. Through the sometimes contradictory discourses promoting economic liberalization and democratic transitions, a backdrop was created for political struggles among the elected leadership in Mexico City, who were either driven by, or fighting against, the deepening of neoliberal principles into Mexican society. Moreover, both elected and non-elected leaders responded to, and also helped shape, dialogue at the national and international level, largely because of the leverage they could enjoy due to the political and economic prominence of Mexico City in respect to the nation-state, and its status as a global city. By exploring the changing relations between the state, business, and labour – all driven by transformations instigated within the realm of global politics, it became clear that the era of rapid neoliberal transformation beginning in the 1980s must be understood as something much more than the imposition of structural adjustment policies by Western institutions, but as the outcome of political struggles, conflicts, compromises and cronyism among the Mexican leadership with each other and Western representatives.

Recognizing the politics of neoliberal transformation has made it possible to understand the role that different actors have played in political struggles. While some representatives among both the elected and non-elected leadership could play a role in, and influence, national and international discussions, they were also responding to another group of city level representatives that not only feared the imposition of neoliberalism as an economic model, but the power that it would and did transfer to already wealthy economic and political elite, thereby shifting the weight of economic growth away from the urban population. This fear and resentment funnelled upward to both Mexican and Western elites, but also helped shape the discourse and political promises that were made to represent, support, and gain the support of poor and low-income residents in the city. Such discourse and promises facilitated an earlier and more drastic democratic transition within Mexico City, which in turn empowered low-wage residents, and grassroots and community-based organizations to make new claims to the city. Through a fortuitous balance of leftist leadership and emboldened low-wage groups putting pressure on the city, changes took place regarding the political opportunities and agency of the poor that would, in turn, re-shape their own discourse and political activity.

Such changes have been categorized in this dissertation as either city-wide changes affecting the urban poor in the urban political landscape initiated by government representatives, or informal changes in political agency among the poor. City-wide changes for political agency came about through policy interventions and new forms of representation by the city-level elected leadership. Such changes included new relationships between elected leadership and grassroots activists and a newly cast rhetoric characterizing national and international actors as the enemy to the wellbeing of the urban poor. Informal changes in the political agency of the poor included the range of ways that the poor embraced their new role as 'citizens' rather than 'clients' of the state; promoted a discourse on democratization and participation in a democratic system; and discovered grievances, linked to neoliberal economic reforms, that could be addressed collectively and through new forms of coalition building across the urban space to resist the disciplining effect of neoliberalism. These new forms of political agency and new practices of political participation appeared to have an iterative effect on at least the political rhetoric (if not policies) of both urban and national leadership.

In conclusion, the Neo-Gramscian model has allowed for two key observations. First, through the concept of social forces, it highlights the political nature of neoliberal transformations. This in turn endows political relevance to all which are drawn into the neoliberal fold, insofar as they accept, facilitate or resist such transformation. This, from the perspective of IR theory, means that the poor themselves become a subject and force in international politics which

should be taken into account in future IR theorizing. In addition to this, the social implications of this theoretical approach have highlighted how neoliberal policies undermine relations of trust between actors at different scales of governance, as well as undermine stable working conditions, social safety nets, and thus leave the poor to their own devices. Nonetheless, it has found that in this vacuum of national solidarity, the political agency and aspirations for political participation of the poor have been enhanced. As such, it concludes that, contrary to widespread expectations, neoliberal principles may promote rather than undermine civil society political agency, and thus, create conditions for positive change. This is seen in how the implementation of neoliberal reforms in the global city context closes off political access of the working poor on a vertical level as most resources, political and economic, are channelled to facilitating the growth of high finance sectors that can compete in the global market. Concomitantly, the conditions of poverty for those in the lower tiers becomes more deeply entrenched and living more precarious. Social policies and poverty reduction strategies put in place at the city level have likewise become more targeted in the context of neoliberal development, which has had the effect of fragmenting the population at the urban and neighborhood level. However, and perhaps paradoxically, the horizontal space for accumulating political strength in the global city framework has increased and continues to do so. The withdrawal of the state under conditions of neoliberalism means that citizens have to some extent been left to find their own solutions. In this context, they have built coalitions, discovered new avenues for acquiring attention, and discovered their own forms of 'community citizenship'. Whether such coalitions have allowed them to overcome conditions of poverty remains a separate question.

Recommendations

In expanding the notion of urban poverty in a social and political way, future research could further explore if this gives us new understandings about the multi-layered causes and solutions to poverty. Moreover, in exploring the multi-scalar political and social context of poverty, this research allows 'local' poverty to be interpreted as 'global' poverty insofar as it is linked to global processes that filter through the national and urban context. As such, future research could apply this theoretical model in a comparative research project to link up different geographies of (urban) poverty across least developed, developing and developed countries and explore the ways in which they share or do not share links to global transformations. This research promotes the idea that there is such a thing as 'global poverty', not necessarily because of its physical manifestation in nearly every country of the world

(though to different degrees), but because of how it can be observed in the modern context of neoliberal global restructuring. Furthermore, future research could apply and expand the concept of political agency among the poor to more thoroughly establish and demonstrate the role of 'the poor' in international politics. Once put on the radar of more traditional and critical IR theories, the equations leading to our understanding, interpretations, and even predictions about global politics change, and so would the outcomes of our research, our understandings of international political realities, and possibly even the nature of our international interactions.

Samenvatting

Inleiding

Naar verwachting zal het overgrote deel van de wereldarmoede in 2030 geconcentreerd zijn in steden. Om deze reden is het van groot belang om de oorzaken, omstandigheden en voorwaarden van stedelijke armoede te begrijpen. De Duurzame Ontwikkelingsdoelen (Sustainable Development Goals) die in 2015 mede met het oog op de inclusieve en duurzame ontwikkeling van steden zijn opgesteld, vereisen eveneens een intellectuele inzet. Deze dissertatie draagt door een historische, meerschalige analyse van de politiek van stedelijke armoede bij aan de noodzakelijke kennis. In Mexico Stad, waar grote weelde voorkomt, neemt chronische armoede tegenwoordig alleen maar toe. Het startpunt van dit onderzoek is dat de productie van en het verzet tegen stedelijke armoede, zoals in Mexico Stad, alleen maar kunnen worden begrepen in de context van het politiek en economisch neoliberalisme. Het argument is dat stedelijke armoede een reflectie is van de machtsrelaties die voortvloeien uit het proces van neoliberale kapitaalsaccumulatie.

Gat in kennis

Dit onderzoek verenigt theoretische benaderingen uit de disciplines van Internationale Betrekkingen (IB) en Internationale Ontwikkelingsstudies (IS). Het ontwikkelt - in de context van groeiende zorg dat de theoretische grenzen van beide disciplines het ontwikkelen van nieuwe kennis over belangrijke wereldproblemen, inclusief armoede, aan het beperken is, een multidisciplinaire benadering om meerschalige politiek in relatie tot armoede te verstaan. Ten eerste draagt dit onderzoek bij door elementen van de Neo-Gramsciaanse theorie in het IS-veld op te nemen. Armoede situerend in Neo-Gramsciaanse concepties van staat/maatschappij en sociale krachten, begrijpt deze dissertatie armoede als het gevolg van meerschalige, ongelijke politieke en sociale verhoudingen. Wanneer arme mensen als een sociale kracht worden beschouwd, die de politieke besluitvorming op lokaal en nationaal niveau proberen te beïnvloeden, suggereert dit onderzoek dat zij relevant zijn voor IR-theorie. Het streeft daarom naar een verbreding van het perspectief van IB.

Ten tweede verbreed deze dissertatie het IS-veld door kennis bij te dragen over de relatie tussen internationale betrekkingen en politiek, ofwel de politieke macht van de armen. De armen worden beschouwd als politieke subjecten, met politieke macht en politieke doelstellingen. Dit onderzoek gaat verder dan de reguliere benaderingen die politieke activiteiten van de armen door de lens van sociaal kapitaal of mondigheid (empowerment)

beschouwen. Het verstaat de politieke macht van de armen in termen van de ideeën, dialogen en acties die zij ontwikkelen in het kader van formele en informele politieke processen, en – doorslaggevend – zoals zij vorm krijgen in reactie op economische en politieke verschuivingen op verschillende schaalniveaus. Dit onderzoek draag ook bij aan de relationele analyse van armoede die op dit moment in het kader van de paradigma's van inclusieve ontwikkeling verkend worden. Het betoogt dat Neo-Gramsciaanse theorie een belangrijke versterking kan vormen van het relationele aspect van inclusieve ontwikkeling.

Ten derde vult dit onderzoek een gat in de literatuur over de 'global city' (globale stad) betreffende de wijze waarop politieke macht en participatie van de stedelijke armen getransformeerd worden in de context van hiërarchisch ontwikkelingsbeleid, geïnspireerd door grootstedelijke ambities en neoliberaal kapitalistische theorie. De 'global city' literatuur heeft interesse gewekt voor de wijze waarop transnationale relaties tussen steden tot stand komen en voor de daarmee samenhangende patronen die op het niveau van de stad waargenomen kunnen worden. Hierbij gaat het om het uitpersen van de middenklasse, de onzekerheid en toenemende migratie van mensen met lagere inkomens, en de groeiende polarisatie tussen de rijken en de armen. Terwijl er ruime aandacht is voor de veranderende economische opportuniteitsstructuren en de materiele omstandigheden van armoede in de context van zich versterkend neoliberalisme, is er te weinig bekend over hoe armen, die door de ambities van de globale stad gemarginaliseerd worden, nieuwe politieke eisen stellen. Dit onderzoek corrigeert daarmee de neiging van de 'global city' literatuur om de armen als machteloos te neer te zetten.

Onderzoeksvraag

De leidende vraag van deze dissertatie is als volgt: *Hoe heeft neoliberalisme de context en de mogelijkheden voor politieke daadkracht en participatie van de armen in zich globaliserende steden vorm gegeven?* Om deze vraag te operationaliseren, pas ik het 'global city' perspectief toe om daarmee de wijze waarom globale en transnationale verbanden worden opgezet, zowel met maar ook buiten het bereik van de overheid, te begrijpen. Gebruikmakend van dit model ontstaat aandacht voor de wijze waarop neoliberaal beleid en ideologie de doelstellingen van stedelijke ontwikkeling doordrenken en negatieve uitkomsten creëren voor de armen. Vanuit dit perspectief wordt de 'global city' een container voor neoliberalisme, en wordt neoliberalisme een primaire kracht achter urbane armoede. Hoewel het 'global city' perspectief geen hypothesen aanreikt voor het analyseren van politieke uitkomsten, sluit het een analyse van hoe neoliberalisme de politieke mogelijkheden, macht, en deelname van verarmde groepen beïnvloedt, niet uit.

Deze studie beantwoordt de leidende vraag in een aantal stappen. Ten eerste beschrijft het het verschijnsel neoliberalisme als een serie ideeën en een ideologie – een globaal organisatie-principe – en als een serie beleidsinstrumenten. Hierna wordt weergegeven hoe een bepaalde nationale staat, Mexico, zich ingelaten heeft met globale processen, en volgens welke belangen dit is gebeurd. Ten derde – op een meso-niveau - verken ik hoe Mexico Stad betrokken is bij globale en transnationale interacties en hoe het stedelijk beleid is ingericht om zulke verbanden aan te gaan. Op dit niveau gaat de studie in op het breder scala van doeleinden van de stedelijke elite die spanning ervaart tussen grootstedelijke ambities, de noodzaak om welzijn- en anti-armoedebeleid te ondersteunen, en de wens om het democratische proces te bewaken. Deze analyse geeft weer hoe de ruimte voor politiek engagement tussen de stedelijke overheid en de armen met het verdiepen van neoliberale principes is gewijzigd. Tenslotte, op het basisniveau, beantwoordt deze studie de leidende vraag door na te gaan hoe stedelijk arme groepen de veranderende stedelijke, nationale en internationale processen hebben geïnterpreteerd, en vervolgens hun pogingen tot politiek engagement hebben gewijzigd, politieke macht hebben geclaimd, en deelgenomen hebben aan het politieke proces.

Dit onderzoek tracht ten eerste het conceptuele probleem van hoe armoede geanalyseerd en begrepen wordt, op te lossen. Het biedt een helder raamwerk, voldoende argumentatie, en een grote hoeveelheid empirisch materiaal om te bewijzen dat wanneer 'lokale armoede' ingebed wordt in een meerschalige context, het beschouwd kan worden als een uitdrukking van 'globale armoede'. De volgende vraag is dan of op deze basis een nieuw anti-armoedebeleid kan worden geformuleerd. Voor zover aannemelijk is gemaakt dat de principes en het beleid van neoliberalisme obstakels creëert voor het verminderen van stedelijke armoede, kan men in elk geval concluderen dat nieuwe ideeën en beleidsmaatregelen voor globale samenwerking verkend en geïmplementeerd moeten worden.

Data en methoden van onderzoek

De multidisciplinaire benadering die voor dit onderzoek is gebruikt, concentreert zich op een historisch moment in de Mexicaanse geschiedenis – de jaren die leiden naar en volgde op de periode van democratische transitie zoals die plaatsvond eerst op het stedelijke en daarna op het nationale niveau. In de periode 1995 tot 2005 kwamen belangrijke veranderingen op het gebied van politieke gedachtenvorming, formele en informele politieke processen, politieke representatie, en de samenstelling van formele en informele politieke actoren in Mexico tot stand. Wanneer men deze democratische transitie verklaart uit beslissingen die op het nationaal niveau genomen zijn om concurrentiekracht op wereldschaal te bevorderen, is het

mogelijk om de belangen en activiteiten van een scala van sociale krachten in de urbane omgeving in het faciliteren of juist het weerstaan van veranderingen na te trekken.

Als een kwalitatieve, historische en meerschalige studie, heeft dit onderzoek gebruik gemaakt van een aantal onderzoeksmethoden en bronnen. Essentieel waren de gegevens die middels veldwerk in Mexico Stad verzameld zijn. Deze gegevens moesten in een bredere institutionele, historische, nationale, politieke en economische context geplaatst worden, om zodoende de betekenis van gegevens te begrijpen en verbinding te maken tussen verschillende onderzoekniveaus. Voor het historische onderzoek naar nationale ontwikkeling en de globale institutionele context is gebruik gemaakt van een veelheid van secundaire bronnen, zoals historische verslagen en analyses, contemporaine analyses van boeken en artikelen, biografische informatie, en institutionele documenten. Literatuurverkenningen zijn gebruikt voor een analyse van de krachten die schuilgaan achter de ambities voor het verkrijgen van de status van 'global city', maar ook om de implicaties van die ambities op regionale, stedelijke en lokale niveaus te verkennen.

Om de politiek van stedelijke armoede te bestuderen zijn twee onderzoekseenheden uitgekozen. De eerste onderzoekseenheid bestaat uit de lokale organisaties van of vertegenwoordigend de stedelijke armen. Dergelijke organisaties hebben een nadrukkelijk politiek perspectief en nemen deel aan verschillende soorten van politieke actie. Gezien hun natuurlijke deelname aan het politieke proces en het gemak waarmee de onderzoeker toegang kreeg tot hun gelederen, droegen zij in belangrijke mate bij aan de bevindingen van het onderzoek. Interviews met leiders en leden van deze organisaties, krantenberichten over hun activiteiten, participerende observatie van vergaderingen en openbare acties, secundaire literatuur die de historische totstandkoming van sociale bewegingen en activiteiten in de stad beschrijven, en academische literatuur over de rol van sociale bewegingen en lokale organisaties, maakten deel uit van de onderzoeksmethodiek.

De tweede onderzoekseenheid is de stedelijke overheid. Dit gedeelte van het onderzoek werd uitgevoerd middels de raadpleging van officiële documentatie (inclusief officiële statistieken, uitgewerkte ontwikkelingsplannen, en notulen), participerende observatie bij publieke hoorzittingen over zaken betreffende stedelijke armoede, interviews met ambtenaren, een uitgebreide analyse van krantenartikelen met alternatieve perspectieven op het overheidsbeleid, secundaire bronnen met biografische informatie over belangrijke leiders, secundaire bronnen over de historische ontwikkeling van de stedelijke overheid en contemporaine bronnen over de stedelijke overheid en het stedelijk beleid.

Bevindingen

De Neo-Gramsciaanse benadering heeft een interpretatie van de Mexicaanse democratische transitie als voortkomend uit de conflicten en compromissen van verschillende sociale krachten op het nationale en globale niveau mogelijk gemaakt. Door de soms tegenstrijdige discoursen die economische liberalisatie en democratische transitie bevorderden, ontstond een platform voor politieke strijd binnen de politieke elite van Mexico Stad. Politieke leiders bepleitten of vochten tegen de versterking van neoliberale principes in de Mexicaanse samenleving. Deze leiders – gekozen of ongekozen – reageerden op en gaven vorm aan de dialoog ook op nationaal en internationaal niveau; zij konden dit doen vanwege de politieke en economische betekenis van Mexico Stad in het land, maar ook als 'global city'. De verkenning van veranderende relaties tussen overheid, de private sector, en de factor arbeid – gedreven door transformaties op het terrein van de wereldpolitiek – maakte duidelijk dat het tijdperk van snelle neoliberale transformatie dat in de jaren tachtig begon, niet alleen een gevolg was van de invoering van structureel aanpassingsbeleid (structural adjustment policy). Het kan daarentegen worden gekenschetst als de uitkomst van politieke strijd, conflicten, compromissen, en vriendjespolitiek van het Mexicaanse leiderschap met westerse vertegenwoordigers.

Het inzicht van een 'politiek' van neoliberale transformatie maakt het mogelijk om de rol van verschillende actoren in het politieke proces te onderscheiden. Terwijl sommige vertegenwoordigers van het gekozen en ongekozen leiderschap een rol konden spelen in nationale en internationale discussies, reageerden zij ook op een andere groep van stedelijke leiders die vreesden voor de invoering van het neoliberalisme als een economische model, omdat ze vermoeden dat het tot een machtsoverdracht zou leiden naar de rijke, nationale elite en daarmee weg van de stedelijke bevolking. Deze angst en rancune bereikten de Mexicaanse en westerse elites, maar hielpen ook het discours en de politieke beloften die aan de stedelijke armen werden gedaan, te vormen. Deze discours en beloften bevorderden een eerdere en meer drastische democratische transitie in Mexico Stad, welke lage-inkomensgroepen en lokale organisaties bemoedigden om nieuwe eisen aan de stad te stellen. Door een gunstige co-existentie van links leiderschap en mondiger lage-inkomensgroepen die druk op de stad uitoefenden, kwamen veranderingen tot stand betreffende de politieke mogelijkheden en daadkracht van de armen. Dit zou ook gevolgen hebben voor hun eigen discours en politieke activiteit.

Dergelijke veranderingen op het stedelijke niveau zijn gecategoriseerd als formele politieke mogelijkheden voor de armen, ofwel als informele veranderingen in politieke daadkracht van

de armen. Formele mogelijkheden voor deelname kwamen tot stand door beleidsinterventies en nieuwe vormen van representatie door het gekozen leiderschap. Voorbeelden hiervan zijn nieuw beleid voor burgerparticipatie, nieuwe relaties tussen gekozen leiderschap en lokale activisten, en een nieuwe retoriek die nationale en internationale actoren karakteriseerde als vijanden van het welzijn van de stedelijke armen. Informele veranderingen in de politieke daadkracht van de armen kwamen tot uiting in de wijze waarop de armen (a) zichzelf kwamen te bezien als 'burgers' in plaats van als cliënten van de staat; (b) een discours ontwikkelden over democratisering en participatie in een democratisch systeem; en (c) een serie grieven gerelateerd aan neoliberale economische hervormingen ontdekten waartegen collectief en door nieuwe coalitievormen in de stedelijke ruimte verzet kon worden geboden. Deze nieuwe vormen van politieke daadkracht en nieuwe praktijken van politieke participatie lijken herhaaldelijk een effect te hebben gehad op de politieke retoriek (zo niet het beleid) van stedelijke en nationale leiders.

Concluderend heeft het Neo-Gramsciaanse model twee belangrijke observaties mogelijk gemaakt. Ten eerste heeft dit model, door het concept van sociale krachten, de politieke aard van de neoliberale transformatie belicht. Dit verleent politieke relevantie aan allen die het neoliberale kamp worden ingetrokken, in zover zij de transformatie accepteren, faciliteren of tegen werken. Uit het oogpunt van IR-theorie betekent dit dat de armen een subject en een kracht worden in de internationale politiek, en daarom in de theorievorming meegenomen moeten worden. Bovendien heeft deze benadering aangegeven hoe neoliberaal beleid de relaties van vertrouwen tussen actoren op verschillende schaalniveaus, stabiele arbeidsvoorwaarden en sociale vangnetten heeft ondermijnd, en daardoor de armen aan hun lot heeft overgelaten. In dit vacuüm van nationale solidariteit zijn echter de politieke daadkracht en de aspiraties van de stedelijke armen voor politieke participatie versterkt. Men kan daarom concluderen dat, in tegenstelling tot de verwachting, neoliberale principes de politieke daadkracht van de armen kan vergroten in plaats van verkleinen.

Neoliberale hervormingen in de 'global city' sluiten de politieke toegang van de werkende armen af, omdat de meeste hulpbronnen – politiek en economisch – gebruikt worden om de groei van de 'high finance sectors', die op de wereldmarkt kunnen concurreren, te faciliteren. Als gevolg versterkt zich de armoede van hen die verblijven aan de onderkant van de samenleving, en worden hun levens meer precair. Sociaal beleid en armoede-reductie strategieën die op het stedelijk niveau waren ontwikkeld, zijn eveneens doelwit geworden van neoliberale ontwikkeling. Dit heeft als effect gehad dat de bevolking op stedelijk- en buurtniveau versplinterde. Tegelijkertijd - enigszins paradoxaal - is de horizontale ruimte

beschikbaar voor de opbouw van politieke kracht in het 'global city' perspectief toegenomen. De terugtrekking van de overheid onder omstandigheden van neoliberalisme heeft ertoe geleid dat burgers tot zekere hoogte hun eigen oplossingen hebben moeten zoeken. Zij hebben coalities gebouwd, nieuwe mogelijkheden gevonden voor het verwerven van aandacht, en hun eigen vormen van gemeenschapsburgerschap (community citizenship) ontdekt. Of dergelijke condities hen geholpen hebben om de omstandigheden van armoede te overwinnen, is echter een aparte vraag.

Aanbevelingen

In het verkennen van de meerschalige politieke en sociale context van armoede heeft dit onderzoek 'lokale' armoede geherïnterpreteerd als 'globale' armoede. Toekomstig comparatief onderzoek zou dit theoretisch model kunnen gebruiken om de geografieën van (stedelijke) armoede in minst-ontwikkelde, ontwikkelende en ontwikkelde landen te bestuderen en te verkennen of zij al of niet verband houden met transformaties op wereldniveau. Dit onderzoek heeft naar voren gebracht dat er zoiets bestaat als 'wereldwijde armoede', niet zozeer omdat het zich in bijna elk land (maar in verschillende mate) manifesteert, maar dat het waargenomen kan worden in de moderne context van neoliberale, globale herschikking. Toekomstig onderzoek zou tevens het concept van politieke daadkracht van de armen kunnen toepassen en uitwerken om de rol van 'de armen' in de internationale politiek nauwgezet aan te tonen. Wanneer deze interpretatie doordringt tot de radar van meer traditionele en kritische IR-theorieën, zal de wijze waarop wij de globale politiek verstaan, interpreteren, en voorspellen, veranderen - zo ook de uitkomsten van ons onderzoek, ons begrip van internationale politieke realiteiten, en mogelijkerwijs zelfs de aard van onze internationale interacties.