ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE PARADOX OF LOCAL EMPOWERMENT: DECENTRALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN MEXICO

Andrew D. Selee, Doctor of Philosophy, 2006

Dissertation directed by: Professor David A. Crocker and Professor I.M. Destler
Maryland School of Public Policy

This dissertation examines whether decentralization to municipal governments in Mexico has improved democratic governance. The research examines the effects of decentralization on democratic governance in three Mexican cities: Tijuana, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, and Chilpancingo and draws on key national indicators.

The findings indicate that decentralization has significantly increased the authority and autonomy of Mexican municipalities, but that these changes have not necessarily led to local governments that are responsive and accountable to citizens or allow for citizens' active engagement in public affairs. Further analysis of these findings suggests that municipal political institutions create few incentives for public authorities to be responsive and accountable to citizens. The use of closed party lists, prohibitions on independent candidacies, guaranteed supermajorities for the leading party, and the prohibition on reelection all combine to undermine accountability and responsiveness. In this environment, public authorities tend to be more concerned about party leaders than citizens. As a result, citizens continue to be linked to local governments through political

brokers within the principal political parties and there are few real opportunities for citizen engagement outside of these mediated channels despite the nominal existence of elaborate participatory planning processes.

Nonetheless, the study also finds marked differences in the way that citizens are linked to the political system in different cities. Where strong social organizations existed prior to decentralization, citizens are more likely to have effective, albeit indirect, channels for voice in public affairs. Where these social organizations are linked closely to the principal political parties, they are even more likely to influence public policy than where these organizations are highly autonomous. Strong social organizations provide a necessary basis for ensuring citizen voice, but their linkages to the political process ultimately determine whether they are effective in influencing policy decisions. In other words, horizontal linkages in civil society—social capital—are a necessary precondition for good democratic governance, but vertical linkages between citizens and political actors are equally important.

THE PARADOX OF LOCAL EMPOWERMENT:
DECENTRALIZATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN MEXICO

by

Andrew D. Selee

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Advisory Committee:

Professor David A. Crocker, Co-Chair
Professor I.M. Destler, Co-Chair
Professor Jonathan A. Fox
Professor William A. Galston
Professor Roberto Patricio Korzeniewicz
Dr. Joseph S. Tulchin

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Theory and Methods

Chapter 1

Introduction: Democracy Close to Home?

In the 1980s and 1990s, decentralization reforms swept across Latin America and the world as almost every country implemented measures to strengthen the authority and autonomy of local governments. Mexico was no exception. Proponents argued that decentralization had the potential to improve democratic governance by making elected authorities more responsive, since they would be closer to citizens and better able to discern what their preferences were. In addition, decentralization would bring citizens closer to government, allowing them to know what their elected authorities were doing and to hold them accountable. It would also, according to some proponents, allow citizens to be more actively engaged in deliberation about public affairs. Decentralization would thus create a better quality of representation, greater transparency, and more opportunities for citizen participation. As a result, government would be responsive and accountable to citizens, who would, in turn, be actively engaged in deliberation about public affairs.

Most of what we know about the relationship between decentralization and democratic governance is from the experience of the developed world. In most of those countries, the construction of democratic institutions and the extension of citizenship rights took place during a period of centralization, and decentralization has taken place after these rights and institutions have been largely determined.[1] In contrast, in Mexico,

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[1] See T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class,* London: Pluto, 1987 [1950]. Citizenship rights are, of

as in much of the developing world, decentralization has coincided with a period of democratic transition. Therefore, local governments are being empowered at the same time that political institutions at all levels of government are being constructed and citizenship rights negotiated and expanded. We know very little about how decentralization affects democratic governance in contexts where political institutions are still under construction and citizenship rights are often weakly defined and enforced.

This dissertation examines whether decentralization to municipal governments in Mexico has improved democratic governance by enhancing representation, ensuring transparency, and creating new opportunities for citizen participation. In Mexico, decentralization began in 1980s and accelerated after 1996, during a period in which Mexico was in transition from being a one-party dominant state to a competitive multiparty democracy. Decentralization to municipalities in Mexico has been the result not only of transfers of functions, resources, and powers from the federal government, but also a result of municipal governments asserting their role vis-à-vis both the federal government and state governments. Decentralization has been both a top-down and a bottom-up process through which municipal governments have gained considerable new authority and autonomy within the Mexican state.

Municipalities played an important role in the democratic transition itself, becoming the first arenas of political competition in a still authoritarian regime. By 2004, the vast majority of municipalities had undergone at least one change of political party in power. They also had a degree of authority and autonomy far greater than they had only a few

course, still being negotiated, extended, and restricted in these countries, and political institutions are frequently modified (see, for example, Judith N. Shklar, *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion,* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991, on the United States). However, periods of the greatest expansion of citizenship rights have generally coincided with periods of centralization. Indeed, the struggle for inclusive rights has often led to greater central government intervention to ensure equal access to rights.

years earlier. Given these favorable conditions, this research explores how democratic governance in municipalities changed over time as local governments expanded their role. To understand this, I review the existing framework for decentralization and municipal governance in Mexico and then conduct three case studies of municipalities governed by different political parties and located in different regions of the country: Tijuana, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, and Chilpancingo (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: **Figure of Mexico Showing Tijuana, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, and Chilpancingo**

I find that municipalities have, for the most part, become vibrant arenas of political competition and generally comply with the requirements of polyarchy: free and fair elections accompanied by an almost universal right to vote, organize, express opinions, share information, and serve as a candidate for election.[2] Moreover, municipalities have

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[2] Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989, especially Chapter 15. However, there is some debate whether polyarchy is well entrenched in all states and municipalities in Mexico. There are areas where the right to organize is still systematically violated and

increasingly sought to strengthen the role of municipal councils, make information on finances and policy decisions accessible to the public, and implement participatory mechanisms to involve citizens in municipal planning. These efforts should contribute to making municipal governments more responsive and accountable and generate important arenas for public deliberation.

Nonetheless, these advances also show important limitations. Even with the advent of competition, elected officials have few incentives to be responsive or accountable to citizens and, instead, have significant incentives to respond to the wishes of authorities at other levels of government or within party hierarchies. Transparency initiatives are only weakly institutionalized in most municipalities and frequently undermined by the actual behavior of municipal officials. Participatory mechanisms for planning, though frequently attempted, rarely appear to have much impact on public decision-making and serve primarily as venues for strategic bargaining among local leaders rather than arenas for public deliberation. Local governments are far more democratic than they once were, but decentralization during a period of democratic transition has brought government closer to citizens without necessarily bringing citizens closer to government.

Two legacies of the authoritarian past explain why decentralization has not always produced the kind of ongoing vibrant democratic experience at a local level that theory suggests. First, the institutional structure of municipalities creates few incentives for elected representatives to be responsive or accountable to their constituents. Party list elections with guaranteed majorities for the largest party and prohibitions on reelection and independent candidacies combine to strengthen the influence of party leaderships in

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citizens are unsure if their votes have been counted fairly. However, most Mexican municipalities, including the cases studied here, meet the conditions of polyarchy.

the selection of candidates and make elected municipal authorities primarily responsive and accountable to those above them in the party hierarchy. Second, political practices of clientelism and control that were common during the period of one party dominant rule have survived the change to a regime of competitive democracy. These practices, which create a form of "indirect citizenship" in which individuals can enforce their rights or be heard by public authorities only by using political intermediaries, were created during a period of one party dominant rule, but have been adapted to a period of multiparty competition. These practices thrive in large part because citizens have few alternatives to influence public decisions that affect them and local institutions create few incentives for direct government accountability to citizens. This phenomenon is not merely a case of authoritarian leaders surviving at local levels after they are thrust out of power nationally, but rather the permeation of authoritarian practices among the range of political actors, old and new, that contest power in Mexico. The deficiencies in the institutional structure of municipalities and the weak enforcement of citizenship rights conspire to sustain these authoritarian practices even with the advent of political competition.

Nonetheless, I also find a marked difference in democratic governance across municipalities. These differences appear to depend on a third factor, which is the nature of social organizations and their linkages to the political system, prior to decentralization. In cases where vibrant social organizations existed and contested power, local governments, once empowered, tend to be somewhat more responsive and accountable. The existence of multiple sources of political mediation leads to the development of competing channels of influence that allow citizens more options for having their voice heard and for monitoring public authorities. Even though these municipal

governmentsstill suffer from weak representation and do little to encourage real public deliberation, they allow more opportunities for citizen influence and control. Surprisingly, I find that in Mexico's highly party-centric political system, social organizations with close links to political parties actually seem to create more opportunities for citizen influence in public decision-making than highly autonomous social organizations, even if the latter are often more internally democratic.

These findings contribute to our understanding of the relationship between decentralization and democratic governance by suggesting that the practices of political actors, the configuration of civil society, and the nature of political institutions together help determine the success of decentralization reforms. Decentralization reforms that fail to pay attention to the structure of the relationship of organizations, institutions, and practices at a local level are not likely to succeed in producing expected benefits for democratic governance. In a context of weak citizenship rights, making government closer to people does not necessarily guarantee responsiveness and accountability, much less deliberative decision-making. Moreover, authoritarian political practices that precede decentralization may shape the way local governments relate to citizens as they assume their new functions, powers, and resources. Polyarchy alone does not ensure good democratic governance if the prevailing institutions and practices that link citizens and the state are inherently exclusionary and social organizations are too disparate and weakly linked to the political process to provide a channel for citizens to have a voice in public decision-making.

These findings also highlight the importance of understanding local governance within debates on democratic transition and consolidation. Traditionally local

governments have been seen as potential laboratories of democratic experimentation where citizens can learn practices of public deliberation and government oversight. If, in fact, local democracy is permeated by legacies of the authoritarian past, further efforts at all levels of government may be required to address these legacies by redefining democratic institutions, strengthening civil society, and transforming political practices. Local democracy should not be seen a residual category in democratic debates; rather, it is one of the foundations on which the rest of the democratic edifice in a society is constructed. The health of local democracy helps determine the health of a democracy writ large and its weaknesses point to the hidden debilities of the political system as a whole.

Chapter 2
The Conceptual Link between Decentralization and Democratic Governance

2.1 Overview

Does decentralization to municipal governments improve democratic governance? The literature sheds light on this relationship but falls far short on answering this question. This chapter begins by defining the two key concepts—decentralization and democratic governance—and then addresses the literature that discusses the relationship between them.

2.2 Defining Decentralization

Decentralization refers to the redistribution of power within the state between the central government and other public authorities. Most previous works on decentralization have focused on decentralization as a transfer of power from the central government to other entities. In an influential work, Dennis Rondinelli and his collaborators define decentralization as the "transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organizations, local governments or nongovernmental organizations."[1] Some studies continue to use this broad definition,

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[1] Dennis A. Rondinelli and Shabbir Cheema, "Implementing Decentralization Policies: an Introduction," in Cheema and Rondinelli, eds., *Decentralization and Development: Policy Implementation in Developing Countries,* Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983, p. 18. See also Dennis A. Rondinelli, John R. Nellis, and G. Shabbir Cheema, *Decentralization in Developing Countries: A Review of Recent Experience,*

which includes everything from empowering local governments to privatizing state

functions. However, in practice, most contemporary discussions of decentralization refer

principally to the transfer of functions, powers, and resources from the central

government to subnational governments.[2] One World Bank study, for example, refers to

decentralization as "the process of devolving political, fiscal, and administrative powers

to subnational units of government."[3] Ribot describes decentralization as "any act by

which central government formally cedes powers to actors and institutions at lower levels

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Washington, DC: The World Bank 1983. They then separated decentralization further into deconcentration, in which national government decentralizes to national government agencies outside the capital; delegation, in which decentralization takes place to semi-autonomous governmental agencies (e.g. central banks, parastatal companies); devolution, in which decentralization is to subnational governments; and privatization, which is to non-governmental organizations, businesses, and other private entities. Rondinelli and Cheema, "Implementing Decentralization Policies," and Rondinelli, Nellis, and Cheema, *Decentralization in Developing Countries.* A more recent definition by Rondinelli is "the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations or the private sector…" Dennis A. Rondinelli, "What is Decentralization?" in Jennie Litvack and Jessica Seddon, eds. *Decentralization Briefing Notes,* Washington, DC: World Bank Institute, 1999.

[2] Most recent studies of decentralization, both by multilateral institutions and scholars, focus their discussion of decentralization on devolution (even in cases, such as Litvack and Seddon, cited below, where they use a broad definition at the outset). Among World Bank studies, see Shahid Javed Burki, Guillermo E. Perry, and William R. Dillinger, *Beyond the Center: Decentralizing the State,* Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1999; Jennie Litvack and Jessica Seddon, eds. *Decentralization Briefing Notes,* Washington, DC: World Bank Institute, 1999; Jennie Litvack, Junaid Ahmad, and Richard Bird, *Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries,* Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998; George E. Peterson, *Decentralizationin Latin America: Learning through Experience,* Washington, DC: The World Bank 1997; Anwar Shah, *Balance, Accountabilty, and Responsiveness: Lessons about Accountability,* Policy Research Working Paper No. 2021, Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1998; Anwar Shah and Theresa Thompson, *Implementing Decentralized Local Governance: A Treacherous Road with Potholes, Detours, and Road Closures*, Policy Research Paper No. 3353, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004; and James Manor, *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization,* Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1999. Among academic studies, see Tulia G. Falleti, "A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective," *Americxan Political Science Review,* Vol. 99, No. 3, August 2005; Richard C. Crook and James Manor, *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa: Participation, Accountability, and Performance,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Philip Oxhorn, Joseph S. Tulchin, and Andrew D. Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective: Africa, Asia, and Latin America,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003; Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew D. Selee, eds, *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America,* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004; Arun Agrawal and Jesse C. Ribot, "Accountability in Decentralization: A Framework with South Asian and West African Cases," *The Journal of Developing Areas,* Vol. 33, Summer 1999, pp. 473-502; and Jesse C. Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy: The Politics of Choice in Natural Resource Decentralization,* Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 2004; as well as many others cited in this chapter.

[3] Burki, Perry, and Dillinger, *Beyond the Center,* p. 3.

in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy."[4] Others have further confined their definition to the devolution of powers to democratically elected bodies. Crook and Manor, for example, refer to "democratic decentralization" as the "devolution of power, responsibility and sometimes resources on to democratically elected councils at local or intermediate levels."[5]

Therefore, I argue that transfers from the central state are only one form of decentralization. Decentralization can also be achieved through the strengthening of subnational governments vis-à-vis the central government. Indeed, most contemporary scholarship on decentralization, in practice, includes forms of decentralization that are not transfers from the central government.[6] The kinds of decentralization that do not involve direct transfers include measures to clarify the legal framework and responsibilities of subnational governments, enhance their fiscal powers, and increase their capacities and responsibilities.[7] These measures are sometimes the result of central government actions, but they are often the outcome of efforts by local governments themselves. Moreover, attempts by local governments to develop their own tax base or assume new functions, thus increasing their relative importance vis-à-vis the central government, may be profoundly decentralizing without requiring transfers from the national government. Similarly, court decisions that extend the jurisdiction of subnational governments may contribute to decentralization without involving transfers.

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[4] Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy,* p. 8.
[5] Crook and Manor, *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa,* p. 1. Cf. Agrawal and Ribot, "Accountability in Decentralization."
[6] The notable exception are initiatives to decentralize the health and education sectors, which tend to be focused primarily on transfers of central government responsibilities.
[7] For decentralization scholarship that in practice discusses decentralization not only in terms of transfers but also the development of fiscal and physical capacity locally, see Merilee Grindle, *Audacious Reforms;* Peterson, *Decentralization in Latin America;* Litvak, Junad, and Bird, eds., *Rethinking Decentralization,* and Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy.*

Moreover, in some cases, decentralization reforms actually involve shifting resources

from intermediate levels of government to municipal governments, rather than between

national and subnational governments.[8]

As a result, I propose a somewhat different approach to defining decentralization, one

which is not based exclusively on the notion of transfers from the national government to

subnational authorities, but rather emphasizes the increase in the functions, powers, and

resources of subnational governments vis-à-vis the national government.[9] Under this

definition, *decentralization is the increase in the authority of subnational governments*

over functions, powers, and resources and of their autonomy for decision-making over

these relative to the national government. This shifts the locus of agency from the central

government alone to that of all the various levels of government which may be involved

in decentralization. It also better represents the kinds of decentralization that are included

in most contemporary research—and most political debates—on the subject.

Authority

Local governments are only significant administrative and political entities to the

extent that they actually do things that matter in citizens' lives. This requires that local

governments have authority, that is, a set of functions, powers, and resources of their

own. Functions are the services that governments provide. On a local level, this may

include building, maintaining, and operating basic infrastructure (e.g. streets, parks,

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[8] See Grindle, *Audacious Reforms,* for example.
[9] Agrawal and Ribot, "Accountability in Decentralization," combines what I call "authority and autonomy" into one concept of "powers" and place a special emphasis on the nature of actors; however, in many ways, these two approaches share a similar concern for understand what subnational governments do and what margin of discretion they have. Cf. Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy.*

drinking water, sewage) and providing other basic services (e.g. preventive healthcare, recreational activities, registration of births, deaths, and marriages). Powers, on the other hand, refer to the policymaking authority that governments have to regulate social, economic, and political life. For local governments, this may range from creating regulations for local activities (e.g. markets, transportation) to implementing municipal planning or setting criminal codes and electoral legislation. Finally, resources are the funds with which the government carries out its activities.

Since decentralization is, by definition, a relational term, we are concerned with the way authority changes over time, in other words, whether functions, powers, and resources of subnational government increase. Decentralization is often measured in terms of the percentage of public resources that subnational governments exercise or the increase in their absolute resources. While these measures are often a useful shorthand for quantifying decentralization, a fuller understanding can only be obtained from looking at fiscal measures together with the legal framework that defines the functions and powers of subnational governments and the actual functions and powers they exercise. Chapter 3 provides an approach to operationalizing the term "authority" in understanding decentralization.

Autonomy

To be relevant for democracy, subnational governments also need to have a degree of discretion to make decisions over how they employ their functions, powers, and

resources.[10] Autonomy refers to the degree to which subnational governments have discretion in decision-making. The autonomy of subnational governments is often limited by formal and informal rules. In some cases, subnational governments may have responsibility for implementing services, but little policymaking authority.[11] In other cases, responsibilities for certain policy arenas may be concurrent between different levels of government, so that higher levels of government have *de facto* veto power. In still other cases, subnational governments may have decision-making autonomy in some policy areas but their decisions are subject to review and modification by other levels of government.[12]

Subnational government may also find they have limited autonomy if they do not have control over their own resources. When subnational governments raise most of their revenues, they can generally ensure their autonomy in fiscal matters. Similarly, if they receive transfers from higher levels of government that are set by formulas, with little margin for changes in the amount or method of allocation, they can also generally ensure their autonomy. On the other hand, subnational governments have limited autonomy when they depend on discretionary transfers from higher levels of government which have the ability to alter the nature, amount, and timing of transfers.

For this reason, many studies use the percentage of own-source revenue (locally raised revenue), known as the "vertical balance," as shorthand for understanding the degree of autonomy that subnational governments have.[13] However, this measure,

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[10] Cf. Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy,* Agrawal and Ribot, "Accountability in Decentralization."
[11] Education decentralization in Mexico, for example, initially gave states responsibility for schools but did not allow them to set curriculum or teachers' salaries. (This has since changed.)
[12] This has been the case for Mexican municipal governments in a number of policy areas, at least until a recent Supreme Court decision that will be discussed in Chapter 5.
[13] World Bank, "Fiscal Decentralization Indicators," published on the web at http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/fiscalindicators.htm, accessed June 26, 2005.

although useful for understanding local revenue capacity, may be misleading as a measure of autonomy.[14] Transfers that are set by formula may also ensure the autonomy of subnational governments and, as we argue in Chapter 5, also play an important role in promoting equity among different subnational governments with widely varying possibilities for raising their own local revenue. Indeed, increasing the percentage of own-source revenue for subnational governments may increase the autonomy of subnational governments (by giving them decision-making control over fiscal matters), while undermining the authority many of them have if they have disparate abilities to raise local revenue. Therefore, to measure autonomy, we need to look not only at own-source revenue but also the security of transfers, and the degree to which subnational governments have full decision-making discretion over their own functions, powers, and resources.

2.3 Defining Democratic Governance

As a robust political ideal, democracy is about how citizens in a political community engage in public reasoning and make collective decisions through pre-established rules and institutions in conditions of political equality.[15] In practice, democratic governance requires that citizens elect their public authorities freely, have input into setting the public agenda, and can hold their authorities accountable for their

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[14] For an economic argument on why transfers are necessary to subnational governments, see James M. Buchanan, "Federalism and Fiscal Equity," *American Economic Review,* Vol. 40, No. 4, September 1950, pp. 583-99.
[15] Amartya Sen, "Why Democratization is Not the Same as Westernization: Democracy and its Global Roots," *New Republic*, October 6, 2003.

decisions.[16] It is, therefore, about how governments are responsive and accountable to citizens, who in turn are able to be engaged in reasoning about public matters, expressed through elections and other forms of participation in public affairs. *Democratic governance*, in turn, refers to the way the relationship between public authorities and citizens takes place in specific contexts in a democratic regime.

Democracy as a normative ideal is based on the notion that all members of the community are political equals and that they should be the ultimate arbiters of public authority.[17]   In small communities, citizenship was often based on members' direct participation in community affairs; however, in complex modern democracies citizenship has become an impersonal legal category that assigns uniform rights and responsibilities to all members of the community.[18] Citizenship rights and responsibilities are no longer functions of a member's standing in the community or her active participation in community affairs, but a category assumed *a priori* for all members. Good democratic governance presumes that citizens can avail themselves of their rights within the community on equal terms with all other members of the community.

The exigencies of modern democratic societies require that citizens assign authority for most major decisions to elected representatives who act on their behalf. The normative ideal of democracy as rule by the people is preserved to the extent that citizens

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[16] Sartori, for example, notes that "large-scale democracy is a procedure and/or a mechanism that (a) generates an open polyarchy whose competitions on the electoral market (b) attributes power to the people and (c) specifically enforces the responsiveness of the leaders to the led." Giovanni Sartori, *A Theory of Democracy Revisited, Part One: The Contemporary Debate,* Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1987, p. 156.

[17] Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*; Norberto Bobbio, *Democracy and Dictatorship: The Nature and Limits of State Power,* translated by Peter Kennealy, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

[18] J.G.A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times," in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship,* Albany: State University of New York, 1995; Dahl (*Democracy and Its* Critics) notes that most societies draw some boundaries to this to exclude minors and those who may have limited mental capacity.

regularly elect representatives who are responsive and accountable to them.[19] Systems of

representation based on competitive elections, when embedded in a strong system of

civil and political rights, allow citizens to signal their preferences at the ballot box and

reward or punish elected officials for their decisions after the fact.[20] Elections can

perform this function only when they are free and fair and are embedded in a strong

system of civil and political rights that include freedom of expression, broad access to

information, the right to organize autonomous associations, and universal suffrage with

the right to be a candidate for election, a set of conditions Dahl has called "polyarchy."[21]

Electoral systems face significant problems under conditions of unequal access to

information, weak party systems, and the absence of re-election, but even under

suboptimal conditions elections still give citizens a degree of control over the decision-

making process in a democracy.[22] In Dahl's terms, these systems are polyarchies because

multiple centers of power exist and compete against each other for influence producing a

dispersion of power within society.[23]

     Nonetheless, elections are largely a "blunt instrument": they allow citizens to

express their prospective preferences for a candidate and her agenda and to reward or

punish her after the fact.[24] Elections alone provide citizens with little input into the

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[19] Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

[20] Morris Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981.

[21] Robert Dahl lists seven conditions for polyarchy: elected officials; free and fair elections; inclusive suffrage; right to run for office; freedom of expression; alternative information; and associational autonomy. Robert Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989, list and discussion in Chapter 15.

[22] Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes, and Bernard Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. On the economic benefits of real world polyarchies, see Morton H. Halperin, Joseph T. Siegle, and Michael M. Weinstein, *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace,* New York : Routledge, 2005.

[23] Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory,* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.

[24] For the limitation that elections face as mechanisms of accountability, see the editors' introduction in

actions of elected officials between elections and, in and of themselves, give citizens no way to know what their representatives are doing on their behalf. For this reason, it is important to have an institutional framework that allows citizens to monitor the decisions and actions of their elected authorities and gives them a voice in public affairs between elections, that is, systems that allow for the free flow of information between elected authorities and citizens between elections and encourage authorities' responsiveness to citizen demands. Without these mechanisms for *transparency* and *participation* to ensure an ongoing reciprocal relationship between citizens and representatives, competitive democracies become "delegative democracies," political systems where citizens matter only at election time and they lack influence to make their voices heard between elections or even sufficient information to make informed decisions at election time.[25] Democracies that lack mechanisms for citizen voice are weakly responsive and end up encouraging "exit" strategies; that is, citizens refuse to participate in other aspects of public life, such as paying taxes or obeying laws.[26] Democracies that have no mechanisms for citizens to know what their authorities are doing are only weakly accountable.

Transparency and citizen participation fulfill more than a functional role in ensuring responsiveness and accountability. By establishing an ongoing reciprocal

Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation.* Among other concerns, they note that it is hard for voters both to choose candidates prospectively and reward or punish candidates (or their parties) retrospectively. In this case, the responsiveness and accountability functions of elections actually may come into conflict.

[25] Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy,* No. 5, January 2004, pp. 56-69.

[26] The wealthy often "exit" from the public provision of goods by creating their own mechanisms for private provision (for example, private security forces and private electrical generation are quite common in wealthy communities in Latin America). In some cases, the poor—or the best educated—may choose to "exit" by migrating, as well. On voice and exit strategies, see Alberto O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Declines in Firms, Organizations, and States,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970.

relationship between citizens and their elected authorities between elections, they provide citizens the opportunity to engage in public reasoning, the normative basis of democracy.[27] Democracies that provide active opportunities for citizen engagement in public affairs, along with extensive access to information, give citizens a stake in public decisions and may at times encourage the search for the common good above private interests.[28] They are "strong democracies" that develop individuals as agents of public reasoning rather than as occasional decision-makers at election time.[29] They are democracies in which citizens and elected authorities have co-responsibility for public decisions. Few—if any—democracies function entirely in this way, but as a strong normative ideal, democracy requires more than the delegation of authority (no matter how responsive and accountable), but also a constant reciprocal engagement of citizens and elected authorities in the process of governance.

I argue that we need a theory of democratic governance that takes into account these three elements described above: a system of representation, government transparency, and opportunities for citizen participation. Taken together, these three elements help ensure responsiveness and accountability of elected authorities and create opportunities for a rich citizen engagement in the political process. The research in this project examines democratic governance in the light of these three elements.

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[27] Sen, "Why Democratization is not the Same as Westernization."
[28] Cf. David A. Crocker, "Sen and Deliberative Democracy," in Alexander Kafman, ed., *Capabilities Equality: Basic Issues and Problems,* New York: Routledge, 2006; Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1996.
[29] Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy,* second edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, p. xxiii; cf. Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970; and Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition,* second edition, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978 [1958]. Amartya Sen refers to this as the "intrinsic" benefit of democracy. Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom,* New York: Anchor Press, 2000, see chapter 6 for the discussion on the intrinsic benefits of democracy.

Systems of Representation

Systems of representation refer to the way that public authorities are elected and under what conditions they serve.[30] Normatively, systems of representation should produce elected authorities who are *responsive* and *accountable* to citizens' wishes, claims, and reasons.[31] This requires, first and foremost, that they meet the requirements of polyarchy discussed above: free and fair elections; inclusive suffrage; right to run for office; freedom of expression; alternative information; and associational autonomy. Even when these conditions are met, however, institutional design plays a significant role in the way elected officials respond to citizens' concerns.

Elections express, in part, citizens prospective preferences for policy (or, at least, for candidates), and how systems translate these preferences into seats within representatives bodies plays a part in the system's responsiveness. Mill refers "representation in proportion to numbers" as "the first principle of democracy."[32] Elections for executives generally are winner-take-all contests; however, in legislative

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[30] A broader discussion of the concept of representation might encompass all three elements described above. Indeed, *representative democracy* is about more than the election of representatives; rather, it refers to the way that citizens and elected officials interact to ensure an effective combination of delegation with ultimately accountability to citizens. Pitkin, for examples states that, "Political representation is primarily a public, institutionalized arrangement involving many people and groups, and operating in the complex ways of large-scale social arrangements….It is representation if the people (or a constituency) are present in governmental action, even though they do not literally act for themselves." In this definition, representation thus encompasses the range of reciprocal interactions between citizens and elected authorities in the process of governing. However, for purposes of this project, I use the term "systems of representation" to refer to the way public authorities are elected and under what conditions they govern, and use "transparency" and "participation" to refer to other aspects of the reciprocal relationship between citizens and elected authorities, understanding that all three are part and parcel of representative democracy. Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978 [1967], quote on pp. 221-222. For a more restricted approach to representative democracy, primarily centered on elections, see Bernard Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
[31] Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978 [1967]. Cf. also the introduction in Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation.*
[32] John Stuart Mill, "On Representative Government*,*" in *Three Essays,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 252.

elections, electoral design plays a vital role in how preferences are translated into electoral results.[33] Whether minority preferences are represented proportionally plays a significant role in how much these are taken into account by elected officials.[34] Systems that overrepresent or underrepresent expressed preferences often risk weakening responsiveness.[35]

Design also influences the extent to which systems create downward accountability, that is, accountability to citizens.[36] In representative democracies, retrospective voting plays an important role in ensuring downward accountability since elected officials depend on citizens for their continuation in office.[37] However, in many systems, elected officials may be more concerned with party officials or authorities at other levels of government. In most contemporary democratic systems, elected authorities have some degree of upward accountability to party leaders; however, representatives lose their ability to represent if their attention is primarily directed upward—individually or collectively—to party leaders or other government officials with little concern for constituents' opinions and preferences.[38] The absence of reelection coupled with closed party lists may undermine representation by providing few

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[33] See Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: an Inquiry into Structures, Incentives, and Outcomes,* New York: New York University Press, 1997; William H. Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism: a Confrontation between the Theory of Democracy and the Theory of Social Choice,* San Francisco, CA: W.H. Freeman, 1982; and Arend Lijphart, "The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws, 1945-85," *American Political Science Review,* Vol. 84, No. 2, June 1990.

[34] The consequences of different electoral systems on patterns of representation—and which citizen views are included and excluded—are covered in Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999.

[35] Ironically, systems that produce majoritarian outcomes may encourage accountability, by making it clear who is making decisions, but they undermine responsiveness *ex ante* by underrepresenting key constituencies. John Ferejohn, "Accountability and Authority: Toward a Theory of Political Authority," in Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation.*

[36] On downward accountability, see Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy.*

[37] Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting.*

[38] We need to concede an intermediate category: one where individual legislators may be primarily loyal to party leaders but collectively they are downwardly accountable (worrying about their party not losing the next election). Most parliaments that are democratically accountable function this way.

consequences for policymakers who ignore citizens' preferences and significant

consequences for those who disobey party leaders.[39] Similarly, high barriers to entry into

politics, such as a small number of political parties that are centrally controlled, may also

undermine accountability, since it encourages collusion among leaders of the parties with

a monopoly on political power.[40]

Transparency and Monitoring

High information costs in a democracy undermine the degree to which citizens

can hold elected officials accountable and limit the quality of deliberation. Democratic

governance requires that citizens have ways of knowing what their elected

representatives are doing on their behalf. This requirement includes having timely

information on decisions made by public authorities, who makes these decisions (e.g.

votes and procedures), and how resources are allocated (e.g. budgets, salaries, contracts).

Both the kind of information available and the ways that citizens can access it are critical

for transparency. Good democratic governance requires that public authorities publish

information on their actions, decisions, and expenditures frequently and citizens be able

to get most of this information on demand. It also requires that this information be

presented in a form that is accessible to most citizens (i.e., reports are widely distributed,

figures are clearly understandable) and that rules and procedures for making decisions be

published ahead of time with citizens having access to real-time information as key

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[39] Cf. Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering,* p. 16.
[40] Bernard Manin, Adam Przeworski, and Susan C. Stokes, "Elections and Representation," in Przeworski, Stokes, and Manin, eds., *Democracy, Accountability, and Representation,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 46-48.

decisions are being made.

Transparency—understood as citizens' access to information about what their elected authorities are doing on their behalf—is a *sine que non* of accountability. Without it, elected authorities can act with impunity. Transparency alone is insufficient to ensure that citizens can monitor—and hold accountable—their elected officials, but it is an essential component.[41] In many cases, institutions of horizontal accountability, such as courts and ombudsmen, can help encourage transparency and ensure elected officials' compliance with established rules and procedures. To the extent that these autonomous bodies within the government have the power to compel government action, they often play a fundamental role in ensuring the prompt disclosure of information and respect for established procedures for policymaking.[42]

Opportunities for Citizen Participation

Good democratic governance requires that citizens have clear opportunities to make their voice heard to public authorities. These include both established rules on how to bring suggestions, demands, and complaints to the attention of elected authorities (and their appointed representatives) and established mechanisms to solve community problems or set priorities for public expenditures that encourage public discussion among citizens and government authorities.

The existence of these opportunities can improve responsiveness by providing

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[41] I am grateful to Jonathan Fox for pointing this out.
[42] Andreas Schedler, "Conceptualizing Accountability. The Self-Restraining State : Power and Accountability in New Democracies," in Schedler, Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.

regular mechanisms for elected authorities to know what citizens want. Moreover, when these institutional channels do not exist, citizens are forced to use either use personal connections (particularism) or patronage networks (clientelism) to be heard, or they simply have no voice in the policy process between elections. The creation of institutional channels for participation may encourage citizens to have a voice in governance and to do so through public, rather than private, channels.

If these channels for voice and deliberation are well-designed, they can also encourage citizens to engage in public deliberation around issues of concern and search for collective solutions to shared problems, thus responding to the normative ideal of democracy as a process of public reasoning.[43] However, considerable disagreement exists within the literature on what the role of deliberation should be within governance. Deliberative theorists argue that deliberation should help people go beyond their particular interests to develop a collective sense of the common good. In effect, by debating priorities, citizens can generate a sense of common purpose that is superior to that which emerges from strategic bargaining among them.[44] Shapiro, on the other hand, warns that deliberation, without attention to equalizing power relationships, may actually end up benefiting already privileged groups.[45]

Like Shapiro, I take a cautious approach to deliberation in this research. I consider the ability for citizens to engage in public reasoning—that is, an ongoing debate about public matters—vital, but have few expectations that this process will, in fact, lead

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[43] Sen, *op. cit.*

[44] David Crocker, "Deliberative Participation : The Capabilities Approach and Deliberative Democracy," chapter 11 in *The Ethics of Global Development: Agency, Capability, and Deliberative Democracy*, unpublished book manuscript; Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*; Daniel Yanelovich, *Coming to Judgement: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World,* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991.

[45] Ian Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. For Shapiro, the ideal of "non-domination" may help groups decide when deliberation is to be instituted.

to a reasoned search for the common good. Having the ability to engage in public reasoning is an intrinsic basis of democracy, and it may also have particular instrumental benefits in democratizing societies where citizens are developing new capacities for expressing their views and respecting those of others. However, producing consensus decisions through debate may be less important than simply ensuring citizens' voice in political decisions. Therefore, when I refer to opportunities for citizen participation as a means to public deliberation, I am looking at ways that citizens have an opportunity to reason among themselves and with public authorities regardless of whether this involves strategic bargaining or a search for common good. My only requirement for public deliberation is that it allow citizens and public authorities to express themselves and listen to each other, no matter what the motivation or outcome of this process. I argue that opportunities for citizen participation within governance play a vital role in enabling citizens to voice their concerns and express their interests, whether to other citizens or to elected authorities. Deliberation as a means of reaching majority agreement is one way this result obtains but it far from the only way.

The question of citizen participation is not without complications, however. The design of the rules and institutions for participation, and the nature of the society in which they are implemented, can lead to significantly different outcomes. Institutions for participation may empower segments of society that were formerly excluded, but they may also empower privileged segments of society at the expense of others or just reward vocal minorities. Participatory channels may undercut particularistic or clientelistic networks by creating public channels for citizens to have access to being heard, but they may also reinforce existing networks. These mechanisms may enrich the institutions of

representation by giving elected authorities better information on what citizens want, or they may undercut representation by bypassing elected bodies and establishing direct democracy. Only by examining the nature of participation through existing channels can we understand their broader impact on democratic governance.

2.4 The Literature Linking Decentralization and Democratic Governance

Decentralization has often been linked to values such as efficiency and innovation in government. However, several different theoretical approaches also link it to improved democratic governance. Public choice and institutional economics have been particularly interested in the way that decentralization reduces information costs, both for citizens and elected officials, thus enhancing the responsiveness of elected authorities to citizen preferences and potentially making them more transparent. Democratic theories have emphasized the way that strong local governments may create opportunities for citizen participation and deliberation on public matters and encourage the accountability of elected officials. Nonetheless, democratic theorists also worry about uneven power relationships within local communities and the potential for decentralization to exacerbate these, while institutional economists warn against the distorting effects of weak institutional structures and informal practices that may undermine potential democratic benefits.

Institutional Approaches

For scholars of public choice and institutional economics, decentralization can help improve the flow of information between principal and agent, ensuring a closer fit between citizen preferences and government actions. Moreover, decentralization reduces the scale of activities, which can also help tailor a closer fit between citizens' preferences and government action, something that might otherwise be diluted on a larger scale. Eduardo Stein, for example, notes in a recent Inter-American Development Bank paper, that:

> With regard to allocation, decentralization can allow a closer match between the preferences of the population and the bundle of public goods and services chosen by government. If preferences are heterogeneous across jurisdictions, the decentralized decision maker can tailor the bundle of goods and services, in particular those whose benefits are geographically concentrated, to better suit the preferences of the population, instead of providing a "one size fits all" bundle for the country as a whole.[46]

This approach builds on the work by Tiebout and Oates who have argued that decentralization helps to internalize externalities of service provision and match government services and investments to the preferences of citizens. It thus provides for "allocative efficiency in the face of different local preferences for public goods."[47]

Oates, for example, notes that the fiscal federalism literature:

> …argues that the central government should have basic responsibility for the macroeconomic stabilization function, should play a major role in income redistribution in terms of financing support for low-income households, and should provide national 'public goods' whose beneficiaries include the residents of all the various jurisdictions in the nation. Subcentral governments have their primary role in the provision of goods and services that are consumed 'locally'. In this way, outputs of

public services can be tailored to the preferences and circumstances of the various geographical constituencies that comprise the nation.[48]

Tomassi further argues that decentralization reduces the principal-agent problem. With national governments, citizens (principals) are far removed from the agent (elected authorities), which makes it difficult to hold them accountable for their actions. With local governments, citizens can more closely reward or punish elected authorities for specific decisions related to their local unit.[49] This argument suggests both that elected authorities on the subnational level have better information than their national counterparts about what citizens want and are likely to act on it (responsiveness in representation) and that citizens have better information on what elected authorities do and can reward or punish them (transparency).

However, institutional economics also suggests that the nature of existing institutions—both formal and informal—shapes information flows, principal-agent relationships, and government performance.[50] The institutional structure of decentralization is critical to achieving expected effects. Even if decentralization provides a closer match between citizens' preferences and government decisions, uneven capacities to raise revenue and unequal capacities to provide services may undermine local government's ability to be responsive.[51] Moreover, weak political institutions may

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[48] Wallace E. Oates, ed., *The Economics of Fiscal Federalism and Local Finance,* Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998, p. xiv. For perhaps the most influential early work on fiscal federalism, see Charles M. Tiebout, "A Pure theory of Local Expenditures," *Journal of Political Economy,* Vol. 64, No. 5, October 1956, pp. 416-24. Reproduced as chapter 22 in Oates, ed., *The Economics of Fiscal Federalism.*

[49] Mariano Tommasi and Federica Weinschelbaum, "Centralization versus Decentralization: A Principal-Agent Analysis," Leitner Program in International and Comparative Political Economy Working Paper 2003-02, Yale University, 2003.

[50] Douglass North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, op. cit.*

[51] Rémy Prud'homme, "The Dangers of Decentralization," *World Bank Research Observer*, Vol. 10, No. 2, December 1995, pp. 201-20.

not translate citizens' preferences to government policy. If local authorities are beholden to elites, who have preferential access to political power, principal-agent relationships may not function as theory suggests. Similarly, if local institutions are simply too weak to respond to citizen preferences, they will similarly fail to perform as expected. One World Bank report in this vein concludes that "Much of the literature on decentralization, normative and empirical, is based on industrial countries and assumes the existence of institutions that are usually very weak in developing countries."[52] As a result, understanding the institutional structure of decentralization and of local institutions is vital to exploring its link to democratic governance. Surprisingly, despite the rich literature of institutional design in democracies,[53] there is little systematic research on the way that the design of local political institutions may influence the outcome of decentralization.

Socio-Cultural Approaches

A long-standing debate exists in democratic theory about whether decentralization enhances democratic governance. Many proponents argue that local governments offer opportunities for citizens to build on natural units for deliberation where citizenship ties are strongest, and to engage with public issues in richer, more active ways. Strengthening these will produce positive benefits for citizens' ability to engage actively in public life, both as a deliberator with other citizens and an interlocutor with elected authorities.

Communitarian theorists, for example, argue that people's lives are lived in

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[52] Litvak, Ahmad, and Bird, *Rethinking Decentralization in Developing Countries,* p. 2.
[53] For example, Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*; Riker, *Liberalism against Populism;* Lijphart, "The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws."

community and that their deepest and densest ties of citizenship can be found in these

communities. These ties go beyond the formal rights stated in laws and constitutions and

include a set of reciprocal norms of conduct defined by people's ongoing engagement

with each other. In other words, there is a denser set of citizenship rights and obligations

which flow from membership in a smaller political community within the state.

Following de Toqueville's insights about American democracy as built essentially

through close-knit grassroots communities,[54] they note that public reasoning is most fluid

and relevant in people's lives when it takes place within the context the norms and

practices of these communities.[55]

     Similarly, theorists of deliberative democracy generally recognize that local

communities are an important, though not exclusive, arena for public deliberation, since

they allow for face-to-face interaction.   Mansbridge's study of deliberation in New

England town meetings explored the search for common good that could only take place

in a community where citizens feel deeply intertwined with each other (1983).[56]

Deliberative arenas in small communities also may allow citizens to learn skills and

values of public deliberation, which they can then apply in larger arenas of public

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[54] Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy in America,* translated by George Lawrence, New York: HarperCollins Perennial Classics, 2000 [1835].

[55] Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community: The Reinvention of American Society,* New York: Touchstone, 1993; Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality,* New York: Basic Books, 1983; William A. Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002; and Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Proponents of indigenous rights often make arguments similar to communitarian theorists, arguing that cultures need protection because they provide the framework in which people develop meaning and institutional processes for public reason. Kymlicka, for example, argues that "cultures are valuable, not in and of themselves, but because it is only through having access to a societal culture that people have access to a range of meaningful options." Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights,* Oxford: Clarendon Press*,* 1995, p. 83. However, see also the response to Kymlicka from Galston in *Liberal Pluralism.*

[56] Jane Mansbridge, *Beyond Adversary Democracy,* New York: Basic Books, 1980.

reasoning. Gastil notes that:

> One reason deliberative forums are an effective means of cultural learning is that they are, for the most part, small. Small groups provide people with a tangible, visible microcosm of the larger society…Though not always consciously, people learn and test social norms, rules, and practices in these groups because they are the closest thing to a full society that a person can experience.[57]

While public reasoning is, by no means, limited to small communities or face-to-face interactions, deliberative theorists generally agree that local communities and small associations form key building blocks for public reasoning.[58]

Some democratic theorists also note that local governments can potentially give citizens greater opportunities to engage with public agendas. Young notes that "local governance units can best encourage and enable the active participation of citizens in raising issues, shaping the policy agenda, making decision and implementing them."[59] Fung and Wright explore what they call "Empowered Participatory Governance" (EPG), systems through which democratic decision-making is devolved to local institutions that create joint decision-making between public authorities and citizens. The institutional innovations they explore include participatory budgeting in Brazil, *panchayat* governments in Kerala, India, and school councils in Chicago. EPG includes "(1) a focus

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[57] John Gastill, "Cultivating a Deliberative Civic Culture: The Potential Value of Public Deliberation in Mexican Municipal Governance," unpublished article, available in Spanish as "Promoviendo el desarrollo de una cultura cívica deliberante: el valor potencial de la deliberación pública para la gestión municipal en México" in Andrew Selee and Leticia Santín del Río, eds., *Democracia y Ciudadanía: Experiencias de Participación y Deliberación en Gobiernos Locales Mexicanos,* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center and Agora, forthcoming..

[58] Theorists of popular education in Latin America also see local communities as important areas of social learning and deliberative engagement; however, the emphasis is on the way traditionally excluded sectors of society develop an understanding of the broader social, political, and economic context through their interactions in inherently unequal local communities. See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, New York: Continuum Press, 1993 [1970]; Carlos Nuñez, *Educar para transformar, transformar para educar,* Guadalajara, Mexico: IMDEC, 1985; Orlando Fals Borda, *Acción y conocimiento: como romper el monopolio con investigación-acción participativa*, Santa Fé de Bogotá: CINEP, 1991.

[59] Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 228.

on specific, tangible problems, (2) involvement of ordinary people affected by these

problems and officials close to them, and (3) the deliberative development of solutions to

these problems."[60] Decentralization may serve to give citizens and opportunities to

engage with public issues in more active and more deliberative ways. This is particularly

true if participation, which previously took place through informal channels of personal

influence, is now encouraged through formal channels that allow citizens to deliberate

and have their voice heard in public, structured fora.[61]

These approaches point to exemplary cases where local arenas provide citizens

with opportunities for a richer democratic experience; however, they tell us little about

the majority of communities where people live, where conditions for deliberation and

participation may be far less than ideal. Skeptics note that small communities are more

given to "tyranny of the majority" along ethnic, economic, religious, or other grounds,

while larger political communities tend to dilute this effect by creating ephemeral

majorities around specific issues rather than permanent majorities.[62] Madison, worrying

about the effect of "factions" over two centuries ago, warned that:

> …a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small
> number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in
> person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common
> passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the
> whole; a communication and concert results from the form of government

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[60] There is no assumption, however, that public deliberation necessarily requires consensus or a
disinterested search for the common good. While Fung and Wright suggest that this may be the result of
deliberative arenas, they recognize that people are generally bargaining around their own interests, but in
environments where they are required to take into account the needs of others. "Real-world deliberations
are often characterized by heated conflict, winners, and losers" Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright,
Deepending Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance, London:
Verson, 2004, quotes on pp. 15 and 17. On the relationship between deliberative decision-making and
political conflict, see Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory.*
[61] Cf. Gonzalo de Maza and Rodrigo Villar, "Espacios públicos de concertación local," Special Report of
the Inter-American Foundation, forthcoming. Draft presented at the Woodrow Wilson Center conference
on "Local Spaces for Democratic Innovation," February 10, 2005 and at the University of Texas at Austin
on February 8, 2005.
[62] Sartori, *Theory of Democracy Revisited: The Contemporary Debate,* chapter 6.

itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual.[63]

Similarly, building on Madison, McConnell observes that local communities tend to tyrannize minority opinions and favor elites.

> As Madison observed long ago, the smaller the society, the fewer probably are the parties and interests composing it; the fewer these parties and interests and the smaller the compass in which they act, the more easily do they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Far from providing guarantees of liberty, equality, and concern for the public interest, organization of political life by small constituencies tends to enforce conformity, to discriminate in favor of elites, and to eliminate public values from effective political consideration. The service of a multitude of narrowly constituted political associations is often genuine. However, this service lies in the guarantee of stability and the enforcement of order rather than in support for the central values of a liberal society."[64]

Moreover, McConnell notes that the prevalence of personal ties at the local level tends to privilege these ongoing interest groups that are well-connected to political power and can dominate small communities, whereas "impersonality is the guarantee of individual freedom characteristic of the large unit."[65]

Scholars of decentralization have similarly called attention to the dangers of "elite capture," in which local elites are able to use their influence and resources to maintain control over local governments and "capture" the benefits of decentralization. [66] However, Dahl, in his influential analysis of New Haven, argues that even in conditions of economic inequality, political resources tend to become diffuse and fragmented, giving citizens considerable influence over

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[63] James Madison, "Federalist No. 10," in Alexander Hamilton, Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers,* New York: Signet Classics, 2003 [1787-1788].

[64] Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966, p. 6.

[65] McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy,* p. 107.

[66] Giles Mohan and Kristian Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 21, No. 2, 2000; Gerd Schonwalder, "New Democratic Psaces at the Grassroots? Popular Participaction in Latin American Local Governments," *Development and Change,* Vol. 29, pp. 753-70, 1997.

competing political elites. He observes that "minority control by leaders within associations [or parties] is not necessarily inconsistent with popular control over leaders through electoral processes."[67] According to Dahl, as long as competition exists, and the requirements for polyarchy described above are met, a system of multiple and overlapping centers of power develop which make citizens the ultimate arbiters over who governs.

Nonetheless, there is little doubt that in decentralized regimes not all local governments perform in the same way. One influential theory, put forth by Putnam, argues that different democratic and performance outcomes among localities can best be explained in terms of the existing stock of social capital in each. This stock is a result of the social networks and norms of reciprocity that bind citizens together, which are usually reflected in the nature of associational life within the community or region.[68] In Putnam's view, these stocks of social capital change only slowly over time, and they exert a strong influence over the way that local democracies operate. Localities with strong ties are inherently both more democratic and more efficient. Different democratic outcomes can, therefore, be explained in terms of the prevailing political culture, which is reflected in the way citizens relate to one another and to public authority.[69]

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[67] Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs: Democracy and Power in an American City,* New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1961, quote on pp. 100-101.
[68] Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. See also Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.
[69] Putnam's theory is an heir to a tradition of theories that emphasize political culture. Early works that influenced this approach include Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics,* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959; and Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Palo Alto: Standford University Press, 1963. A more recent application is Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

State-Society Approaches

Some theorists have disputed Putnam's view that social capital is a set stock of norms and ties, and urged looking at the way state actors and social actors contest power over time as a means to understanding how social capital is shaped. These scholars argue that social capital is not only a static function of the degree of average civic engagement within the local political unit, but a result of complex encounters and negotiations over time.[70] They argue instead that it is far more useful to look at the way existing institutions and practices mediate citizens' insertion in the political process. They further argue that both social movements and political leadership may play a role in reshaping institutions and practices,[71] although these also have an important inertia built into them that may keep changes from taking place as expected. Migdal, for example, proposes an approach he terms "state in society" which looks at how social forces and state actors engage in struggles over the terms of domination, thus shaping the contours of both the state and society.[72]

Dreze and Sen argue that to understand how decentralization shapes democratic governance we need to look at the how decentralization reforms empower different

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[70] See, for example, Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection of Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work," American Political Science Review,* volume 90, number 2, 1996, pp. 389-97; Patrick Heller, "Social Capital as a Product of Class Mobilization and State Intervention: Industrial Workers in Kerala, India," in Peter Evans, ed., *State-Society Synergy: Government and Social Capital in Development,* International and Area Studies Research Series No. 94, Berkeley, CA: University of California at Berkeley, 1997; and Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy*, July 1996.

[71] On the role of agency in social capital, see Anirudh Krishna, "Moving from the Stock of Social Capital to the Flow of Benefits: The Role of Agency," *World Development,* Vo. 20, No. 6, pp. 925-43, 2001. On social movements, see Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work."

[72] Joel S. Migdal, "The State in Society," in Migdal, Atul Kohli, and Viivenne Shue, eds., *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Cf. Jonathan Fox, *The Politics of Food in Mexico: State Power and Social Mobilization,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992, especially chapter 2.

people and groups within localities and how these respond to the changes.[73] If society is

structured unequally, different sectors are likely to experience decentralization

differently. Armony observes that civil and political rights tend to be distributed

unevenly in unequal societies.[74] Economic inequalities also translate into unequal access

to the legal system, police protection, and political influence, thus compounding citizens'

widely different links to the state. In cases of severe economic inequality, political

participation for the poorest segments of society may also serve instrumental purposes

that belie the democratic purpose of citizenship. Faced with limited economic security,

links to individual politicians (particularism), usually in a situation of unequal exchange

of votes for political favors (clientelism), serve to give poor citizens the only margin of

influence they have within the political system and ensure personal ties to influential

people who can help in times of crisis.[75]

Mamdani has developed the concept of "indirect citizenship" to describe the way

citizens in conditions of unequal rights in Africa are linked to political power through

chains of intermediation.[76] This pattern is common in many developing societies and

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[73] Cf. Jean Dréze and Amartya Sen, *India, Development and Participation,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, especially chapter 10.

[74] Ariel Armony, "Fields of Citizenship," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Meg Ruthenburg, eds., *Citizenship in Latin America,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, forthcoming. Cf. James Holston and Teresa P.R. Caldeira "Democracy, Law, and Violence: Disjunctures of Brazilian Citizenship," in Felipe Aguero and Jeffrey Stark, eds., *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

[75] On clientelism, see Luis Roniger and Ayse Gunes-Ayata, eds., *Democracy, Clientelism, and Civil Society,* Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 1994; and Jonathan Fox, "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship: Lessons from Mexico," *World Politics*, 46(2), January 1994. Appadurai also notes that, as a result, the poor may often lack the same "capacity to aspire" as wealthier sectors of society, since their action is generally geared to solving immediate needs and they have few successes at achieving long-term influence and change.Arjun Appadurai, "The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition," in Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, *Culture and Public Action,* Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004. See also the chapter in the same volume by Amartya Sen, "How Does Culture Matter," in which he argues that experiences with violence and unfulfilled expectations (often unevenly distributed among citizens) may also undermine citizens' desire to participate in public affairs.

[76] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

important enclaves within developed ones, where citizens can enforce their rights as citizens only by making claims through political brokers. One variation is traditional political patronage (clientelism), where citizens vote for a candidate in return for political favors. However, indirect citizenship does not always require an explicit exchange of rights for favors. Rather, it thrives in any system where citizens must appeal to political intermediaries to get a hearing with public authorities on a wide range of basic rights and demands: access to healthcare, construction of schools, fixing of the local water system, police protection, or even avoidance of unjust imprisonment. In regimes built on indirect citizenship, citizens depend on intermediaries for protection and influence. Intermediaries may be political officials, neighborhood leaders, union bosses, or any number of other locally rooted individuals who have access to political power. Citizens can only make their rights effective either by attaining individual influence (usually by getting rich or becoming a broker themselves) or by using the services of these intermediaries.

Indirect citizenship can exist equally within nominally democratic and non-democratic regimes. This phenomenon is not necessarily the same as elite capture, which suggests the dominance of a single person, group, or family over a locality. Indeed, indirect citizenship can structure social and political relations within a regime that meets all of the requirements of polyarchy set forth by Dahl. Multiple centers of power may exist, and compete against each other in free and fair elections, yet each be structured as a form of intermediation that keeps citizens from enforcing their rights directly without the presence of the intermediaries. In Mexico, as in much of Latin America, local communities were often managed by brokers who served higher level political leaders to

maintain order and mobilize votes. These systems often developed within the context of dictatorial, oligarchical, or one-party dominant regimes. However, it is possible that they have survived even with the advent of competitive democracy.

The possibility thus exists that empowering municipal governments might empower these intermediaries instead of average citizens, or a combination of both. Examining the impact of decentralization on democratic governance, therefore, requires a careful look at how power relations are structured and change over time, that is, which individuals and groups within localities are empowered when local governments are empowered.

Empirical Evidence

Empirical studies of local governance in Mexico and around the world provide evidence both of the potential decentralization holds to create more responsive and accountable governance and its dangers for fragmenting the public agenda and producing unequal local engagement.

Among the positive signs has been the growth of local government innovation in countries around the world. Three sets of global surveys of decentralization testify to the variety and depth of these experiences, although they also caution that many of the conditions necessary to produce optimal effects of decentralization on democratic governance are absent or only weakly supported in many countries.[77] There is no

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[77] One set of studies, by the Woodrow Wilson Center, is reported in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*, and Tulchin and Selee, eds., *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America;* a second set of studies, by the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex, is reported in Manor, *Democratic*

question that decentralization has produced important experiences of "democratic innovation" at the local level, generating new ways of linking citizens and their governments, at least within the local arena. At the most basic level, local governments have increasingly become elected bodies in many parts of the world, whereas in previous decades they were often appointed bodies.[78] This is often a direct result of national democratic transitions, but in many cases, already democratic (or semi-democratic) central governments have instituted elections for local units for the first time.

Many local governments around the world have experimented with initiatives to give citizens a voice in public affairs and allow them to monitor public decisions. These experiences of deepening democracy have included participatory budgeting in Brazil, which now takes place in over one hundred municipalities, allowing citizens to participate setting priorities for municipal investments.[79] Similar experiences of participatory budgeting have been carried out in the Philippines, Argentina, and Uruguay among other countries.[80] In South Africa, local policy initiatives often require extensive

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Decentralization, and Crook and Manor, *Democracy and Decentralization in South Asia and West Africa;* a third study on natural resource decentralization by the World Resources Institute is reported in Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy,* and Jesse C. Ribot and Anne M. Larson, eds., *Democratic Decentralization Through a Natural Resource Lens: Experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America,* London: Frank Cass, 2005.

[78] See Selee, "Introduction," and Peterson, *Decentralization in Latin America,* for data on this change in Latin America. This change is even more evident in Africa, where dozens of countries have implemented elected local governments for the first time. Correspondence with Jesse Ribot, June 24, 2005. See also Crook and Manor, *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa,* especially the concluding chapter.

[79] On Porto Alegre, see Gianpaolo Baiocchi, "Participation, Activism, and Politics: The Porto Alegre Experiment," in Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright, *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance,* London: Verso, 2004; Rebecca Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999; on other Brazilian cities, see Gianpaolo Baiocchi, ed., *Radicals in Power: The Workers' Party and Experiments in Urban Democracy in Brazil,* London: Zed Books, 2003.

[80] On the Philippines, see Leonora C. Angeles and Francisco Magno, "The Philippines: Decentralization, Local Governments, and Citizen Action," in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*; for Argentina, see Enrique Peruzzoti, *Presupuestación Participativa en Argentina*, background paper presented at the workshop on Democratic Innovations at the Woodrow Wilson Center, October 3, 2004; on Uruguay, see Peter Winn and Lilia Ferro-Clérico, "Can a Leftist Government Make a Difference?: The Frente Amplio Administration of

citizen consultation, and municipalities in the Philippines and Guatemala have often developed similar participatory planning mechanisms.[81] In India, decentralization to *panchayat* (local community) units is credited with spawning citizen engagement,[82] as it has been in Bolivia, with that country's Popular Participation Law.[83] These experiences are often credited with forcing elected officials to be more responsive to their constituents; giving citizens a more active role in setting municipal priorities; and allowing citizens to monitor public investments more closely. One study of participatory budgeting in Brazil by the Inter-American Development Bank found that local governments made more efficient and effective investments in infrastructure for poor communities when citizens were involved in setting priorities.[84] Other studies have noted that participatory budgeting empowers new social actors or at least involves old social actors in new ways and undercuts traditional forms of clientelism.[85] Nonetheless, studies also recognize that participatory budgeting has profoundly distinct impacts on state-society relations in different social contexts and under different designs.[86]

Montevideo, 1990-1994," in Douglass A. Chalmers, Carlos M. Vilas, Katherine Hite, Scott B. Martin, Piester, and Monique Segarra, eds., *The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America: Rethinking Participation and Representation,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
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[81] On South Africa, see Steven Friedman and Caroline Kihato, "South Africa's Double Reform: Decentralization and the Transition from Apartheid,", in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*; on the Philippines, Angeles and Magno, "The Philippines: Decentralization, Local Governments, and Citizen Action," also in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee; on Guatemala, see Victor Gálvez, Carlos Hoffman, and Luis Mack, *Poder local y participacion democrática,* Debate 30, Guatemala: FLACSO, 1998.
[82] T.M. Thomas Isaac and Patrick Heller, "Democracy and Development: Decentralized Planning in Kerala," in Fung and Wright, *Deepening Democracy*; and Dréze and Sen, *India: Development and Participation.*
[83] CEPAD…
[84] Inter-American Development Bank, "Assessment of Participatory Budgeting in Brazil," Sustainable Development Department, April 2005.
[85] Abers, *Inventing Local Democracy;* Leonardo Avritzer, *Democracy and the Public Space in Latin America,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
[86] Leonardo Avritzer, "Presupuesto Participativo en Tres Contextos," presentation at the seminar on Decentralización, Iniciativas Locales y Ciudadanía organized by the Woodrow Wilson Center and Fundación Pent in Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 17, 2005.

However, these changes also face significant limitations. Often decentralization initiatives, especially in Africa, have not empowered accountable local units but rather local governments with little discretionary autonomy or other non-elected authorities, such as NGOs, stakeholder groups, or traditional authorities.[87] Moreover, local governments are often weak in terms of institutional capacity, have uncertain resources, and have only short terms in office. This combination of factors means that citizens do not always take local governments seriously as political entities and that municipal officials must spend their time in the capital trying to pry loose more resources for local initiatives.[88] World Bank studies further indicate that there is often a mismatch of expectations with institutional design. Although local governments are expected to assume new responsibilities, they often lack the resources, fiscal powers, legal framework, and regulatory powers that are needed to carry out their responsibilities.[89]

In many cases across regions, elected local governments have political structures based on closed party lists. Party list systems tend to enhance the power of the mayor over local legislatures and makes legislators primarily accountable to their political party or the mayor rather than to citizens.[90] However, despite the extensive literature on political institutions in Latin America,[91] most of this has focused exclusively on national institutions and few systematic studies have been conducted of local and state

[87] Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy.*
[88] Andrew D. Selee and Joseph S. Tulchin, "Decentralization and Democratic Governance: Lessons and Challenges," in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective.*
[89] Litvack, Ahmad, and Bird, *Rethinking Decentralization*; Burki, Perry, and Dillinger, *Beyond the Center.*
[90] See Crook and Manor, *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa,* especially pp. 292-300; Peterson, *Decentralization in Latin America,* pp. 13-15; and Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy,* p. 27.
[91] For example, Scott Mainwaring and Matthew Sobert Shugart, eds., *Presidentialism and Democracy in Latin America,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992; Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994; Scott Maintwaring and Timothy R. Scully *Building Democratic Institutions: Party Systems in Latin America,* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.

institutions.[92] One notable exception is a study by Acedo which finds that electoral

systems in Mexican municipalities are highly exclusive because they are based on closed

party lists with no independent candidacies.[93]

Despite their number, few of the participatory initiatives prove sustainable over

time and relatively few municipalities actually generate participatory innovations.[94]

While those experiences that do take place may have long-lasting impacts, even if they

disappear at some point, the lack of greater innovation and sustainability should be cause

for reflection. In some countries, the weakness of local government institutions,

including few resources and limited technical capacity, appear to work against greater

innovation and further sustainability.[95] In others, the structure of representation, with

party lists and short terms in office, appears to undermine elected authorities' interest in

innovating further. In many cases, the uneven texture of state-society relations appears to

produce dissimilar outcomes among municipalities in the same country. This appears to

be the case in India, where different political histories among states have led to widely

varying experiences of decentralized governance,[96] and in Brazil, where even the same

participatory initiatives may produce profoundly different results for democracy.[97]

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[92] Peterson mentions this problem in *Decentralization in Latin America* but only in passing. None of the major studies of

[93] Blanca Acedo, "Los sistemas electorales municipales en México: la incorporación del principio de representación proporcional," in Jacqueline Martínez Uriarte and Alberto Díaz Cayeros, eds., *De la descentralización al federalismo: estudios comparados sobre el gobierno local en México,* Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2003.

[94] This is one of the findings of a recent Woodrow Wilson Center study on Local Democratic Innovation in Latin America, coordinated by the author, with case studies from six countries (Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil). Brazil appears to be a notable exception to this rule, and Colombia a partial exception, findings which call for further analysis.

[95] Friedman and Kihato, "South Africa's Double Reform"; on Guatemala, see also Luis Mack, "Descentralización, iniciativas locales y ciudadanía en Guatemala: la democracia en un contexto institucional incierto," paper presented at the workshop on Local Democratic Innovation in Latin America, Woodrow Wilson Center, September 2, 2005

[96] Dreze and Sen, *India: Development and Participation..*

[97] Avritzer, "Presupuesto Participativo."

Similarly, in Bolivia and South Africa, decentralization has produced noticeably different results for democratic governance among municipalities.[98] Finally, there is the danger that participatory innovations may sometimes undermine representative structures by concentrating power in the executive branch or granting power to unelected civil society organizations. In Brazil, for example, participatory budgeting is carried out under the auspices of the mayor, rather than of the city council, and may serve to concentrate executive authority at the expense of the legislature.[99] In Bolivia, on the other hand, the existence of vigilance committees, where civil society organizations are represented, may serve to constrain the authority of elected municipal councils.[100]

In Mexico, historical studies have pointed out the contested nature of power in Mexican municipalities. Rubin, for example, shows that in Juchitán, Oaxaca, the one-party dominant system actually involved considerable contestation among different political factions, even though these were all contained with the PRI (at least until the 1970s).[101] Even during a period of one-party dominance in Mexico, political power was never fully top-down; part of the success of the Mexican political system was that it incorporated grassroots demands as well as vertical mandates from above in a highly fluid and flexible process for decision-making. Municipalities were a vital arena where this negotiation took place despite the relative weakness of the municipal governments themselves in terms of functions, powers, and resources.

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[98] See Roberto Laserna, "Descentralización, iniciativas locales y ciudadanía: el caso Boliviano," paper presented at the workshop on Local Democratic Innovation in Latin America, Woodrow Wilson Center, September 2, 2005, and Friedman and Kihato, "South Africa's Double Reform."
[99] Marcus Melo, "Democratizing Budgetary Decisions and Execution in Brazil: Participatory Arrangements versus Redesigning Formal Institutions," paper presented at the workshop on Local Democratic Innovation in Latin America, Woodrow Wilson Center, September 2, 2005.
[100] Roberto Laserna, "Descentralización, iniciativas locales y ciudadanía."
[101] Jeffrey Rubin, *Decentering the Regime: Ethnicity, Radicalism and Democracy in Juchitán, Mexico,* Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997

As political competition increased in Mexico in the 1980s and 1990s, studies of

Mexican democracy began to focus on municipalities as a space for counterhegemonic

power to the one party dominant state, since opposition parties won their first significant

victories at a municipal level. They were studied both for their ability to pry open

Mexico's one-party dominant system from below[102] and to see if opposition parties

would govern any differently than the PRI had for decades.[103]

However, as municipalities increased their authority and autonomy, many studies

began to focus on the capacity of local governments for democratic innovation. Early

studies analyzed experiences of innovative governance and concluded that municipalities

were potential seats for democratic (and administrative) experimentation.[104] In more

recent years, the Innovations in Municipal Government Project, has documented

hundreds of municipal governance innovations, many of them related to democratic

experimentation.[105] Bazdresch, analyzing the innovations in participation in the Project,

finds a positive correlation between institutional innovations in participation and

government responsiveness.[106] However, Cabrero notes that most of the innovations in

participation and accountability involve only minimal processes of consultation of joint

action between municipalities and citizens in providing services; only 11% involve

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[102] For example, Carlos Martínez Assad, ed., *Municipios en Conflicto,* Mexico: UNAM, 1985; and Blanca Torres, ed., *Descentralización y Democracia en México,* Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1986.
[103] For example, Victoria E. Rodriguez and Peter Ward, *Opposition Government in Mexico,* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.
[104] Mauricio Merino, *Fuera del Centro,* Xalapa: Universidad Veracruzana, 1992; Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, *La Nueva Gestión Municipal en México: Análisis de experiencias innovadoras en gobiernos locales,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1995; and Rodriguez and Ward, *Opposition Government in Mexico.*
[105] See Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, ed., *Innovaciones en gobiernos locales,* Mexico: CIDE, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004.
[106] Miguel Bazdresch, "Cambio Municipal y Participación Social," in Enrique Cabrero, ed., *Políticas Públicas Municipales: una agenda en construcción,* Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2003.

citizen engagement in planning and monitoring local government activities.[107]

Several other scholars have documented cases of significant democratic experimentation. Ziccardi notes the capacity of municipalities to engage citizens in new horizontal relationships between government and society.[108] In a four-city study, Schteingart and Duhau find that new practices in democratic governance were emerging that allowed citizens to have a direct voice on key issues of the public agenda and involved virtuous cycles of accountability and participation.[109] In this same volume, Guillén finds that Tijuana had undergone an ambitious process to give citizens ongoing input into key decisions on the municipal agenda through a participatory planning council,[110] while Duhau and Schteingart argue that Ciudad Nezahualcoyótl had done the same through a series of community committees and a citywide development council.[111] Socorro Arzaluz reaches similar conclusions in a study of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl's participatory planning process.[112] In a similar vein, Santín argues that Mexico's municipalities have become key arenas for virtuous engagement between civil society organizations and government.[113] Pineda and Rodríguez document successful experiences of popular organizations that were able to create synergies with municipal

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[107] Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, "Participación y deliberación en la acción pública local: la experiencia municipal," in Selee and Santín, eds, *Democracia y Ciudadanos.*

[108] Alicia Ziccardi, ed. *La tarea de gobernar: Gobiernos locales y demandas ciudadanas,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa and UNAM, 1995.

[109] Marta Schteingart and Emilio Duhau, eds., *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2001.

[110] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México: El Caso de Tijuana, B.C., 1989-1997," in Martha Schteingart and Emilio Duhau, eds., *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2001.

[111] Emilio Duhau and Marta Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista de Nezahualcóyotl," in Schteingart and Duhau, eds., *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2001.

[112] Socorro Arzaluz Solano, "Participación ciudadana en la gestión urbana de Ecatepec, Tlalnepantla y Nezahualcóyotl (1997-2000)," Ph.D. dissertation, Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, El Colegio de México, December 2001.

[113] Leticia Santín del Río, "Decentralization and Civil Society in Mexico," in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective.*

leaders to generate innovations in accountability and participation.[114]

With the *de jure* granting of self-determination to indigenous communities in Oaxaca and the *de facto* implementation of indigenous rights regimes in Chiapas, several authors have addressed the reform of indigenous municipalities from within. Burguete finds that indigenous municipalities in eastern Chiapas are increasingly experimenting with new institutional structures to include traditional community roles within the municipality.[115] Recondo finds extensive experimentation in the implementation of Oaxaca's indigenous rights law, while Santín finds that indigenous municipalities are reinventing their traditions and creating new deliberative modes of engagement.[116]

Despite this catalogue of important innovations in Mexican municipalities, few of these innovations survive over time. In a forthcoming volume on participation and deliberation in Mexico's municipalities, Tonatiuh Guillén suggests that the weakness of Mexico's municipalities lies in their lack of representative democracy, which in turn undermines their potential to serve as more effective arenas of participation and deliberation.[117] According to Guillén, the dependent structure of the city council, the closed list system of elections, the closed nature of political parties, and the monopoly that political parties have on political participation combine to limit the representative

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[114] Luis Pineda, "La participación de la ciudadanía, condición necesaria para el desarrollo de la gobernabilidad" and Carlos Rodríguez, "Experiencias muncipales de participación y deliberación en México: hacia la construcción de una democracia territorial de proximidad,"in Selee and Santín, eds., *Democracia y Ciudadanos*.

[115] Araceli Burguete, "The De Facto Autonomous Process: New Jurisdictions and Parallel Governments in Rebellion," in Jan Rus, Rosalía Aída Hernández Castillo and Sanan L. Mattiace, eds., *Mayan Lives, Mayan Utopias: The Indigenous People of Chiapas and the Zapatista Rebellion,* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003.

[116] David Recondo, "'Usos y costumbres', y elecciones en Oaxaca. Los dilemas de la democracia rpresenttiva, en una sociedad multicultural," *Trace*, No. 36, December 1999; Leticia Santín del Río, *Formas de integración del gobierno en municipios con población indígena y ciudadanía multicultural: Oaxaca-Chiapas,* Mexico: FLACSO, 2004.

[117] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Democracia representativa y participativa en los municipios de México: procesos en tensión,"in Selee and Santín, eds., *Democracia y Ciudadanos*.

nature of municipalities and, therefore, limit their responsiveness and accountability to citizens.[118] Rodríguez, in the same volume, observes that most institutional innovations in participation do not last more than one three-year mayoral term because of the tendency of mayors to want to make their mark with new reforms rather than continuing the existing institutional innovations.[119] Merino, in the same volume, argues that the fragmented nature of federal transfers to municipalities makes participation difficult since each transfer fund requires different institutional structures for decision-making and expenditure allocations.[120] According to Merino, there is no single public agenda at the municipal level that citizens can engage with, since it is constantly shifting and dependent on decisions at higher levels of government.

These institutional factors tell part of the story, but they do not capture the full extent of the limitations that municipalities face. Other factors tied to historical legacies and existing political practices appear to play a role as well. Mexico's political system has historically been considered a "corporatist system," at least during the period of one party-dominant rule, which lasted from the 1930s until the 1990s, in which citizens were organized in corporate groups and linked to political power through intermediaries.[121] Cornelius warns that as the corporatist structure of Mexico's one-party state disintegrates, local authoritarian leaders, who had always been subservient to higher level authorities in the party/government, gain increased autonomy and are becoming entrenched within

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[118] Cf. Acedo, "Los sistemas electorales municipales." For suggested reforms to the constitution to correct this, see Red de Investigadores en Gobiernos Locales, "Bases para una Reforma Constitucional en Materia Municipal," Mexico City and Tijuana: IGLOM, September 2004, document prepared for the Mexican Chamber of Deputies. This document was coordinated by Tonatiuh Guillén.

[119] Carlos A. Rodríguez Wallenius, "Experiencias muncipales de participación y deliberación en México: hacia la construcción de una democracia territorial de proximidad,"in Selee and Santín, eds., *Democracia y Ciudadanos*.

[120] Mauricio Merino, "La importancia de las rutinas: marco teórico para la investigación sobre la gestión pública municipal en México," in Selee and Santín, eds., *Democracia y Ciudadanos*.

[121] See Chapter 4 for an extensive discussion and review of literature.

"authoritarian enclaves." He suggests that:

> …the end result of the dispersion of power now under way in Mexico could be a fragmentation of the traditional, centralized, presidentialist system into a highly variegated mosaic: a 'crazy quilt' of increasingly competitive, pluralistic political spaces where pro-democracy forces have consolidated themselves, juxtaposed with hardened authoritarian enclaves in which the surviving '*dinosaurios*' of the PRI-government apparatus are able to resist not only local pressures for democratization but also external pressure.[122]

Gibson makes a similar argument, suggesting that in both Mexico and Argentina political parties that lose power at a national level may choose to reinforce their role at the local and regional level and to resist further democratization.[123]

This retrenchment of old authoritarian leaderships is undoubtedly taking place in some municipalities; however, most municipalities in Mexico are the scene of vibrant competition among two or more political parties and most have had at least one change in political party, as we will show in chapter 5. Therefore, they hardly conform to the strict notion of "elite capture" where a single dominant individual, family, or group holds sway uncontested. Rather, old forms of clientelism and particularism appear to have survived within the context of competitive democracy. Thus new patterns of competition coexist with old patterns of control and mobilization. Andreas documents that most Mexican citizens in rural communities dislike political clientelism and reject norms of trading votes for favors.[124] Fox describes the process through which numerous Mexican popular organizations, previously linked to clientelistic networks, have transitioned out of these

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[122] Wayne A. Cornelius, "Introduction," in Cornelius, Wayne, Todd Eisenstadt, and Jane Hindley, eds., *Subnational Politics in Mexico,* La Jolla: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1999, quote on p. 12.
[123] Edward Gibson, "Subnational Authoritarianism: Territorial Strategies of Political Control in Democratic Regimes," Paper presented at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2 - September 5, 2004.
[124] Andreas Schedler, "'El voto es nuestro'. Cómo los ciudadanos mexicanos perciben el clientelismo electoral," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología,* Year 66, No. 1, January-March, 2004, pp. 57-97.

by using alliances among civil society organizations and with reformist elements in the government.[125] However, he also cautions that important enclaves of unequal power relationships between political leaders and citizens continue to exist.   Fox and Aranda, therefore, stress the need to look at the internal dynamics of municipalities to understand decentralization's democratic potential:

> It is often assumed that decentralization necessarily encourages more accountable governance…the impact of decentralization on accountability depends on how representative local government was before receiving additional external resources. At least in Mexico, there is no evidence that increased external funding for municipalities…increases local-level accountability.[126]

2.5 Towards a Theory of Decentralization and Democratic Governance

In order to understand whether decentralization to municipalities improves democratic governance, we need first to see what government structures are empowered through decentralization and then see within municipalities which individuals and groups specifically are empowered. I argue for an approach that combines institutional analysis of the political system with a detailed understanding of how social actors are linked horizontally among each other and vertically to the political system.

To understand whether this is happening in specific cases, it is necessary to examine both the formal rules and institutions that govern decentralized regimes and the democratic process and analyze informal political practices that may or may not coincide with the formal rules and institutions. In particular, uneven power relations and

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[125] Fox, "The Difficult Transition from Clientelism to Citizenship."
[126] Fox and Aranda, *Decentralization and Rural Development in Mexico,* quote on p. 50.

clientelistic politics may shape political power in ways that formal rules do not predict.

The approach used here, therefore, looks first at the formal and informal rules that govern

the authority and autonomy of municipal governments; then at the formal and informal

rules that determine political processes within the municipal arena. It explores the

continuities with old institutions and practices as well as the changes taking place over

time. The next chapter develops a methodological approach to doing this, and

subsequent chapters test it with regards to decentralization and democratic governance in

Mexico.

Chapter 3
Research Design

3.1 Public Policy Method

Public policy as a discipline seeks to understand the real-world causes and

implications of public policies and contribute to the design of better policies in the future.

In particular, it seeks to link or contrast the desired outcomes of policies with the actual

outcomes. Therefore, the public policy method of study begins with the analysis of a

concrete policy or set of policies as the independent variable to be analyzed. It looks at

the policy (or set of policies) in light of its expected outcome. It then assesses the effect

of the policy (or set of policies) on the expected outcome (dependent variable). If the

policy does not lead to the expected outcome, it may be that the initial expectations are

incorrect or that other intervening variables need to be explored. As a final step, the

public policy researcher draws conclusions that may inform future policy in the area in

question.

I use a comparative politics research method that looks at changes over both time

and space. The present study analyzes variation across a set of three cases that show

political and geographic variation and also analyzes variation within each case study over

a period of nine to fifteen years in each case.

3.2 Design of the Study

The current study seeks to analyze the effect of decentralization policies in Mexico with regards to the quality of democratic governance in Mexico. As we have seen, theoretical insights from institutional economics, public choice, and democratic theory suggest that enhancing the authority and autonomy of local government should lead to the normatively desired outcome of improved democratic governance by enhancing representation, transparency, and citizen participation.

> Δ Decentralization (Autonomy + Δ Authority)$\rightarrow$
>
> Δ Democratic Governance (=representation + transparency + channels for citizen participation)

Nonetheless, we must allow for the possibility that intervening variables influence this relationship. As noted in the last chapter, both formal political institutions and informal political practices may affect the ability of decentralization to improve democratic governance. Therefore, we need both to determine if the relationship holds and, if not, what intervening variables might explain the disjuncture.

To explore the relationship, I examine three case studies of cities in Mexico within the context of decentralization reforms. The first analytical approach, "a view from above," examines the degree of authority and autonomy that local governments have achieved overall in Mexico and the general framework for representation, transparency, and participation. The second analytical approach, "a view from below," explores these variables within the three case studies and assesses the possible influence of intervening variables (institutions and political practices) in more detail.

The study combines qualitative and quantitative measures. Although I make extensive use of quantitative data both to compare municipal finances (as a measure of authority/autonomy) and to explore municipal election patters over time (as a measure of competition/representation), much of the exploration of the independent variable (decentralization) and most of the exploration of the dependent variable (democratic governance) require qualitative measures.

Selection of Variables

As noted, the relationship to be explored is between the change in autonomy and authority of municipal governments (independent variables) and the change in representation, transparency, and participation (dependent variables). Below the variables are operationalized even further so that the relationship can be tested (see Table 3.1 for greater detail on variables, indicators, and measurements).

Decentralization (independent variable)

As was noted in Chapter 2, decentralization can be defined as *the increase in the authority of subnational governments over functions, powers, and resources and of their autonomy for decision-making over these.* It can be measured along two axes, authority and autonomy. Since we are primarily concerned with decentralization to local governments, we will operationalize these variables with respect to local governments; however, we could as easily do the same for state governments in Mexico (or any other intermediate level of government). It is important to note, however, that decentralization to subnational governments in general does not necessarily mean the empowerment of

local governments; it is entirely possible that decentralization may empower intermediate

levels of government (states) without empowering local (municipal) governments. In this

research, we are only concerned with decentralization that does empower municipal

(local) governments. Below I operationalize the terms authority and autonomy.

Authority refers to the responsibilities, functions, and resources that subnational governments have within the aggregate of the public sector. It can be measured quantitatively as the percentage of total public expenditures that municipal governments (or state governments) exercise. This formula helps us visualize the relative weight of municipal governments within the public sector. However, this only gives us a partial measure of the authority of municipal governments. To operationalize the concept fully, we need to add the following qualitative measures:

- The change in functions that municipal governments perform.
- Whether municipal governments have exclusive or overlapping responsibility for new functions.
- The change in powers municipalities have for determining regulations and other policies within their jurisdiction.
- Whether new functions and powers are mandated by constitutional changes, new laws, or just administrative decrees.
- Whether municipalities have sufficient resources to carry out their functions and powers.

Autonomy refers to the relative independence and self-determination that local governments have with respect to their authority, that is, how much autonomy they have to make independent decisions with regards to their functions, powers, and resources. One common measure of subnational autonomy is "vertical imbalance," the percentage of subnational revenues raised by the subnational unit.[1] This is a useful starting point; however, it does not tell us very much on its own. Self-generated revenue may be subject to control by other levels of government, as was the case in Mexico prior to 1980,[2] and transfers from other levels of government may be unconditional.[3] Therefore, autonomy is best thought

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[1] This is a popular measure in studies by the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank.
[2] Before 1980, many taxes were collected by the states but administered by the central government. The fiscal reform of 1980 concentrated most tax collection in the federal government in return for a negotiated system of transfers to states.
[3] There is a substantial debate among economists about whether it is best for subnational governments to raise most of their own revenue. The conventional thinking (including that most accepted by the World Bank) is that most revenues should be raised and spent locally so that there is a correspondence between what people contribute in taxes and what they get back from each level of government.. Nonetheless, others dispute this argument suggesting that standardized collection of taxes nationally with clear transfer systems allow for targeting resources to alleviate poverty and compensate for regional inequalities. See the

of as a composite of quantitative and qualitative measures including the following:

- The percentage of revenue that is locally raised and not subject to control by other levels of government.
- The percentage of transfers that are unconditional and set in formulas with clear timing for transfers.
- Whether municipalities have broad policymaking discretion for deciding their expenditures.
- The degree of borrowing authority that municipal governments have.
- Whether higher level authorities can remove local authorities or reverse their decisions.

Democratic Governance (dependent variable)

Drawing from the discussion in Chapter 2, we might expect three aspects of democratic governance to be enhanced by decentralization: representation, transparency, and opportunities for participation. To evaluate whether these democratic outcomes are achieved by decentralization in the cases under study, we need to operationalize these three dimensions of democratic governance.

Representation refers to whether elected representatives know what citizens priorities are; believe they need to respond to these priorities (rather than to other interests in the political system or in society, such as special interests or party leadership); and make decisions that reflect this concern. We measure this through a set of three measurable variables:

- Conditions of polyarchy are met: all citizens have equal rights to vote or be a candidate for public office, as well as express opinions and organize autonomous organizations; and elections are free and fair.
- An independent, respected electoral institution oversees the elections.
- Voting preferences are translated into representative bodies in roughly proportional amounts.
- Elected officials have incentives to be responsive to citizen demands.

Transparency refers to whether citizens can have access to basic information about decisions pending or already made by their elected representatives,

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discussion in Chapter 2.4 of institutional economics and public choice theories.

including city council resolutions, planning documents, budgets, investment decisions, debt, and contracts. This can be measured in two ways:

- Municipal documents are published and made available regularly, especially city council resolutions, municipal development plans, annual budgets, infrastructure investment expenditures, contracted debt amounts, the salaries of high level municipal officials, and contracts with private parties.
- Municipal council meetings are generally open, announced ahead of time, and their decisions are public record.
- There is a legal framework that gives citizens access to municipal documents on demand.

Participation refers to the opportunities that citizens have to become engaged proactively in municipal affairs between elections through giving their opinion on municipal decisions and engaging in public reasoning. This can be measured through:

- The mayor and city council hold open meetings with citizens to receive comment on proposed decisions.
- Neighborhood councils serve as meaningful conduits for citizen concerns.
- Participatory planning/participatory budgeting processes exist which involve a broad cross-section of citizens and have a real impact on budgetary decisions.
- Citizens have clear institutional channels for presenting demands to public authorities and for deliberating about and commenting on municipal initiatives.
- These channels are the real channels of participation and influence rather than informal networks based on personal relations and patronage.

The View From Above: National Framework

Part II addresses the relationship between decentralization and democratic governance seen from a national level. Chapter 4 first constructs a historical framework in which to understand centralization and state-society relations in Mexico. Chapter 5 then analyzes the change in authority and autonomy of Mexico's municipalities in the

period 1980-2004 and the consequent changes in representation, transparency, and participation in municipalities. This chapter relies on national-level fiscal, electoral, and legal data, including two databases constructed by the author of all municipal elections in the period 1989-2004 and of the finances of all municipalities in the period 1989-2002. In addition, I consult a comprehensive survey of mayors by Indesol-Inegi as part of their survey of mayors in 2002 and a database of transparency laws created by the Instituto Federal de Acceso a Información (IFAI) in 2005.

The View From Below: Case Studies

In Part III, the same variables are explored for three municipalities—Chilpancingo (Chapter 6), Tijuana (Chapter 7), and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl (Chapter 8). Below is an explanation of the selection of cases. In each case, I reviewed all available municipal reports and development plans for the period 1996-2005,[4] as well as any other available documentation from the municipality. I constructed a detailed history of each municipality's finances using data available from the national statistical institute (INEGI) and complemented, when needed, with data from the annual municipal report.[5] In addition, I conducted interviews with 20 to 40 people in each municipality. The sample included at least:

- One current or former mayor;
- Three municipal council members, one from each of the major parties;
- Two key administration officials involved with citizen demands (usually the director/coordinator of public works, planning, or citizen participation);

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[4] See the discussion on the time period below.
[5] The annual municipal report is called different names in different cities. I have standardized them by calling them al the *Informe Municipal* (municipal report).

- Sixteen neighborhood leaders, selected according to specific criteria in each city to represent a cross-section of geographic, socio-economic, and partisan diversity (the criteria are explained in detail in each chapter).[6]

In all three cities I was able to conduct additional interviews both with people who fit into the above mentioned categories and others who represented locally relevant categories: business leaders, political party officials, and civic organization leaders. The formal interviews followed a semi-structured interview format built around four to five key questions. The questionnaires used can be found in the appendices.[7]

In addition to the formal interviews, I had dozens of informal conversations around this research with political leaders, scholars, community leaders, and journalists in each of the cities and nationally (including two cabinet officials). These conversations are not reported in the data, but they helped improve my understanding of the context and developments in each city.

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[6] The specific methodology for choosing community leaders to interview differed from city to city, depending on how the municipality is structured. This methodology is described in each chapter in greater detail. However, in Tijuana, it involved focusing on two of the city's fourteen subdelegations (administrative districts); in Chilpancingo, I focused on six different neighborhoods selected to represent different sectors of society; and in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, where neighborhood distinctions are less noticeable, I chose a mixture of elected neighborhood council leaders and representatives of other important neighborhood organizations in several neighborhoods of the city. In all cases where partisan affiliation mattered, interviews were conducted with people who sympathized with different political parties.

[7] I benefited from the research assistance of talented researchers in each city: Lilia León in Tijuana; Jessica Hernández in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl; and Osiel González in Chilpancingo. They conducted many of the interviews of neighborhood leadership in the three cities, although I also conducted several with them as well (and a few on my own). All the other interviews were conducted by me.

Table 3.1: Variables and Measurements

Variables	Indicators	How Measured
Decentralization (independent variable)		
Authority	The change in functions that municipal governments perform. Whether municipal governments have exclusive or overlapping responsibility for new functions. The change in powers municipalities have for determining regulations and other policies within their jurisdiction. Whether new functions and powers are mandated by constitutional changes, new laws, or just administrative decrees. Whether municipalities have sufficient resources to carry out their functions and powers.	Review of public expenditure data Review of constitution/ legal framework/ relevant judicial decisions
Autonomy	The percentage of revenue that is locally raised and not subject to control by other levels of government. The percentage of transfers that are non-discretional and unconditional (set in formulas with clear timing for transfers). The degree of borrowing authority that municipal governments have. Whether municipalities have broad policymaking discretion for deciding their expenditures. Whether local authorities can be removed by higher level authorities or their decisions reversed.	Review of public revenue data Review of formulas for transfers Review of legislation on debt Interviews with municipal leaders on controls involved in local policymaking
Democratic Governance (dependent variable)		
Representation	All citizens have equal rights to vote or be voted for public office, as well as express opinions and organize autonomous organizations Elections are free and fair. An independent, respected electoral institution oversees the elections. Voting preferences are translated into representative bodies in roughly proportional amounts. Elected officials have incentives to be responsive to citizen demands.	Review of Constitutional/Legal framework for representation Review of electoral data Interviews with city council members Interviews with community leaders
Transparency	There a legal framework that gives citizens access to municipal documents on demand. Municipal documents are published and made available regularly, especially city council resolutions, municipal development plans, annual budgets, infrastructure investment expenditures, contracted debt amounts, the salaries of high level municipal officials, and contracts with private parties. Municipal council meetings are generally open and their decisions are public record.	Review of existing legislation Review of documents published, including annual report, municipal plan, webpage, council resolutions, published budgets, and other documents Interviews with political and community leaders

| Participation | The mayor and city council hold open meetings with citizens to discuss proposed decisions.
Neighborhood councils serve as meaningful conduits for citizen concerns and encourage deliberation.
Participatory planning/participatory budgeting processes exist which involve a broad cross-section of citizens and have a real impact on deciding and monitoring investment decisions.
Citizens have clear institutional channels for presenting demands to public authorities, for commenting on municipal initiatives, and for deliberating with each other and with municipal officials.
These channels are the real channels of participation and influence rather than informal networks based on personal relations and patronage. | Review of legislation on participation
Review of national survey of mayors
Review of election and meeting data for participatory planning/budgeting
Interviews with community leaders, neighborhood committees, and municipal officials |

Selection of Cases

The case studies examine three medium to large cities in Mexico, each ruled by different political party and located in a different geographical region of the country. First, I chose three cities which had been dominated each by a different party in recent years. In doing so, it was hoped that this might shed some light on different governing styles of the three major parties in Mexico and the way they relate to citizens in the process of democratic governance. There is a considerable literature from the 1980s and 1990s about the "different" governing styles of the PAN and PRD (as distinct from the long-ruling PRI),[8] so it seemed important to choose one municipality from each party. In this case, Tijuana has been a bastion of the PAN since 1989 and is the only major city

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[8] Among many works, see Victoria E. Rodriguez and Peter M. Ward, *Opposition Government in Mexico,* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995; Yemile Mizrahi, *From Martyrdom to Power: The Partido Acción Nacional,* South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003; Kathleen Bruhn, *Taking on Goliath: The Emergence of a New Left Party and the Struggle for Democracy,* University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997; Marta Schteingart and Emilio Duhau, *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2001.

where the party has won five consecutive times. (Ironically, after fifteen years the PAN lost control of the city in the 2004 elections, part way into my research.) Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl was the first major city won and held in the next election by the PRD, which has now repeated three times in the city government since 1996. Chilpancingo is one of the few remaining cities over 100,000 inhabitants that have never been governed by a party other than the PRI.[9] Chilpancingo had the advantage of being in one of the states which has always been governed by the PRI as well (although, ironically, the PRI lost the state government to the PRD in 2005, also in the middle of my research).

Second, suspecting that regional factors might play a role in the nature of democratic governance, I chose cities in three different parts of the country. Putnam's work, in particular, stresses the role of regional factors in influencing democratic outcomes in Italy based on the different histories of each.[10] Mexico has long been considered to have three distinct regions: north, center, and south (sometimes further subdivided). The northern region is more industrial and the home of much of the country's export agriculture. The northern states tend to have the highest per capita income. The center is based around the dynamism of Mexico City, with industrial production and small family and collective farms. The area around the capital has high per capita income but also significant pockets of extreme poverty. The south is mostly dedicated to subsistence and small-scale agriculture, with some large export-oriented farms. It is the poorest and most unequal of the three regions. For the study, Tijuana represents a case in the north (located on the Mexico-U.S. border); Ciudad Nezahualcóytl represents the center (within the Mexico City metropolitan area); and Chilpancingo

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[9] Only 18 of the country's 152 municipalities over 100,000 inhabitants fall into this category.
[10] Putnam, *Making Democracy Work, op. cit.*

represents the south (in Guerrero, one of the country's three poorest states and perhaps its most violent).

Finally, I selected cases that were urban. I chose to focus on cities because almost 60% of Mexicans live in cities of over 100,000 inhabitants (and 91.5% live in urban or semi-urban municipalities of over 15,000 inhabitants, see Graph 5.10 in Chapter 5). The selection of only urban municipalities clearly biases the study in favor of cities; as a result, some findings may not apply equally to smaller municipalities. I discuss the findings in the final chapter with this cautionary note in mind. Of the three cities, Tijuana and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl are large cities over one million inhabitants; Chilpancingo is a medium-sized city of approximately 200,000 inhabitants. There are no large cities (over one million inhabitants) that have been governed continuously by the PRI; of the eighteen other cities over 100,000 inhabitants continuously governed by the PRI, five were located in the south, all in states governed by the PRI and with roughly similar population sizes (Chilpancingo, El Centro, Campeche, San Andrés Tuxtla, and Othon P. Blanco). I chose Chilpancingo largely because it was a city I already knew well and where I had initial contacts that facilitated research.

Table 3.2: Comparison of Municipal Case Studies

City	State	Region	Size	Party
Tijuana	Baja California	North	1,210,820	PAN (1989-2004)
Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl	State of Mexico	Center	1,225,972	PRD (1996-present)
Chilpancingo	Guerrero	South	192,947	PRI (1929-present)

Time Period

I chose to study the cases closely in the period of 1996-2005 because it is the period of greatest decentralization. It also facilitated data collection, since finding municipal records over ten years old is often quite difficult. In the case of Tijuana, I extended the period further back—to 1989, since this was the year of election of the first opposition government and it provided an interesting look at continuities and discontinuities over time—and I stopped the period in December 2004 when the PRI took office again.

In each case study I take a historical look at the development of state-society relations in the municipality before taking stock of decentralization and democracy in the municipality in the most recent period.

A Note on Data Sources

Research on local governance in Mexico is not easy. One of the results of decades of centralization has been a paucity of good research sources on local issues and a deficit of research institutions outside of Mexico City. The work of the network of local government researchers in Mexico (Investigadores en Gobiernos Locales Mexicanos—IGLOM) and the Prize for Innovation in Local Governments, located at CIDE, have both put together an impressive body of data and research that proved extremely useful. Similarly, the work of the national statistical bureau, INEGI, to create databases of local municipal finances, though imperfect, provided much needed

comparative data. I chose to use INEGI data for all municipal financial information, even when I had other sources, because it allowed for comparison across cases. The database of local election data created by CIDAC and the 2002 survey of municipal mayors by INDESOL and INEGI also provided very useful comparable data.

For the case studies, Tijuana was by far the easiest city in which to find data. Several well-researched scholarly studies of the city exist and the municipal government keeps excellent records. Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl was more challenging: there are few contemporary academic studies in the social sciences and the municipality keeps less careful track of older documents. However, the city has a Documentation Center which proved a treasure trove of information and data: maps, government studies, memoirs of politicians, internal party documents, articles by journalists, and unpublished M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations. Chilpancingo presented even more of a challenge: there appear to be no previous studies whatsoever on the city in the social sciences and municipal records were quite poorly kept. Fortunately, I could piece together information from several historical volumes, studies of state-level politics, and dozens of interviews and private conversations. Perhaps not surprisingly, in all of the cities, the interviews proved to be the most interesting and important source of data.

PART II:

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

Chapter 4
Centralization and Citizenship in Mexican History

4.1 Centralization, State Building, and Citizenship

Centralization has often been linked in the literature to nation-building and the

creation of a strong state that can promote development, ensure rule of law, and integrate

divergent regional cultures and political practices. The literature on centralization, which

is mostly based on the experience of the United States and Western Europe, generally

associates it with the creation of a uniform administrative apparatus that can implement

public policies throughout the nation-state and regulate market transactions.[1]

Centralization is thus thought to establish social control by concentrating rule-making

authority in the state at the expense of other non-state sources of power.[2]   As a result,

centralization may also help extend universal citizenship beyond local identities by

providing a single set of civil and political rights that citizens share across the national

territory.[3]   Centralization thus serves as a necessary precondition for democracy, as it

makes possible universal citizenship, the rule of law, and competing forms of political

power. In addition, centralization creates the preconditions for economic development by

providing a strong state apparatus that can enforce contracts, provide infrastructure and

basic services, and correct market imbalances.

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[1] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 81. Stein Rokkan and Derek W. Urwin, *The Politics of Territorial Identity: Studies in European Regionalism,* London: Sage Publications, 1982. See also Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology,* edited by Guerther Roth and Claus Wittig, translation by Ephrain Fischoff, New York: Bedminster Press, 1968, Volume III.
[2] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies, Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988.
[3] Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968, p. 135

Nonetheless, in Mexico, like in much of Latin America, centralization has meant concentrating power in the central government without fully creating a strong state, democratic institutions, or inclusive citizenship. Throughout the period 1857-1980, there was a gradual extension of the responsibilities, functions, and resources of the central government at the expense of state and municipal governments. In addition, the central government developed a series of formal and informal mechanisms to control subnational governments and to intervene in their internal affairs. This process culminated in creating one of the most centralized states in Latin America, in which subnational governments had few formal functions, powers, or resources, and even less autonomy to use them. Centralization avoided the fragmentation of the country, achieved several decades of economic growth, and created a degree of market regulation, but the state remained relatively small and severely limited in its ability to promote development that could benefit the majority of citizens. Indeed, total public expenditures in Mexico remained below the average for Latin America and far below that of more developed countries, suggesting that centralization did not produce a strong central state as much as it did weak subnational governments.

The reason for this outcome has a great deal to do with the way centralization was achieved in Mexico. National leaders wanted a strong, autonomous central state, but they went about it by creating a political system that privileged bargains with local and regional powerholders. What emerged was a state that was highly centralized within its institutional hierarchy but weakly institutionalized with regard to other power centers in society, represented by an extensive network of local and regional powerholders. These, in turn, retained a significant degree of autonomy and an important role as political

intermediaries between citizens and the state.[4]   The Mexican state would eventually

develop mechanisms for channeling conflict among these powerholders, especially after

the 1930s. However, the price for co-opting these centrifugal forces was the continued

survival and co-existence of local and regional centers of power outside the state. In

short, the Mexican state never developed a strong state apparatus for pursuing its declared

goal of development with equity, but it did succeed in creating a system that channeled

conflict over power.

This particular approach, centralization by co-optation, has also shaped the nature

of citizenship in Mexico. Most Mexicans, except occasionally the middle class, have

related to public authority not as individuals but as members of groups within clientelistic

chains mediated by local and regional intermediaries. These intermediaries have often

include community leaders, union bosses, political party leaders and their operatives, and

a range of elected and appointed officials who function less as public representatives than

as political brokers. Citizenship has been, in formal terms, universal, but its exercise has

taken place indirectly through informal channels of power mediated by a political class of

professional intermediaries. The composition of these intermediaries and the way they

operate within the political system have changed a great deal over time. However, the

underlying pattern has remained relatively constant. Citizenship, in practice, is

determined less by legal norms than by a constant negotiation of power relationships

between citizens and an array of intermediaries who link citizens to the state.[5] These

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[4] cf. Migdal, *Strong Societies, Weak States*.
[5] Similarly, Mische has argued for Brazil that "In such a situation in which rights on paper do not translate
into rights in practice, the question is not who 'counts' as a …but rather what kinds of social practices
between state and societal actors might make citizenship meaningful. The burden of proof thus shifts from
the legal definition to the social relationship, which in turn becomes a question of ethics and political
practice, and not just formal entitlements." Ann Mische, "Projecting democracy: the formation of
citizenship across youth networks in Brazil," in Charles Tilly, ed., *Citizenship, Identity, and Social History,*

relationships formed the basis of the authoritarian state during the period covered by this chapter and they would also shape the nature of the democratic transition covered in the next chapter. The nature of centralization in Mexico has thus shaped the nature of decentralization; and the nature of authoritarianism has shaped the contours of democratic governance today.

4.2 Colonial Rule and its Legacy

Both centralism and regionalism have been strong currents in Mexican history since the colonial period. The interplay between these two opposing forces, and the way they have been negotiated over time, has shaped the nature of citizenship and the relationship of state power to citizens. In colonial times, the desire of the Spanish crown to achieve administrative centralization as a means of control and of optimizing the extraction of resources conflicted with the reality of colonists who had been granted control over large tracts of land and indigenous communities that maintained a degree of autonomy over their internal affairs. As Lorenzo Meyer has observed:

> Great distances and abrupt geography played in favor of local interests, as did the relative weakness of the crown, which always needed resources and had a small army. The disputes among local groups, classes, and races, and the legitimacy of the crown vis-à-vis any other form of authority favored the interests of the center.[6]

Even the formal structure of governance in colonial times expressed this

New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 135.
[6] Lorenzo Meyer, "Un tema anejo siempre actual: el centro y las regiones en la historia mexicana," in Blanca Torres, ed., *Descentralización y Democracia en México,* Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1986, p. 23.

contradiction. On the one hand, the Castillian model of governance privileged a strong central bureaucracy, centralized in the colonial capital, and maintained a strict approach to taxation of local communities.[7] On the other hand, Spain bequeathed the concept of the *Municipio Libre* or "Free Municipality" as the basic unit of government, ruled by a collegial city council and with a degree of guaranteed autonomy separate from the colonial authorities.[8] As a result, in practice the colonial governments mediated between the crown, which sought centralized control, and regional and local authorities, based legally in the municipality and with *de facto* power because of their distance. Fiscal resources were largely controlled by municipalities and states and, therefore, by local powerholders, who often resisted turning these over to the federal authorities, and could win elections and raise armies on their own.[9] However, the colonial authority, exercised by the viceroy of New Spain, was the ultimate arbiter of public authority. According to Fernando Escalante, "The colonial state was, since it was constituted, an apparatus for mediation; mediation no only among competing interests, but among bodies with private privileges."[10] The intermediaries, who included large landowners, bilingual indigenous leaders, military commanders, and even elected municipal authorities, negotiated their position between those they represented and the colonial authorities.

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[7] Claudio Véliz, *Centralization in Latin America,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 29 and 45.
[8] Véliz, *Centralization,* p. 170; Juan Bruno Ubiarco Maldonado, *El federalismo en México y los problemas sociales del país,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2002, pp. 79-80.
[9] Fernando Escalante, *Ciudadanos Imaginarios,* Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1992, pp. 102-7
[10] Escalante, *Ciudadanos Imaginarios,* p. 109.

4.3 Independence: Weak Federalism and Indirect Citizenship

Mexico's independence struggle lasted eleven years, from the declaration of independence by a radical priest and his peasant followers in 1810 until the eventual victory of the Mexican forces against the Spaniards under the leadership of an aristocratic general in 1821. The independence struggle helped shape national identity. On the eve of independence, most people in New Spain identified primarily with their province, not New Spain as a whole. The independence war helped shape identity in Mexico, as elsewhere in Latin America, and created a new sense of belonging to a single country based on the shared experience of the independence struggle.[11] However, regional interests also emerged strongly after independence and would repeatedly challenge the central state. Between 1829 and 1876 Mexico had thirty-six different presidents. "The national state was no more than an embryo, a project, during the half century that followed independence," according to Meyer.[12]

Mexico became a federal state soon after independence (following a two-year interlude as an empire) in large part to negotiate this tension between an emerging national state and strong regional interests and keep the country from falling apart soon after being born. Riker's classical study of federalism argues that it is about autonomous political units coming together in a "federal bargain" to face common threats[13]; however, Mexico, like Brazil and Argentina, followed a different model, what Alfred Stepan has

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[11] John Charles Chasteen and Sara Castro-Klarén, *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003. p. xvii.
[12] Meyer, "Un tema anejo siempre actual," p. 24.
[13] William Riker, *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance,* Boston: Little Brown, 1964.

called "holding together federalism."[14] Federalism in Mexico had less to do with a

political ideal for building a great unified country than with creating a solution to the

centrifugal forces of regional governments that wanted to break free from central control.

This is not to say that there was no ideological underpinning for the federalist debate after

independence. Many intellectual leaders of the independence struggle saw the U.S.

concept of federalism as an antidote to the centralist tradition of Spain. Although most

only vaguely understood federalism, they saw it as a means of protecting local autonomy

and individual rights.[15] At the constituent congress that followed the overthrow of

Emperor Iturbide, the delegates, after much debate, finally declared Mexico a federal

republic. Meacham describes the process:

> It is all too true that the normal process of federation was reversed in
> Mexico; that instead of the national state being created by the local states,
> as in the United States, the local states were created by the national
> representative body. The pretensions of the provinces to independence
> were idle. It is significant that the convoking of the constituent congress
> was the act of a government representing, or purporting to represent, the
> Mexican Nation as a whole, not the provinces as independent entities. In
> no sense can the constituent congress be viewed as the legal representative
> of the states which did not exist. Thus the states enjoyed no original or
> inherent, but delegated powers. The constituent congress, in the name of
> national sovereignty, created the sovereignty of the states.[16]

The provinces—now states after the constituent congress—had certainly existed

before independence and enjoyed, in some cases, significant authority and

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[14] Alfred P. Stepan, "Towards a New Comparative Politics of Federalism, Multinationalism, and
Democracy," in Edward L. Gibson, *Federalism and Democracy in Latin America,* Baltimore: Johns
Hopkins University Press, 2004.
[15] J. Lloyd Meacham, "The Origins of Federalism in Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review,* No.
18, 1938, pp. 168 and 176. Meacham argues that federalism was contained "in an embryonic form" in the
Plan de Casa Mata, the declaration of those involved in overthrowing the Emperor Iturbide and instituting
the first republic after independence.
[16] Meacham, "The Origins of Federalism," pp. 179-80.

autonomy.[17] However, they were not necessarily powerful as public institutions except insofar as they were controlled by powerful regional leaders. The decision to imbue them with federal powers did not owe itself to a decision of sovereign bodies coming together but primarily to regional leaders trying to ensure their base of power through the new constitution.

The 1824 constitution also preserved the concept of the Free Municipality; however, in practice, the nature of the municipality and its functions were left to the state to decide.[18] In practice, nonetheless, municipalities often enjoyed far-ranging powers, steady sources of income, and internally democratic procedures. Municipalities were generally responsible for providing education and basic services, administering the law in local disputes, and organizing elections. Municipalities raised revenues through the *alcabalas,* a form of local tariff on goods passing through a jurisdiction, as well as other taxes and fees that they levied. Generally, municipalities were run by municipal councils, elected every year with a prohibition on immediate reelection. Council members—who usually consisted of a sindicate (*síndico*) and a number of *regidores,*[19] would elect the mayor from among their members. However, municipalities were checked in their authority by the prefects—or political chiefs (*prefectos* or *jefes politicos*), officials appointed by the federal or state government to preside over districts that included several municipalities and supervise the way in which they exercised their functions and administered their resources. As often as not, the prefects responded to state governors or

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[17] Hira de Gortari de Rabiela, "El federalismo en la construcción de los estados," in Jaime Rodríguez, ed., *Mexico in the Age of Democratic Revolutions, 1750-1850,* Boulder, Co: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994.
[18] Meyer, "Un tema anejo," p. 23.
[19] Sindicates were—and are today—responsible for the application of the law and as municipal comptrollers. I will generally refer to both *síndicos* and *regidores* together as city council members, except when the difference becomes important in some parts of the case studies.

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to regional powerholders, rather than to the distant and ever-changing federal government. The prefects represented a channel of control over municipalities that could be employed by local, regional, or national elites to limit the public authority of municipal governments.[20]

The tension between the creation of a strong central state and the maintenance of strong regional interests also played out in the nature of political rights of citizenship. For most of the period after independence, political rights were granted extensively to all male citizens, regardless of ethnic origin or property qualifications.[21] However, the liberal impulse of universal suffrage was checked by the application of indirect elections, through which voters selected representatives who would, in turn, elect public authorities. For most of the period between 1824 and 1857, elections involved a three-layer process, where ever-smaller numbers of elected representatives selected the next set of authorities above them. This meant that political citizenship was largely universal but real decision-making authority fell on ever small and more elite groups of citizens. Municipal governments organized the first round of national elections and almost any male citizen could participate (though rarely more than five percent did).[22] However, only those with the time and resources to participate in politics and to travel to the capital could afford to stand for office. Similarly, only those with time and resources to become federal deputies

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[20] Romana Falcón, "Force and the Search for Consent: The Role of the Jefaturas Políticas of Coahuila in National State Formation," in Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Modern Rule in Mexico,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.

[21] There were attempts to impose wealth qualifications in 1836-42 and 1843-47, but these were short-lived. Hilda Sabato, "On Political Citizenship in Nineteenth-Century: Latin America," *The American Historical Review,* October 2001, para 15. Overall, however, suffrage was far more extensive and inclusive in Mexico in the 1800s than in the United States. See Erica Pani, Erika Pani, "*La Calidad de ciudadano.* Past and Present. The Nature of Citizenship in Mexico and the United States: 1776-1912." Woodrow Wilson Center Latin American Program, Working Paper No. 258, July 2002.

[22] Political participation was low, almost always below 5%. Mexican general election of 1851 had 20% of population voting, but this was an exception. Sabato, "On Political Citizenship," paragraph 36..

could then stand for that office and be part of the selection of the president. For important periods, there were also property and literacy requirements for being elected to the second and third tiers of the political structure.

Mexico thus succeeded in ensuring both universal political citizenship and elite rule at the same time. One of the important consequences of this system was that political citizenship was more extensive in Mexico than in the United States or parts of Europe, but it also had less meaning for those included; political rights were widespread but not directly correlated with political power.[23] Voting gave citizens the right to select intermediaries who vote for political leaders, but not the right to participate directly in the selection process themselves. This system increased the universality of the vote, but diminished its meaning. Since voting rarely exceeded five percent of electors, it also meant that political leaders were more concerned with mobilizing a small number of supporters rather than appealing broadly to citizens as a whole. The public discussion of issues consequently mattered far less than political relationships with a small but consistent base of supporters.

The limited worth of citizenship as a tool for political empowerment was compounded by the instability of the political system during most of the first half century of independence. Although elections for local, state, and national political leaders occurred regularly and all of Mexico's many constitutions in the nineteenth century (save one) reaffirmed a commitment to democracy, real power had less to do with elections than with ongoing skirmishes—some violent, some political—among competing

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[23] The United States, for example, had significantly restricted citizenship (women, African-Americans, , and many who did not meet economic or literacy tests were excluded), but those included as full citizens wielded a great deal of political power. In Mexico, in contrast, more people were included in full citizenship but citizenship had less meaning overall in the political process.

politicians. The country had numerous presidents between 1821 and 1867, many of whom came to power with the barrel of a gun (or the threat of it) and others through conspiracies and intrigues. Not only were elections indirect, but they were more often than not irrelevant to the actual political process which, in fact, took place outside of constitutional channels. The country's most significant political cleavage in the nineteenth century was between liberals—who believed in a strong federal state, private property, and a secular government—and conservatives, who believed in a weaker state with strong religious institutions and a mixture of private and collective property rights. However, rarely were the disputes among political leaders as much about ideology as about personal power and private interests.

4.4 The Liberal State and Centralizing Federalism

The conflict between liberals and conservatives, simmering during the first three decades of independence, exploded in the 1850s. After a brief three-year interlude of liberal government from 1855 to 1858, the country descended into an internecine war that lasted until 1867 and included a brief period of monarchical rule with an imported emperor from Austria. The liberals emerged triumphant under Benito Juárez and reestablished the liberal Constitution of 1857, which would remain the law of land for fifty years.

The Liberals believed philosophically in a strong federalism, with municipal autonomy; at the same time, their desire to spur economic development required overcoming the endemic weakness of the central state. These were by no means

incompatible goals, in theory; however, in practice, a state faced by constant challenges

from regional elites required centralization to create stability and growth.[24] The economy

was stagnant, with GDP ten percent less than at the start of the century,[25] and almost half

of the country's territory had been lost in a war with the United States in 1846-48. The

liberals succeeded in building a stronger central state by suppressing rival military

leaders, taking over land and functions from the church, and imposing an increasingly

centralized structure of local prefects. Liberals expropriated church properties and took

over key functions that the church had previously performed, including the registration of

births, deaths, and marriage and the provision of education, healthcare, and social

services.[26] In addition, he put down a series of military rebellions in the first years of his

government, which established the military superiority of the central government with

regards to the regional centers of power. As Enrique Krauze has noted, "Under Juárez,

the various states and regions learned a lesson that would always apply in the future. No

regional cacique, no caudillo or general could truly oppose the center. Juárez inaugurated

an era and an irreversible historical tendency, a fundamental centralism employing

federal forms."[27] This centralism was strengthened by the appointment of prefects who

responded, nominally at least, to the central government and were responsible for

monitoring the activities of municipalities within a given district within states.

Nonetheless, the 1857 Constitution also reaffirmed federalism in favor of the

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[24] Meyer, "Un tema anejo," pp. 26-27; Mallon observes that "This tension between the decentralization and regional articulation of interests, and the need to revindicate the principle of authority and the centralization of power, lay at the center of all Liberal debates and practice from the time of the Ayutla Revolution and the Constitutional Convention of 1856-1857. It reemerged during the Restored Republic in the conflict between Juarismo and the defenders of communitarian Liberalism." Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation,* p. 133.
[25] Meyer, "Un tema anejo," pp. 25-26.
[26] Veliz, *Centralization,* p. 193.
[27] Enrique Krauze, *Biography of Power,* New York: Perennial Publishers, 1998, p. 198.

states and municipalities, giving them the primary role in raising taxes, recruiting the

national army, and running elections.[28] Equally important, not all regional leaders could

be suppressed by force. It was essential to make deals with many of them to ensure

order. In many cases, the prefects ended up responding to the interests of the state

governors rather than the central government, even though they nominally represented

the president in the district.[29] At the same time, peasant organizations shaped the

contours of the new political order, sometimes allying with the federal government

against local elites, sometimes with local landowners against an increasingly invasive

state.[30] It was a period of political change and the construction of a stronger central state,

but the nature of this state building process was in constant tension with other forms of

power outside the central state. As Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo has noted, the state

increased its ability to make rules, but ultimately it "did not impose its rules, it negotiated

their application" with the range of actors who contested state power from the regions.[31]

These changes in the role of the central state necessarily had a profound effect on

the nature of citizenship as well. The liberals replaced the onerous three-tiered election

system with one that had only one tier, so citizens were now only one step removed from

electing their representatives rather than three steps. The wars between liberals and

conservatives had also shaken up the social structure of many towns, creating new

community leaderships and regional *caciques*.[32] Liberal laws abolishing communal

property led to a dramatic concentration of landholdings and created new forms of

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[28] Escalante Gonzalbo, *Ciudadanos Imaginarios,* 133.
[29] Falcón, "Force and the Search for Consent,"; Escalante Gonzaldbo, *Ciudadanos Imaginarios,* pp. 101-2.
[30] Florencia Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 242-43
[31] Escalante Gonzalbo, *Ciudadanos Imaginarios,* p. 129.
[32] Mallon, *Peasant and Nation,* 242-43. *Cacique* is a Mexican term for a local strongman (or woman).

control by local landowners who bought up newly privatized land from impoverished peasants. At the same time, the expanded state bureaucracy created a new urban middle class, tied to government, newspapers, and trade, which in turn constituted new forms of civic association in the cities that could be considered an embryonic civil society.[33] The period following the liberal victory was one of rapid social change and new leadership. On one hand, a new urban middle class developed with a more direct relationship to political institutions. On the other hand, most citizens remained connected to political power through local and regional intermediaries, though those who served this role changed in many cases.

After a few shorter periods of rule by other liberal leaders (and rebellions by other liberal leaders), Porfirio Díaz, one of Juarez's former lieutenants, was elected president in 1877. Except for a brief period from 1880 to 1884 (when he retained *de facto* power but relinquished the title of president), Díaz ruled Mexico until 1910. He succeeded in the liberal project of creating a strong central state that could generate spectacular economic growth, but he did so at the expense of equity, federalism, and democracy. During this period, GDP multiplied 3.2 times; roads increased from 893 to 19,205 km, silver production soared from 25 million pesos to 85 million, and exports jumped from 60 million to 270 million.[34] Diaz created the Bank of Mexico (Banco de Mexico), which along with foreign capital served to finance many of these developments, including the country's infrastructure, mining, and large-scale agriculture. Trade shifted away from metals (which dropped from 65% of exports in 1877 to only 50% by 1911, and trade

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[33] Luis Javier Garrido, *El Partido de la Revolución Institucionalizada,* Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1982, p. 30; Sabato, paragraphs 54-59.
[34] Meyer, "Un tema anejo," p. 28.

became increasingly focused on the United States.[35] This growth generated an extensive

infrastructure that was necessary for modern development, but the economic benefits

were almost exclusively concentrated in a small group of businesspeople and landowners

close to the Bank of Mexico, and in U.S. and British investors. By the end of Diaz's

government, three quarters of Mexico's population was rural and 90 to 95 percent

landless.[36]

The impoverishment of Mexico's rural population was coupled with a tightening

of control over local governments and the elimination of any vestiges of democratic rule.

Díaz abolished the *alcabalas,* internal tariffs, which were the most important source of

municipal income, and reinforced the rule of the prefects.[37] He co-opted some regional

caciques by giving them access to the benefits of the growing economy and exercised a

heavy hand against others. Although elections continued to take place, he effectively

ensured that he could win reelection. Candidates for ocal and state elections were often

negotiated ahead of time, but when needed, the Díaz regime suppressed dissent

ruthlessly. By the early part of the new century, dissent had begun to spread both among

the burgeoning middle class, which had grown with economic production and the central

bureaucracy but resented the lack of political space left by Díaz's authoritarian rule, and

among the rural poor, who had suffered the loss of land and economic opportunities.

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[35] These figures based on Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy, Post-Revolutionary Mexico,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982, pp. 44-51. She estimates that the United States accounted for 36 percent of Mexican exports and 26 percent of imports in 1872 but 65 to 75 percent of exports and 55 to 65 percent of imports in 1911.

[36] Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy*, pp. 48-55. Peter H. Smith, *Labyrinths of Power,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979, ph. 30, on the role of foreign investors.

[37] The *alcabalas* were actually eliminated originally by the Ley Lerdo of 1856 and incorporated into the Constitution of 1857, together with the nationalization of much of the property of the Church; however, it is unclear how much of an impact this had initially and the law was revoked in 1862, to be reinstated in 1884 with Díaz. For more detail on this point, see María del Refugio González, "Debates sobre el regimen del municipio en México en el siglo XIX," in *Estudios Municipales,* No. 13, January-February, 1987, pp. 145-63.

Regional oligarchs, who had not participated fully in the economic expansion, joined in the growing discontent. By 1910, these disparate factions had taken up arms against Díaz and war spread throughout the country. Díaz fled. After a brief rule by liberal opposition leader Francisco Madero, followed by a coup in which he was killed, the country descended into anarchy and internecine warfare until 1920.

4.5 The Revolution and the Reconstruction of the State

As North has observed, institutions have an inherent "imbeddedness" that can often survive even major regime changes.[38] In Mexico, most of the strong central institutions built by Díaz collapsed during the ten-year civil war, known as the Mexican Revolution. The post-revolutionary government that took power after 1920 faced a country in economic ruin, with powerful new generals in control of parts of the countryside and a mobilized peasantry. However, within a few years, they had succeeded in reconstructing many of the key institutions that had ensured strong central rule and created new institutions to complement these.

The post-revolutionary governments of Presidents Alvaro Obregón (1920-24) and Plutarco Calles (1924-29) reestablished the Bank of Mexico and a professional national army; launched the National Irrigation Commission, the National Highway Commission, National Electrical Commission, and the national income tax; and created an elaborate national labor law to respond to the demands of unionized workers who had participated

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[38] Douglass North, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

in the revolution.[39]   Despite these new institutions, the central state faced an ongoing

challenge from regional military leaders who had participated in the Revolution.

Vaughan notes that in the first years after the Revolution:

> …political power was more effectively lodged in the states where civilian
> and military governors and military zone commanders often vied against
> one another and correspondingly against the federal government. Some
> regional power-holders opposed structural change and allied with
> traditional elites against increasing mass mobilization. Others sided with
> peasants and workers—sometimes on principle and often as a means of
> building power bases to be reckoned with at the national level.[40]

The government benefited from rapid economic growth, influenced partly by the global

economic boom of the 1920s, which often allowed them to co-opt regional leaders by

giving them a stake in the country's growth.[41]   However, the recreation of strong central

state institutions competed with the centrifugal forces of the revolutionary elites who

challenged central control at every turn.

Two key institutions also played a decisive role in extending the federal

government's central control in this period. The government launched an agrarian reform

that granted land to thousands of peasant farmers across the country in communal

landholdings known as *ejidos* that could not be sold or taxed. Giving the disastrous

experience that most poor farmers had faced with the loss of land after the liberal reforms

that privatized communal properties, the *ejidos* provided a measure of security that land

would not be lost. The federal government maintained iron control over the agrarian

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[39] The following institutions were created within the first years after the Revolution's end: The National
Power commission, 1922; National Electrical Commission, 1926; National Highway Commission; Central
Bank, 1925; and national income tax, 1924-27. For an extensive list, see Hamilton, *The Limits of State
Autonomy*, pp. 79-82; Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution: Labor, the State, and Authoritarianism in
Mexico,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995 , pp. 23-25..
[40] Mary Kay Vaughan, *The State, Education, and Class in Mexico, 1880-1928,* Dekalb, IL: Northern
Illinois University Press, 1982, p. 127.
[41] Hamilton , *The Limits of State Autonomy,* pp. 76-81, Meyer, "Un tema anejo."

reform program, which allowed them a significant presence in rural areas affected by the revolution.[42] Similarly, the federal government started an ambitious program to extend education throughout the country. The Public Education Department (*Secretaría de Educación Pública*), created in 1921, set about to institutionalize education, which until then had been largely limited to urban areas and dominated by municipality-run schools. The department "had a centralizing capacity greater than that of its predecessor." It built and staffed schools throughout the country, especially in rural areas, which had lacked national education institutions prior to the Revolution.[43]

These measures laid the foundation for greater centralization of the state, but this process needed a political project to complete it and reign in the constant challenges from regional powerholders. In 1928, the assassination of former President Obregón, recently elected to a new term, created the critical moment for President Calles to launch a bold proposal: the creation of a single political party that would bring together all of the revolutionary elites and "institutionalize" the Revolution.[44] This was hardly a new idea, but the crisis of Obregón's assassination provided the critical moment to allow this to happen.[45] According to Knight, "The crisis of 1928 made possible a successful process of settlement, in which elite decisions and conflicts were played out in a situation of flux and uncertainty, but such a settlement was, we might say, latent in the revolutionary

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[42] Vaughan, *The State, Education, and Class*, pp. 128-129.
[43] Vaughan, *The State Education, and Class,* p. 271.
[44] Alan Knight "Mexico's Elite Settlement: Conjuncture and Consequences," in John Higley and Richard Gunther, eds., *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 115.
[45] Knight "Mexico's Elite Settlement," pp. 116-18. According to Knight, the assassination proved critical in part because it left only one of the two national leaders (Obregón and Calles) alive and with absolute authority; Obregón's supporters, who distrusted Calles, were happy to have an institutional structure that checked Calles' authority, and Calles' supporters were willing to support the proposal since Calles would lead the new party.

legacy…"[46] The party, originally called the National Revolutionary Party (PNR, *Partido Nacional Revolucionario*), was formed in 1929 with the participation of key revolutionary elites from all over the country, including regional powerholders and governors (often the same), union and peasant leaders, and federal government officials. It was an elite pact among those who had a claim on the revolutionary legacy and specifically excluded the business community and the church.

Dissent and disagreement, which had been carried out through constant power struggles among competing elites (and often through violence), would now be institutionalized within one official revolutionary family, headed by the President. The PNR, which would later be renamed the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), "was born not to fight for power but to administer it without sharing."[47] Everyone could compete for power, as long as they did so within the confines of the party. The party was, at first, almost a "party of parties" with strong local and regional committees that received money for campaigns from the central committee. As such it was "a kind of confederation of caciques," who agreed to play by the same rules in competing among each other.[48] However, Calles clearly saw the party as a means to centralize authority as well as limit conflict. According to Knight:

> In light of this political panorama, the elite settlement of 1928-9, must be
> seen as a key element in the central government's battle to assert its power
> over divergent political and regional interests. The institutionalization that
> Calles proclaimed implied a further attenuation of independent political
> movements (of both right and left) in the provinces. The elite settlement
> thus reflected a clear perception—by Calles and his collaborators—that
> power had to be centralized, to the advantage of the regime and to the

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[46] Knight, "Mexico's Elite Settlement," p. 118.
[47] Meyer, "Un tema anejo," p. 31.
[48] Garrido, *El Partido Revolucionario Institucionalizada*, pp. 123-25.

detriment of both popular and regional forces.[49]

In the years after the party's founding, violent power-struggles among regional elites and between them and the central government dropped dramatically. Conflict and contestation continued, as they would throughout the twentieth century even as the party consolidated its grip on power, but these took place increasingly within the revolutionary family delineated by the party. Attempts by outside groups to challenge the official party also helped unify party members and solidify the elite pact. Belonging to the revolutionary family meant obligations to respect the formal and informal rules that would develop within the party and its hierarchies, atop of which sat the country's President; however, belonging to the family also ensured members the right to participate in politics and share in the spoils of government.

4.6 Institutionalizing the Revolution

One of the important banners of the Revolution had been greater municipal autonomy and the abolition of the prefects. The 1917 constitution—which was approved by the main revolutionary factions prior to taking power definitively—banned the prefects by forbidding any authority between the states and municipal governments. However, this constitution, which remains in effect today, also granted no specific powers to municipalities, leaving the definition of their role and their fiscal powers to the state constitutions.[50] Article 115 of the constitution, as originally written, simply stated that

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[49] Knight, "Mexico's Elite Settlement," p. 128.
[50] Lorenzo Meyer, "El municipio mexicano al final del siglo XX. Historia, obstáculos y posibilidades," in

the municipalities had legal jurisdiction, should have an elected government, and could administer their own treasury based on rules imposed by the state governments.[51] Similarly, the constitution gave few explicit functions to states that were not also shared with the federal government. Institutionally, therefore, the stage was set for the states to dominate the municipalities. Over time, the federal government would do the same to the states and, by extension, to the municipalities. Indeed, the federal government would slowly concentrate most of the fiscal powers of the public sector and eventually close to 90% of its resources. Through a series of federal and state fiscal changes, municipalities came to comprise only 1.1% of all public expenditures by 1980, while the states exercised only 9.4% (Figure 4.1). Even municipalities' role in organizing their own elections came to an end in 1946.[52]

Graph 4.1: Percentage of Public Expenditures by Level of Government

	1900	1923	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980
Federal	63.0%	72.6%	68.7%	67.4%	71.4%	75.6%	78.3%	80.8%	78.6%	88.0%	86.4%	90.1%	89.4%
State	24.1%	14.5%	22.9%	25.1%	23.3%	19.0%	18.4%	16.2%	18.6%	10.5%	12.0%	8.6%	9.4%
Municipal	12.9%	12.9%	8.4%	7.4%	5.3%	3.4%	3.3%	2.9%	2.8%	1.5%	1.6%	1.3%	1.1%
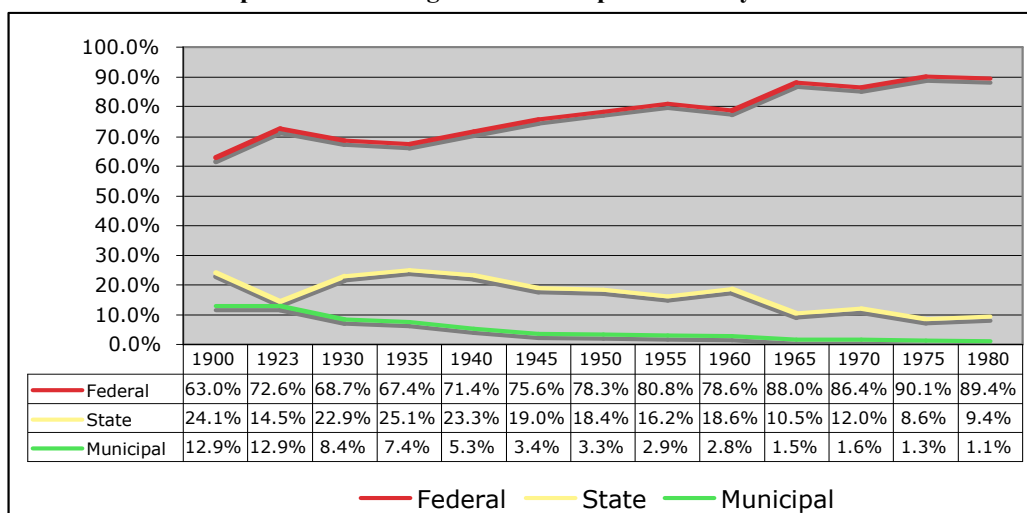
Source: Alberto Díaz Cayeros, *Desarrollo Económico e Inequidad Regional: Hacia un Nuevo pacto federal en México,* Mexico: CIDAC, 1995, p. 65. Note: State expenditures include the Federal District.

Mauricio Merino, ed., *En busca de la democracia municipal: la Participación ciudadana en el gobierno local mexicano,* Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1994, pp. 237-39.
[51] *Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* 1917 (original text). Article 115 would remain virtually unchanged until 1983. There were minor constitutional changes to the article in 1933 (prohibiting the reelection of mayors and city councilors), 1943 (of little substance), 1947 (allowing women to vote), and 1971 (allowing the federal government to remove mayors in territories), but none touched on the substance of the municipality's functions, resource base, or political structure. Meyer II, pp. 241-2.
[52] I am thankful to Ignacio Marván and Jacqueline Peschard for pointing this out.

Most of the reduction of subnational finances in favor of the federation came through

agreements between the state and federal governments in a series of fiscal pacts signed

between 1942 and 1980. The final pact, in 1980, created the sales tax, collected by the

federation and shared with the states through a distribution formula.[53] Both states and

municipalities continued to gain net income, which made the pacts palatable, even while

they had to cede fiscal powers to the federal government. However, the states came out

far better than the municipalities and both lost strength relative to the federal government

(see Figure 4.2).[54] The willingness of subnational governments to cede their fiscal

powers can be explained only in part by the fact that they still continued to gain

resources, since they certainly could have obtained even more resources without the pact.

Figure 4.2: Annual Growth in Real Revenue by Level of Government (Constant 1970 Pesos)

	1910-1928	1929-1942	1943-1949	1950-1972
Federal	4.2	3.5	9.5	12.2
State	3.6	3.8	2.3	8.8
Federal District	1.2	5.5	2.2	13.5
Municipal	4.2	0.1	-1.7	8.2
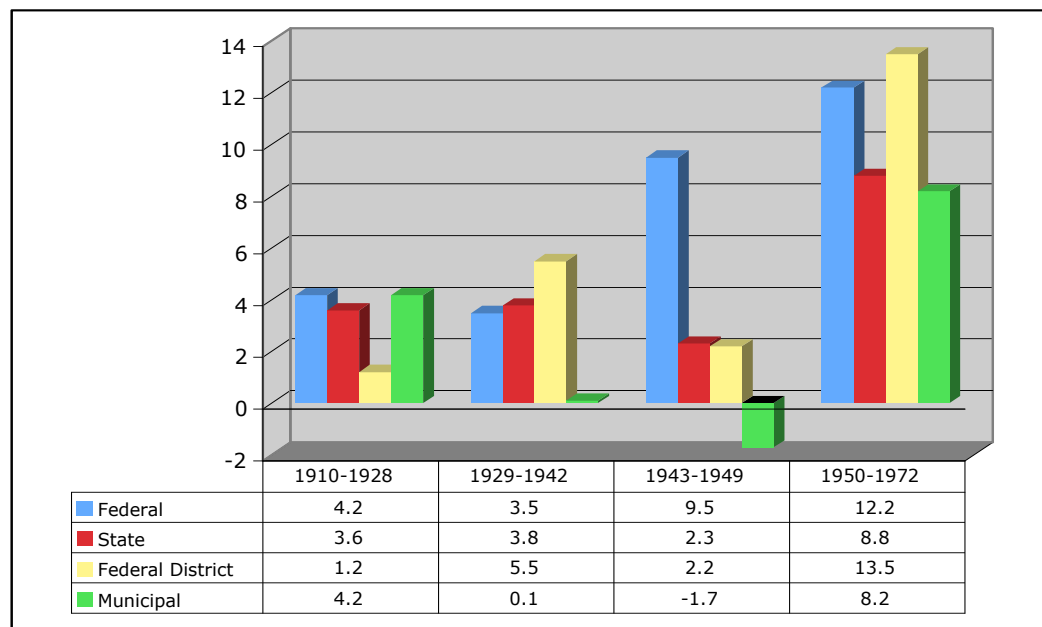
Note: Income by level of government in constant 1970 terms.
Source: Luis Aboites Aguilar, *Excepciones y Privilegios: Modernización tributaria y centralización en México, 1922-1972,* Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2003, p. 39.

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[53] Alberto Díaz Cayeros, *Desarrollo Económico e Inequidad Regional: Hacia un Nuevo pacto federal en México,* Mexico: CIDAC, 1995, pp. 65-67.
[54] Luis Aboites Aguilar, *Excepciones y Privilegios: Modernización tributaria y centralización en México, 1922-1972,* Mexico: El Colegio de México, 2003, pp. 34-39.

It was ultimately the political dimension of centralization, more than the structural limitations of the constitution, which permitted the concentration of powers in the central state and also facilitated the creation of an authoritarian political system. The PNR began as an elite pact to contain conflict among revolutionary leaders, but under President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-40) it would become a true mass party, organized top-down and with the ability to mobilize citizens ideologically by incorporating a discourse (and often reality) of popular demands. Though he was Calles' handpicked successor, Cárdenas exiled his mentor and removed most of Calles' allies from his government and from a number of state governorships.[55] He then reorganized the party along sectoral lines, essentially gutting the regional and local structures in favor of four sectors that represented peasants, labor, popular organizations, and the military. Each of these sectors was vertically integrated and responded, at the pinnacle, to presidential leadership. The state and municipal committees remained, but real power negotiations took place now among the sectors and their leaders.[56] "From being a party which sought to mediate among the different factions of the 'revolutionary' group, a party 'of the masses' was being constructed, which would mediate between the state apparatus and the union organizations." Renamed the Mexican Revolutionary Party (PRM, *Partido Revolucionario Mexicano*) in 1938, the party developed a true peasant and labor base and appropriated the discourses of these organized social sectors.[57] Local and regional leaderships continued to exist, but they found a home within the party's sectors.

This discourse was backed up by actions. Cárdenas implemented a far-reaching land reform that distributed over 17 million hectares of land**,** almost two-and-a-half times the

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[55] Meyer, "Un tema anejo," pp. 31-2.
[56] Garrido, *El Partido Revolucionario Institucionalizado*, 293-95.
[57] *Ibid.*, 295.

number of hectares distributed in the first seventeen years of post-revolutionary governments.[58] This both consolidated federal power at the expense of state and municipal leaders—agrarian decisions were the exclusive purview of the federal government—and served to put in practice the demands of peasants who had participated in the revolutionary conflicts. In 1938 Cárdenas took on the foreign oil companies that dominated Mexico's petroleum industry, expropriating their holdings. On the eve of a world war, the United States and United Kingdom, whose companies had dominated the industry, protested but ultimately accepted Mexico's proposed compensation to their companies.   The expropriation served, ideologically, to cement a strong sense of nationalism in the face of years of military and political defeats at the hands of the neighbor to the north. In practical terms, the expropriation also served to bolster the national treasury. Oil would come to provide anywhere from a tenth to a third of federal revenues.[59] Oil became the motor for national development and spurred a rapid increase in the federal government's strength vis-à-vis state and municipal governments.

Buoyed by state resources, with official ties to the state, a social base of support, and a discourse that appropriated demands from organized social groups, the party dominated Mexico's political life for seven decades. Renamed the PRI in 1946 (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional* or Institutional Revolutionary Party), the party won every election for President, governor, and senator (with one exception) between the late 1930s and 1988. The party resorted to fraud in the presidential elections of 1940 and 1988, and

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[58] According to Pablo González Casanova, Cárdenas' administration distributed 17.89 million hectares of land versus the 7.66 million that had been distributed during the previous seven administrations starting in 1917 (*La Democracia en México,* Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1965, p. 294).

[59] See Thomas Dalsgard, "The Tax System in Mexico: The Need for Strengthening the Revenue-Raising Capacity," *Economics Department Working Papers,* No. 233, Paris: OECD, 2000. With rising oil prices, it has hovered around a third in 2004-2005. See "Ingresos Presupuestarios del Sector Público," Mexico: Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, 2005, published at www.hacienda.gob.mx/eofp.

almost certainly in many state and local elections as well; however, it remained the undisputed party of power. The PRI lost a handful of municipal elections in these decades; however, opposition rule was almost always short-lived.[60] The PRI was bound tightly to the federal government. The President was the *de facto* leader of the party, although it had its own nominally separate leadership, and in each state the governor served as *the de facto* party leader as well. Separate from these state leaderships, the party's sectors (which were reduced to three after the elimination of the military sector in 1940[61]) held influence within the party structure. However, the party was created and shaped by the country's presidents and the government ran the party more than the party ran the government.[62] The Revolution built on Porfirio Díaz's method "bread or bludgeon." But while Porfirio's order was based on being friends with the president, the PRI was based on negotiating differences within "the system." "The assumption, which came to be widely shared, was that all individuals or groups could rise—or at least not lose hope of rising—in the social and economic scale, provided they did it amicably *within the system*, not independently outside of it."[63]

The one-party dominant state developed several legal and extralegal mechanisms that ensured upward accountability among the ranks of career politicians. Amendments to the constitution in the 1930s outlawed reelection in all elected positions. This ban of

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[60] The notable opposition governments were León, Guanajuato in 1945 and San Luis Potosí, San Luis Potosí in 1958. However, both opposition victories lasted only one term. In San Luis Potosí the mayor ended up in jail after trying to run for governor; in León, an opposition victory that cost numerous lives, the opposition party divided after the federal government starved the municipality for resources and bought off party sympathizers. See Meyer, "El municipio mexicano," pp. 245-48.
[61] For a history of civil-military relations in Mexico, inside and outside the PRI, see Raúl Benítez Manaut, "Security and Governance: The Urgent Need for State Reform," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew D. Selee, eds., *Mexico's Politics and Society in Transition,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003.
[62] Smith, *Labyrinths of Power,* p. 57.
[63] Krauze, *Biography of Power,* p. 551.

reelection forced politicians to depend continuously on the will of party leaders—and influential patrons higher in the party—to promote them to new positions once their term had ended. This provision served to circulate party elites and instilled greater loyalty to the party than to building a base of support in any one jurisdiction.   Gradually, this party circulation helped undermine local powerholders whose livelihood depended on exclusive control over a jurisdiction. However, it also undermined almost any sense of accountability to constituents among elected officials, since their next job depended less on performance in their public duties than on party loyalty. Similarly, federal and state constitutions allowed the federal Senate to remove governors, as well as for governors or state legislatures to remove mayors.[64] These provisions created powerful incentives for lower levels of government to obey upper levels. Although the Senate removed governors only occasionally, the dependence of lower level officials on those above them for eventual promotion to future political posts meant that higher level officials could almost always demand the resignation of officials below them as needed, even without pursuing the legal channels. Dozens of governors were forced to resign by the President—as were hundreds of mayors by their governors—during the period of PRI dominance. In time, the PRI developed an institutional culture where politicians knew they would be taken care of as long as they stayed within the party and obeyed those more powerful than them, even if it meant periods of sacrifice.

Municipalities thus became small links in the chain of political power. With few defined functions, limited resources, and almost no fiscal powers, they became primarily stepping-stones for aspiring local politicians and conduits for higher levels of government

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[64] Pablo González Casanova reports that in the early 1960s thirteen states had constitutional provisions which allowed governors to remove mayors at will (*Democracia en México,* pp. 37-43.)

to maintain control over local affairs. In some cases, they also served as arenas for

contesting local political differences and generating demands upward through the party

and state leadership. However, a mayor's hope for moving up in politics depended first

and foremost on maintaining control over dissent and, second, on obtaining from the state

or federal government a few funds to carry out projects to benefit his (or, in rare cases,

her) constituents. The internal structures of municipalities reflected the profoundly

authoritarian nature of their design. The mayoral candidates ran for election with a slate

of handpicked candidates for city council. If the PRI candidate won, as he almost always

did, the entire slate of council candidates would be installed in the council.[65] The lack of

political plurality within city councils and the nature of their election on a party list

chosen by the mayor meant that city councils had few real functions and most citizens

knew little about who they were or what they did.

Municipalities had few mechanisms for transparency—which is hardly surprising

in an authoritarian system—however, they did generally have mechanisms for some form

of citizen participation. These often included neighborhood committees and sometimes

citywide assemblies for discussing public issues. It is impossible to generalize about how

the over two thousand municipalities functioned, but certainly in medium and large cities,

these mechanisms were generally tied to the PRI and used both as channels to sense

citizens' preferences and mobilize them for electoral purposes. As a result, these

mechanisms operated through clientelistic channels as did most other aspects of the

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[65] It is unclear when state constitutions changed to include a single winning slate. In the early period after the Revolution, candidates often ran individually, with or without a party, and the council picked the mayor from among their number As will be discussed below, opposition candidates were allowed to win seats on some city councils starting in 1977.   Blanca Acedo, "Los sistemas electorales municipales en México: la incorporación del principio de representación proporcional," in Jacqueline Martínez Uriarte and Alberto Díaz Cayeros, eds., *De la descentralización al federalismo: estudios comparados sobre el gobierno local en México,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa and CIDAC, 2003, pp. 281-86.

political system. They contained few opportunities for public deliberation and were, rather, means for mobilizing political support.

4.7 Corporatism, Clientelism, and Contestation

The creation and consolidation of the PRI as the party of power, together with the centralization of government functions and resources, successfully substituted the centrifugal forces of regional powerholders with a functional structure for negotiating differences among political actors. Whereas the central state in the nineteenth century—and again immediately after the Revolution—had depended on alliances with regional *caudillos* and *caciques* for its survival, the PRI/state depended on a complex network of political elites who were tied together by their common loyalty to the party. The circulation of elites, promoted by the PRI, partially de-linked political elites from control over geographical regions; however, this was only partial and most states continued to have important political groups, built often around specific families that dominated politics for years.[66] As Pablo González Casanova has indicated, "all the processes for concentrating presidential power have in their origin, as one of their functions, the control of the *caciques*—of their parties, their followers, their mayors—a phenomenon that does not imply, except indirectly, the disappearance of the caciques."[67] The way the party related to society remained rooted in the structures of politics of the nineteenth century, with greater access perhaps for new voices and more mobility among party leaders.

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[66] See, for example, the case of the Figueroa family in Guerrero discussed in Chapter 8 or the Grupo Atlacomulco discussed in Chapter 7.
[67] González Casanova, *Democracia en México,* p. 48.

Although all citizens could participate in elections, they had little ability to decide who was elected. Candidates were selected from above in the political hierarchy and the PRI candidates ensured of victory. Although indirect elections had been abolished, citizens still participated in electoral decisions only indirectly.

The PRI became a vehicle for a series of patronage networks that mediated between citizens and the state. This helped channel collection action towards ends that were localized and fragmented.[68] In the nineteenth century, patronage networks had been closely tied to individual leaders who maintained a tight grip on local politics within their domain. Under the PRI, the circulation of leaders meant that individual leaders were more constrained, but party organizations and networks of politicians became increasingly important. Within the PRI, local organizations—whether municipal party committees, neighborhood organizations, or union locals—were linked upward into ever larger second- and third-tier organizations that ultimately were part of one of the party's sectors. Clientelism, the unequal exchange of political support for public benefits, linked citizens to particular organizations and to their leaders at the local level. Corporatism within the national and state PRI linked these organizations within vertical party hierarchies.

Political hegemony is never complete, however, and the dominance of the PRI as a single national party masked considerable contestation and negotiation taking place in Mexico. Clientelism was a top-down relationship to control dissent, but also a bottom-up relationship that gave citizens regular channels to negotiate demands and express preferences. Although municipal governments and PRI-affiliated organizations were

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[68] Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew D. Selee, "Introduction," in Tulchin and Selee, eds., *Mexico's Politics and Society in Transition,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003, p. 8.

ultimately controlled from above, they also served as sites for struggle and the constant renegotiation of power relationships.[69] Political leaders fought against each other for control of municipal governments and of PRI-affiliated social organizations. Citizens used party structures to mobilize around key demands and needs. The PRI succeeded largely because it was a party that was capable of responding to and incorporating demands and discourses from below. Citizens and local politicians had to negotiate demands in an unequal context, in which state and party hierarchies had the last word; however, the party was sufficiently flexible to contain large-scale social discontent for decades in large part because it tolerated dissent and contestation within its ranks and was able to incorporate—and co-opt—citizen demands and discourses. The hegemony of the official party (and of the state) was constantly negotiated at local, regional, and national levels.[70]

Contestation also took place outside the party, and the PRI/state allowed for a degree of non-official opposition. The National Action Party (PAN), founded in 1946, provided a right-of-center alternative to the PRI in many municipalities (and the federal district) and had an important support base among the middle class. The PAN won a number of municipalities from its creation through the 1970s, including two state capitals (Mérida, Yucatán and Hermosillo, Sonora) in the 1968 elections.[71] It provided an ongoing challenge to the PRI in several states, especially Baja California, Chihuahua, and

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[69] On this point, see Mallon, *Peasant and State;* Mary Kay Vaughan, "Cultural Approaches to Peasant Politics in the Mexican Revolution," *Hispanic American Historical Review,* Volume 79, No. 2, May 1999, pp. 269-305; Rubin, *Decentering the Regime*; and Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994.

[70] For concrete examples, see the discussion of local contestation in Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

[71] The PAN won one municipality in the 1940s, 14 in the 1950s, 20 in the 1960s, and 32 in the 1970s, out of a total of more than 2,000 municipalities throughout this period. Acedo, "El sistema politico municipal en México."

Guanajuato, as well as in the Federal District.[72] Two other small "parastatal" parties, the

Popular Socialist Party (PPS) and the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution

(PARM), also provided a loyal opposition that gave a façade of democratic competition

and occasionally provided a real vehicle for dissent. Mexican leaders were mindful of

the importance of the appearance of opposition outside the official party, and its utility

for creating an escape valve for social conflict. In 1977, following a period of increasing

social conflict, the federal government recognized the long-outlawed Communist Party

(PCM). At the same time, a constitutional change required all municipalities of over

300,000 inhabitants to include opposition members in their city councils through seats

assigned to "proportional representation." This reform, incorporated into state

constitutions as the decade closed, greatly expanded the presence of opposition parties in

the councils of major cities.[73] The constitutional change also increased the number of

seats assigned to opposition parties in the federal congress.

A great deal of contestation took place outside of the party system as well. Local

social movements developed frequently around specific demands that were not met by

political leaders.[74] The official party was often able to co-opt leaders of social

movements and often the whole movement itself.[75] The economy was growing at a

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[72] Chapter 6 describes the active presence of the PAN in Baja California, where the party almost certainly won the 1968 municipal elections in Tijuana and the state capital Mexicali, and consistently presented an electoral alternative to the PRI.

[73] I discuss this reform further in Chapter 5.

[74] See the discussions of the Residents' Restoration Movement (MRC) and several smaller movements in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in Chapter 8; of CUCUTAC in Tijuana in Chapter 7; and of the Urban Popular Movement in Chilpancingo in Chapter 6.

[75] See, for example, the history of the Residents' Restoration Movement (MRC) in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl described in Chapter 8. Cf. Alan Knight, "Weapons and Arches in the Mexican Revolutionary Landscape," in Gilbert Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994.

dramatic pace,[76] which allowed government leaders a certain margin to incorporate

strongly pressed demands. Larger social movements, that defied government co-

optation, developed from time-to-time. On a national level, these included the teachers'

strike of 1956 and the railroad strike of 1958, the doctors' strike of 1965, and the student

movement of 1968.[77] Each of these larger social movements was ultimately repressed

violently as it began to challenge state policy and include demands for democratic

opening. However, other smaller movements maintained a degree of autonomy by not

fully challenging the authority of the state and making more modest claims for

democracy. Several smaller left-wing political movements particularly developed along

these lines, working quietly but assiduously around local and regional demands while

avoiding full-scale confrontation with the state. In chapters 6-8 several of these

movements are discussed, including a broad-based social movement in Ciudad

Nezahualcóyotl over the fair price for land; a statewide civic movement against the

governor of Guerrero in 1960, which detonated a series of local struggles throughout the

state; and various struggles around land and fair elections in Baja California.

In the 1970s, with the dramatic explosion of major cities, an Urban Popular

Movement (MUP) developed in cities throughout Mexico (as elsewhere in Latin

America). The MUP was made up of organizations in cities throughout Mexico that

would come together to form national umbrella organizations at the end of the 1970s and

beginning of the 1980s. These organizations mixed concrete demands for land titles and

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[76] The economy grew 7.0% annually in the 1950s, 8.6% annually in the 1960s, and 7.2% annually between 1970-75. Nora Lustig, *Mexico: Mexico: The Remaking of an Economy,* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1998, p. 15.

[77] As will be discussed in Chapter 8, there were also significant regional armed movements in Mexico, especially in the state of Guerrero. There was one significant armed rebellion in the state of Morelos in the 1950s, under Rubén Jaramillo, but the most important guerrilla movements would emerge in Guerrero at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s.

basic services (electricity, water, sewage) with political demands for democracy. Though

sometimes co-opted and occasionally repressed, the movement became one of the most

sustained challenges to the hegemony of the PRI outside the party in the 1970s and

1980s, but it avoided full-scale repression in large part because it was willing to negotiate

with the government around its concrete demands

The Mexican state and the PRI preferred to co-opt when they could and adapt when

necessary. They tolerated considerable contestation on specific decisions related to

resource allocation, but they did not tolerate challenges to their overall power, the basic

outlines of the political system, or major national policy questions considered of vital

national importance.[78] As Stevens has noted:

> Some groups have been permitted to express dissent from the choices of
> national goals, but this dissent is quarantined so that the disagreement is
> prevented from spreading. This behavior provides the elite with
> information concerning the effect of its policies while at the same time it
> places that kind of information beyond the reach of the bulk of the
> citizenry.[79]

Similarly, the press was allowed to report widely on events in the country as long as it

did not challenge the basic contours of national policy or the interests of key political

leaders. Only one television station existed nationally and it had a close alliance with the

governing PRI. Newspapers and radio stations, both those with a national coverage and

more local media organizations, depended almost invariably on government advertising

for their economic survival.[80] There were a handful of exceptions in large markets where

media could be self-sustaining without government advertising, but these were extremely

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[78] Tulchin and Selee, "Introduction," p. 9.
[79] Evelyn P. Stevens, *Protest and Response in Mexico,* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1974, p. 12.
[80] Chappell Lawson, *Building the Fourth Estate: Democratization and the Rise of a Free Press in Mexico,* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

few and far between.[81] Almost all media—and especially those outside of Mexico City—maintained a cautious approach to criticizing the government and prominent officials of the governing party. The press had to constantly balance their desire to write attractive, cutting-edge stories that exposed the workings of politics with their financial dependence on government resources. This control largely limited their ability to pursue independent journalism.

The PRI was able to periodically expand the contours of the political system to incorporate new demands, new groups, and new kinds of press coverage, and it even to allow a loyal opposition to exist as long as it played by the overall rules of the system. For a country with a recent memory of war, this system provided stability and an institutional means for resolving conflict peacefully. For a country going through rapid growth, it provided mechanisms for sharing the benefits of economic expansion among those involved in politics. For the poor, it provided a small measure of security and even influence in politics, although it was mediated by clientelistic channels. For those inspired by the discourse of the Revolution, it provided an embodiment of the principles of the period's major heroes, if not necessarily the substance of their aspirations. What Mexico's political system could not provide was a more democratic relationship between citizens and the state or an equitable process for national growth and development.

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[81] Notable exceptions were *Excelsior,* in the mid-1970s, which the government was eventually able to control; *Unomasuno* in Mexico City; and *El Norte* in the industrial capital of Monterrey. In the early 1980s the former editor of *Excelsior* would start an independent weekly, *Proceso;* another journalist would launch a daily *La Jornada;* and two journalists in Tijuana would start a northern border weekly*, Zeta.*

4.8 Centralized State, Weak State

The Mexican state by 1980 was extremely centralized, even in comparison to other countries in the western hemisphere and Europe (see Figure 4.3). Not only were fiscal powers and resources concentrated at the federal level, but the federal government had the ability to intervene directly to remove governors, and state governments could do the same with municipal mayors. The federal government also had developed an impressive arsenal of tools to direct and control private enterprise, although the country maintained an important number of strong private sectors enterprises (especially in the north of the country) that were never completely subject to government control. Nonetheless, at the close of the 1970s, nine of the largest ten businesses, thirteen of the largest twenty-five, and sixteen of the largest fifty were partially or completely run by the federal government.[82] Through the Bank of Mexico and other smaller banks, the federal government ensured the dependence of most small and medium-sized businesses on government loans.

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[82] Smith, *Labyrinths of Power,* p. 59.

Figure 4.3: Subnational Expenditures as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditures, Selected Countries, 1980
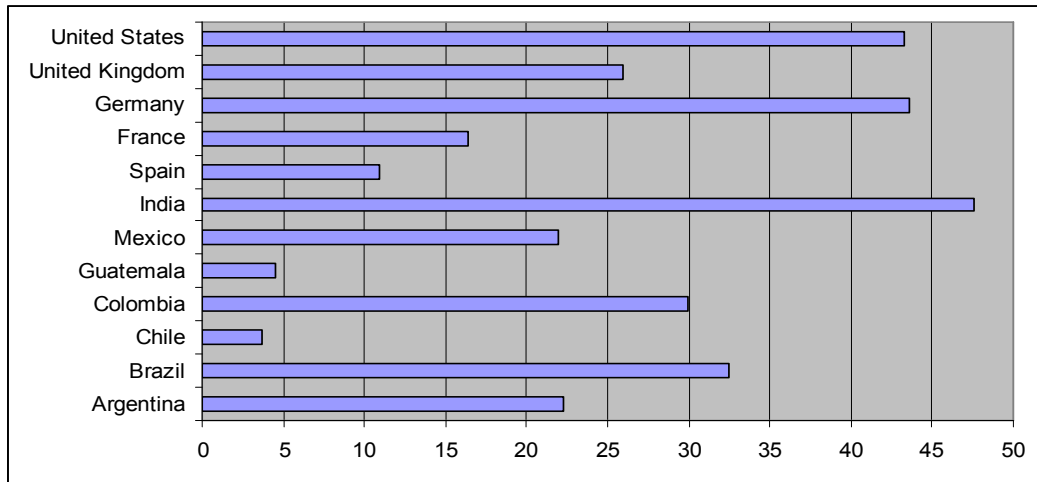
Note: The World Bank data do not include parastatal companies. If these were included, the figure for Mexico's subnational expenditures in 1980 would be around 10.5% (see Figure 4.1), given the weight that Pemex, the national oil company, had within the federal public sector.
Source: World Bank, Subnational Fiscal Indicators, available at:
http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization/fiscalindicators.htm

These formal measures of centralization were only part of the story, however.

The most important means for central control had come from the creation of the PRI as vertically integrated official party. The PRI had become the most important vehicle for ensuring central control over political decision-making and for creating hierarchical channels to resolve disputes among competing political elites. However, the creation of the PRI also required the central government to cede power to informal arrangements among political powerholders. The formal centralization of the state thus contrasted sharply with the continued existence of multiple centers of informal power built on interpersonal bargains and clientelistic networks. Political elites had to swear ultimate allegiance to the party (and, therefore, the hierarchy of the state), but in return they received a certain degree of discretion to manage their own networks of power relationships as they saw fit.

The result of this apparent paradox—an omnipresent centralized government and a pervasive system of informal power—was a state that could channel major conflicts but

was constantly undermined in its efforts to regulate economic activity, provide services, and ensure the rule of law.[83] Central government revenue as a percentage of GDP grew only slowly (Figure 4.4) and noticeably more slowly in Mexico than in a number of other countries in the Western Hemisphere and Europe, so that by 1980 Mexico lagged behind much of Latin America in central government revenue and expenditures as a percentage of GDP (Figures 4.5 and 4.6) despite the ongoing perception of the Mexican state as one of the strongest in Latin America.[84] Moreover, the nature of the bargains within the party necessarily meant a deficient state capacity to enforce the rule of law or create genuinely democratic institutions. As a result, civil and political citizenship, which had been formally universal since independence, was exercised and constantly renegotiated through informal practices of intermediation and clientelism. Even in 1980, as in 1880 and in 1780, citizenship remained somewhat indirect, legally extended to all, yet constantly renegotiated in the interactions between citizens and a range of intermediaries who could mediate between citizens' demands and limited state resources.

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[83] Cf. Migdal, *Strong Society, Weak State.*
[84] Indeed, if we were to factor in the weight of subnational governments in other countries (they had noticeably more revenue capacity in Brazil and the United States by 1980, for example), the gap in public sector revenue would be even more noticeable. According to World Bank statistics, for example, subnational governments accounted for a quarter (25%) of Brazil's public revenues in 1980 and over a third (34%) of the United States' revenues. It is worth noting that Mexico and the United States had roughly the same size government's (compared to GDP) in both 1910 and 1940, but that the U.S. public sector grew rapidly after World War II while Mexico's grew only modestly. For the subnational revenue shares, see World Bank, "Fiscal Decentralization Indicators," available on the WB decentralization website: http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/decentralization.

Figure 4.4: Federal Tax Revenue as a Percentage of GDP
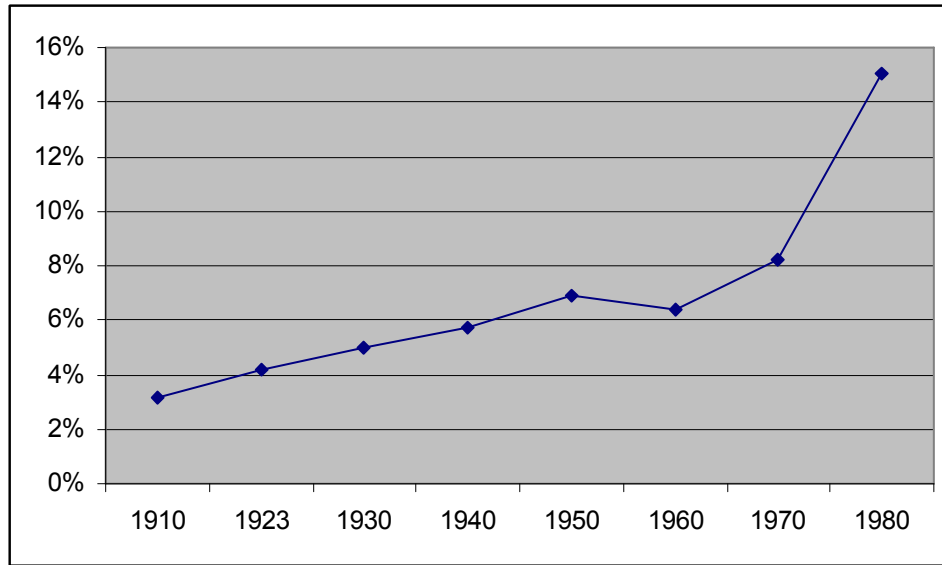
Source: Aboites, *Excepciones y Privilegios,* pp. 396-99, for 1910-1970; for 1980, International Monetary Fund, "International Financial Statistics," dataset available at www.ifs.apdi.net/imf.

Figure 4.5: Central Government Tax Revenues as a Percentage of GDP, Selected Countries, 1910-1980

	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1970	1980
Mexico	3.10%	4.20%	5.00%	5.70%	6.90%	8.30%	15.08%
Brazil		8.90%		9.80%	15.70%		22.28%
Argentina		7.20%		9.00%	18.10%		
United States	1.70%		3.60%	5.70%	13.60%	19.80%	19.11%
Spain	8.30%	5.70%	9.80%	9.30%	7.80%	11.50%	13.74%
Italy	12.10%		16.60%	17.70%	18.50%	20.30%	23.02%
France	10.70%	13.70%	17.80%	17.40%	25.50%	29.20%	38.61%
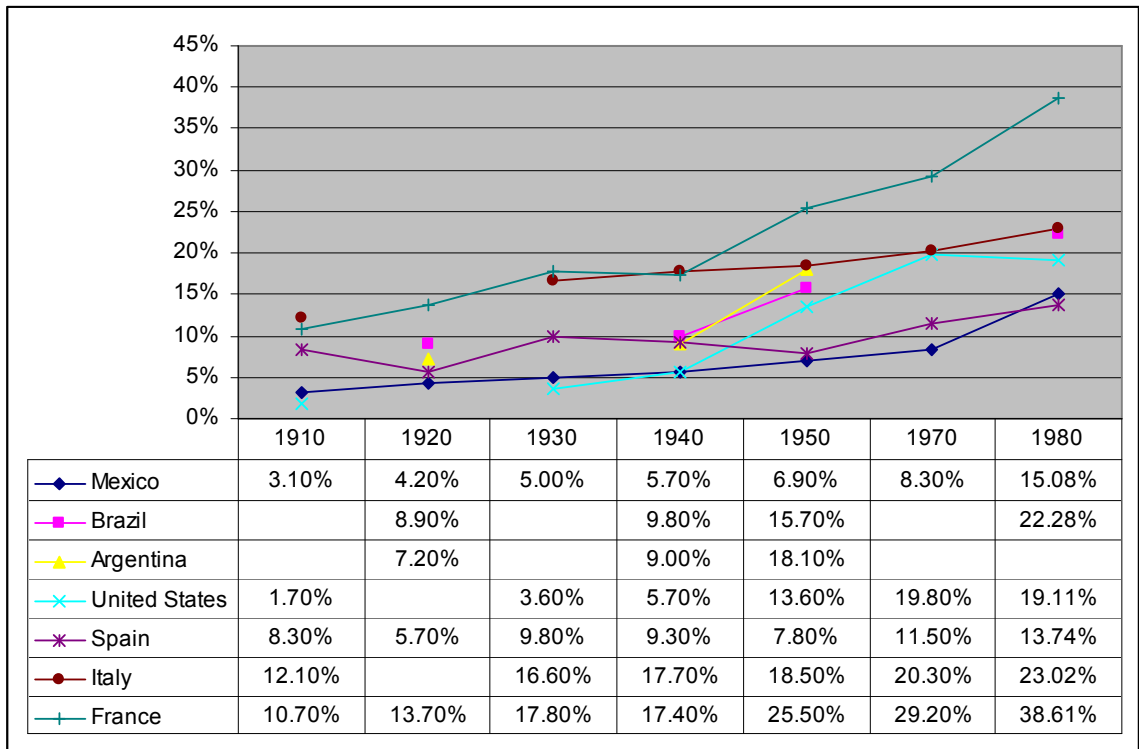
Source: Aboites, *Excepciones y Privilegios,* p. 397, for 1910-1970; for 1980, International Monetary Fund, "International Financial Statistics," dataset available at www.ifs.apdi.net/imf.

Figure 4.6: Central Government Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP, Selected Countries, 1980
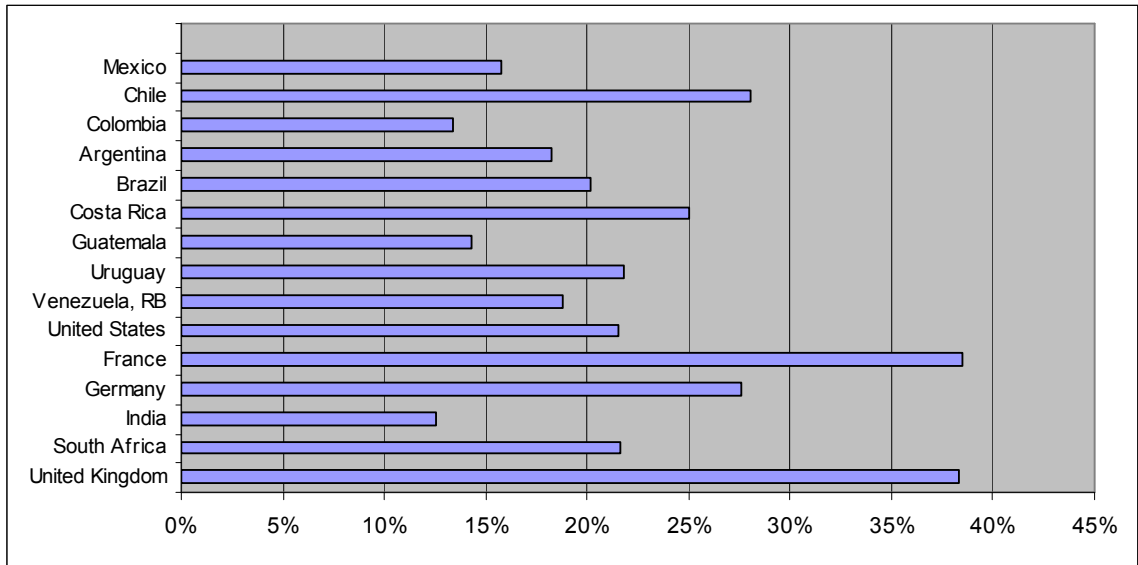
Note: These figures refer only to central government expenditures independent of publicly held corporations. If we were to add in Pemex, the government-owned oil company, the figure for Mexico would increase dramatically for 1980.
Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2004, available on CD-Rom.

4.9 Conclusions

In the terms that we used in Chapter 2 and 3 to lay out the theoretical framework of this project, the Mexican state was highly centralized by 1980, that is, municipal governments (and states too) had limited *authority* and even less *autonomy*. Individual political leaders, who were influential within the PRI, might succeed in obtaining resources for local needs and even creating a margin of maneuver for making decisions, but these were isolated cases. The institutional framework afforded municipalities few functions, powers, or resources of their own, and the political system ensured that mayors were loyal to higher authorities within the state and the party. The country was officially a federation but in practice functions, powers, and resources were concentrated overwhelmingly in the federal government at the expense of states and especially

municipalities.

Similarly, the structure of municipalities was designed to ensure the dominance of the official party and the frequent circulation of politicians through different public posts. Therefore, terms for mayor and city council were short with no reelection allowed; the winning party (almost always the PRI) won all seats in the city council and the occupants of these seats were chosen by party list, which gave control over the council to the party bureaucracy or the incoming mayor. No independent candidates could run. This institutional design did little to ensure *representation*, but it served the ends of a one-party dominant state well. Given single party dominance, *transparency* was limited—largely dependent on what the mayor chose to tell his or her constituents. Political institutions were thus formally democratic, but they were designed to ensure the accountability of local officials upwards to higher-level officials in the party or the government.

Similarly, citizen *participation* in municipal affairs, though frequent, was mediated through clientelistic channels and permitted little citizen engagement in deliberation about public affairs. In fact, the entire political system was predicated on a series of patronage networks that mediated between citizens and their elected authorities. The intermediaries at the center of these patronage networks—union leaders, community representatives, and local party officials—served both as agents of political mobilization for those above them in the party hierarchy and as brokers for the demands and needs of their constituents below them. Independent political parties and social organizations fought for demands of specific sectors of society—often workers, farmers, or neighborhoods—but they had to walk a fine line to avoid repression. Similarly, the

media, though nominally independent, depended on their relationship with government officials, who provided most of the advertising revenue as well as direct subsidies, so reporters had to tread cautiously to avoid anything that might be deemed offensive to those in power. Overall, few spaces of truly autonomous organization existed outside the official party though considerable contestation took place within it. The dominant structure of power was built around a vertically integrated system of political intermediaries who belonged to a single political party and owed their loyalty upward to party leaders. Within this system, political rights were nominally extensive, but the effectiveness of their exercise was sharply restricted. Everyone could vote, but true power was not exercised at the ballot box but through the chain of political brokers who linked citizens with the government and its decision-makers.

Chapter 5
Decentralization and Democratic Transition (1980-2005)

5.1 Authoritarian Legacies and Political Change

In the late 1970s Mexico's central government lived through its most glorious period.
High world oil prices coupled with the discovery of new oil reserves in the Gulf of
Mexico created an influx of revenue into government coffers, supplemented by extensive
loans from foreign banks. During this period the federal government negotiated a fiscal
pact with the states in which they ceded most of their fiscal powers in 1980 to the federal
government in return for increased revenue transfers. In 1977, the federal congress had
passed a law, at the insistence of the President, which expanded proportional
representation in congress (to a quarter of all seats) and created, for the first time,
proportional representation seats in municipal city councils in all municipalities over
300,000.[1] A successful government awash in dollars could afford to be generous with the
opposition and, in passing, shore up its own legitimacy in the eyes of the public.
However, this period of abundance proved short-lived. In 1982, a worldwide recession,
declining oil prices, and soaring interest rates sent the Mexican economy into a tailspin.[2]
Debt spiraled out of control, growth stagnated, inflation climbed, and President José
López Portillo was forced to devalue the peso in his final days in office. The Mexican

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[1] This initiative was the brainchild of legendary PRI politician and intellectual Jesús Reyes Heroles, who at
the time was serving as Secretary of the Interior (*Gobernación*). The idea was to ensure the legitimacy of
the political system at a time when political competition had diminished. The reform also legalized new
political parties, including the long-restricted Communist Party. See Enrique Ochoa Reza, "Multiple
Arenas of Struggle: Federalism and Mexico's Transition to Democracy," in Edward L Gibson, ed.,
Federalism and Democracy in Latin America, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.
[2] Nora Lustig, *Mexico: Remaking of an Economy,* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1998.

economy continued in crisis for most of the next fifteen years (until 1997), with only a brief period of growth from 1990 to 1994.

The federal government faced a loss of public confidence. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s it would gradually devolve powers, functions, and resources to municipal and state governments. Initially it did this in order to divert political conflict from the national stage to the local arena. However, as opposition political parties gained a foothold in subnational governments, they bargained for further decentralization reforms to shore up their own base of support. Decentralization became one of the many reforms that opposition parties pushed in driving for democratic reform over the ensuing years. Decentralization thus served both to open up political space in Mexico's authoritarian regime and was a product of that opening.

Despite the mutually reinforcing relationship between decentralization and democratization in Mexico, neither opposition parties nor the federal government paid attention to reforms that would democratize local governments themselves. Both saw local governments in instrumental terms. For opposition parties, local governments were the bastion from which they could pry open the authoritarian system and ultimately take over national power. For the federal government, local governments presented an opportunity to redirect political dissent away from the national capital. While some local mayors took individual initiatives to democratize municipal institutions, elected leaders as a whole paid little attention to this possibility. Once opposition parties achieved their ultimate goal—creating a competitive electoral system and eventually ousting the PRI from power—they similarly neglected reforms to democratize the local arena. As a consequence, Mexico's municipal governments continue to live with an institutional

structure that was created to serve largely authoritarian purposes. The structure of

Mexican municipalities was developed to privilege single-party rule with limited public

oversight; however, with only minor adjustments, all of the major political parties have

learned how to benefit from the status quo even in a competitive political environment.

5.2 Mexico's Democratic Transition

In many countries of Latin America, democratic transitions came about through

the collapse of a military order (Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Bolivia, and Brazil[3]) or

negotiated peace processes (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua). In a few cases,

"limited democracies," which had elections but largely restricted competition to two

political parties, were liberalized by sudden crises of legitimacy (Venezuela and

Colombia).[4] Mexico, however, underwent a protracted democratic transition that

involved a series of iterative negotiations among key political parties driven by periods of

social mobilization and periodic crises of legitimacy. The negotiations set the electoral

rules and institutions in ways increasingly favorable to competition, and they determined

the powers, function, and resources of subnational governments in ways that gradually

broadened the impact of political plurality at a subnational level. The gradual, negotiated

nature of the transition helped ensure stability, created a strong party system, and

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[3] The Brazilian and Chilean militaries were able to negotiate the end of their rule, however.
[4] On democratic transitions, see the landmark study by Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Lawrence Whitehead, eds., *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986; and a more recent compilation which reviews the literature on transitions in Latin America, Felipe Aguero and Jeffrey Stark, eds., *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

generated a degree of legitimacy for the changes. However, this same process also meant that non-party actors, though influential in pushing for democratic changes, had little impact in the final decision-making.   The bargains that created Mexico's democratic system were agreements among party elites who sought to preserve a monopoly on political influence for themselves within the new political regime.

Even in the times of greatest single-party dominance, considerable political contestation did take place in Mexico. Much of it took place within the official party, but there were also always political parties and civic organizations that operated outside the official party (see Chapter 4). For the most part, however, the PRI enjoyed a certain degree of legitimacy in the eyes of the Mexican public and in an expanding economy it had powerful tools to reward its followers and punish those few opponents who presented a serious challenge. With the economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, the PRI lost much of its legitimacy in the eyes of important segments of the Mexican public. It also found it hard to "share the wealth" with its followers, as it had traditionally done, at a time when federal government revenues were contracting.[5] Moreover, the PRI was forced to turn to technocratic members of the party, generally economists trained abroad, to pull the country out of the economic crisis, alienating many of the career politicians who had dominated party leadership in the past, including most elected offices and the cabinet.[6] The dominant party began to show fissures and the public became more skeptical about its performance.[7]

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[5] Government spending fell 6.9% between 1983 to 1988, then remained constant as a percentage of GDP until 1996. Lustig, *Mexico: Remaking of an Economy,* p. 80-81, 211.

[6] See Miguel Angel Centeno, *Democracy Within Reason: Mexico's Technocratic Revolution,* second edition, University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1997.

[7] For a more extensive analysis of Mexico's democratic transition, see Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew D. Selee, "Introduction," in Tulchin and Selee, eds., *Mexico's Politics and Society in Transition,* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003 and Roderic Ai. Camp, *Politics in Mexico: The Democratic Transformation,* fourth

The PAN was the first beneficiary of the shift in public opinion. In the elections

of 1983, the PAN won around thirty cities, including the state capitals of Chihuahua,

Durango, Sonora, and San Luis Potosí, plus the major border city Ciudad Juárez.[8] The

party went on to compete actively in the state election in Chihuahua in 1986, although the

PAN's apparent victory in the gubernatorial race was not recognized. In 1989, the PAN

had its first major breakthrough, winning the city of Tijuana, with nearly a million

inhabitants, and the governorship of the state of Baja California, where Tijuana is located.

The PAN would win Tijuana four more times in the 1990s and consolidate its hold on the

state governorship as well. In 1992, the PAN won its second governorship, in

Chihuahua, and by 1997 the PAN controlled a majority of large cities in the country.[9]

The PAN consciously followed a "municipalist" strategy, identifying cities as their

strongest bastion of support and building slowly towards national influence. The party

was also willing to bargain with the PRI at key times, giving it some ability to negotiate

demands for strengthened local government in return for supporting the PRI's national

policies.[10]

The Mexican left followed a different path. Traditionally divided among several

smaller political organizations, the left began a process of unification after 1985, creating

first the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico and then the Mexican Socialist Party. The left

had some success at winning small municipalities starting with Juchitán, Oaxaca in

edition, Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press, 2003.

[8] For an analysis of the 1983 elections see Carlos Martínez Assad, ed., *Municipios en Conflicto,* Mexico: UNAM, 1985.

[9] Author's calculations based on the data cited in Figure 5.5. By 1997, the PAN governed 18 of the country's 26 large cities (those that had over 500,000 inhabitants in the 2000 census).

[10] On the PAN, see Yemile Mizrahi, *From Martyrdom to Power,* South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University, Press, 2003.

1981.[11] However, its great opportunity came in 1987-88, when Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, son of Mexico's most revered post-revolutionary president, decided to leave the PRI after failing to get the party to democratize its own internal selection process. Cárdenas launched a campaign for president with the backing of the left and a few other small parties, and many PRI leaders throughout the country supported his campaign. Cárdenas may well have won the vote, but he was officially credited with 31% of the vote against 51% for the PRI's candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Cárdenas' followers and the Mexican Socialist Party together formed a new party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), in 1989, but the party struggled for several years winning no more than a few smaller towns.[12] The party's major breakthroughs finally came with a victory in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, a large city on the outskirts of Mexico City, in 1996, and then in Mexico City itself in 1997 (with Cárdenas as mayoral candidate). In congressional elections that year, the PRD also narrowly edged out the PAN to become the largest opposition party in Congress.

Civil society organizations grew steadily in this period as well. Traditionally Mexico had had few independent social organizations that were not linked to the PRI, and the few exceptions almost invariably were tied to the Catholic Church or to one of the small left political parties, who could provide a measure of protection.[13] However,

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[11] This was a victory for an alliance between the Communist Party (PCM) and a local social movement, the COCEI. However, the COCEI/PCM government was suspended in 1984 before it could finish its term. The COCEI would win Juchitán again in 1990, in alliance with the PRD, and repeat several times after that. See Jeffrey Rubin, *Decentering the Regime.*

[12] The difficulties arose both from the challenges of creating party unity in a new organization that brought together different political cultures (both the historical left and PRI dissidents) and from the resistance of the government, which went out of its way to harass the party at every turn. See Kathleen Bruhn, *Taking on Goliath : the emergence of a new left party and the struggle for democracy in Mexico,* University Park : Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

[13] Miguel Concha Malo, *La Participación de los cristianos en el proceso popular de liberación en México, 1968-1983,* Mexico City: Editorial Siglo XXI, 1986.

the crises of the 1980s generated a growth of independent social organizations, many of

them dedicated to development concerns. Of particular importance was the growth of the

Urban Popular Movement (MUP, for the initials in Spanish), which brought together

coalitions of neighborhood organizations representing poor communities throughout the

country. The MUP had different national structures over the years, but within cities the

urban organizations representing the poor often became quite combative around issues of

land tenure and basic services and helped shape municipal policies.[14] In the early 1990s,

a series of organizations pushing for more democracy emerged. The most important of

these, Alianza Cívica (Civic Alliance), brought together hundreds of smaller associations

throughout the country to lobby for free and fair elections. With considerable support

from the international community, Alianza Cívica succeeded in mobilizing over 30,000

people to monitor the 1994 presidential elections to prevent fraud.[15] An armed

movement that emerged publicly in the same year, the Zapatista National Liberation

Army, also played a role in the struggle for political liberalization. The emergence of the

Zapatistas, a mostly indigenous rebel army in the southern state of Chiapas, galvanized

civic mobilization around their demands for democracy and indigenous rights, and forced

the government to move quickly on planned electoral reforms in that year.[16] Quite

significantly, the national press, which had largely been beholden to the federal

government for advertising dollars and "supplemental income" under the table, gradually

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[14] José Manuel Valenzuela Arce, *Empapados de Sereno: El Movimiento Urbano Popular en Baja California,* Tijuana: Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 1991.

[15] Tulchin and Selee, "Introduction."

[16] It should be noted that the Zapatistas are not necessarily a very democratic movement internally, and they have generally asked their members to abstain in local and national elections; but their demand for democracy found an important echo in other sectors of Mexican society. On the conflict in Chiapas, see Neil Harvey, *The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998; and Cynthia J. Arnson, Raúl Benítez Manaut, and Andrew Selee, eds., *Chiapas: los desafíos de la paz y la negociación,* Mexico City: UNAM, 2003; and Arnson, Benítez, and Selee, "Frozen Negotiations: The Peace Process in Chiapas," *Mexican Studies,* Vol. 22, No. 1, forthcoming February 2006.

broke free of this dependence and developed a more independent posture.[17]

Figure 5.1: Official Presidential Election Results, 1964-2000

	1964	1970	1976	1982	1988	1994	2000
PRI	87.8%	84.4%	92.8%	71.6%	51.2%	50.6%	36.1%
PAN	11.0%	14.0%	0.0%	16.4%	17.0%	26.9%	42.5%
PRD/left*				3.7%	30.9%	17.2%	16.6%
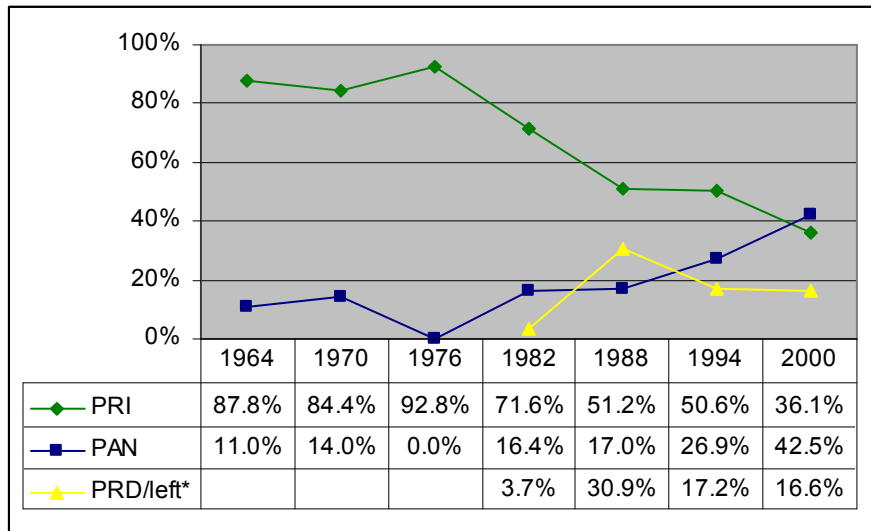
Figure 5.2 Congressional Elections (lower house), 1982-2003

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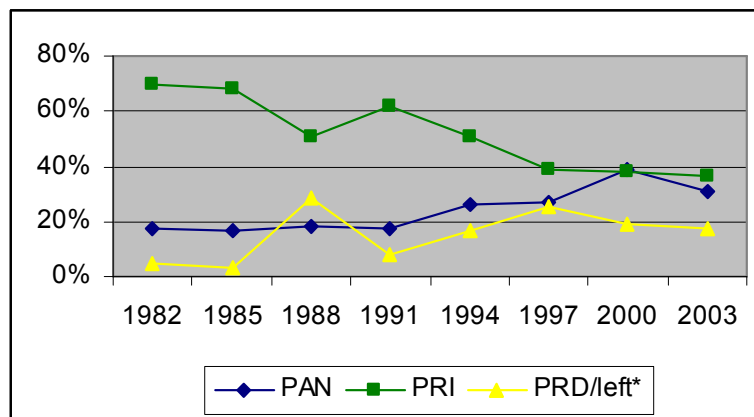
[17] Not all media did this at the same speed or to the same extent, of course. But important independent media voices, especially in print media, developed during the 1980s. These included *La Jornada* and *Proceso* in Mexico City and *El Norte,* which had begun even earlier, in Monterrey. *El Norte* later gave birth to *Reforma* in Mexico City in the 1994. On these changes, see Lawson, *Building the Fourth Estate*.

Figure 5.3: Congressional Seats by Political Party (lower house), 1982-2003
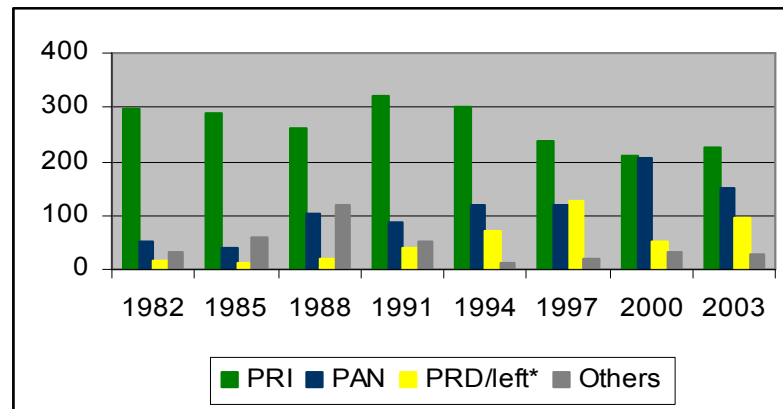
Note for all three graphs: PRD/left is PRD in 1994 and 2000; Frente Democrático Nacional (FDN) in 1988; Partido Socialista Unificado de México (PSUM) in 1985; and the Mexican Communist Party (PCM) in 1982. In some years the three major parties entered elections in coalitions with small parties; however, the results reported here reflect all votes as in favor of the major parties. Percentages do not add to 100% because data presented on electoral results exclude smaller parties and blank votes.
Source for all three graphs: CIDAC, "Base de Datos de Elecciones Federales," available at www.cidac.org, and Instituto Federal Electoral, "Estadísticas de las Elecciones Federales de México 2003," available at www.ife.org.mx, both consulted June 17, 2005

Throughout the period after 1982 opposition political parties grew in electoral strength (see Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3) and increasingly conquered municipal and state elections (see Figures 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6). The pressure of both the opposition parties and civil society organizations forced the federal government to pass increasingly more effective electoral laws as well. In 1990, the Federal Electoral Institute was created as an autonomous body to run elections. Though still largely controlled by the Ministry of the Interior, it was no longer located within the ministry itself. In 1994 it incorporated citizen counselors for the first time, and in 1996 became a fully autonomous institution run by seven citizen counselors selected by a two-thirds majority in the congress. The conditions were now set for clean and fair elections. Most states followed suit, setting up autonomous electoral institutions with differing degrees of credibility.[18] By the mid-

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[18] See Jacqueline Peschard, "Instituciones electorales estatales," unpublished manuscript presented at the Woodrow Wilson Center, March 2005.

1990s, the country reached a "tipping point," where citizens voted as often for opposition parties as for the PRI in municipal elections.[19] Indeed by 1997, almost half (49.9%) of citizens lived in municipalities ruled by opposition governments.[20] Also in 1997 the PRI lost the federal congress for the first time.[21] Opposition parties maintained their strong foothold in municipal elections thereafter, and in 2000, a charismatic PAN candidate, Vicente Fox, swept the PRI out of office for the first time in 71 years, winning 42.5-36.1% over the PRI's candidate.

Figure 5.4: Number of Governors by Political Party, 1980-2000

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
PRD																		1	3	4	6
PAN										1	1	2	3	3	3	4	4	6	6	7	9
PRI	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	31	30	30	29	28	28	28	27	27	25	23	21	17
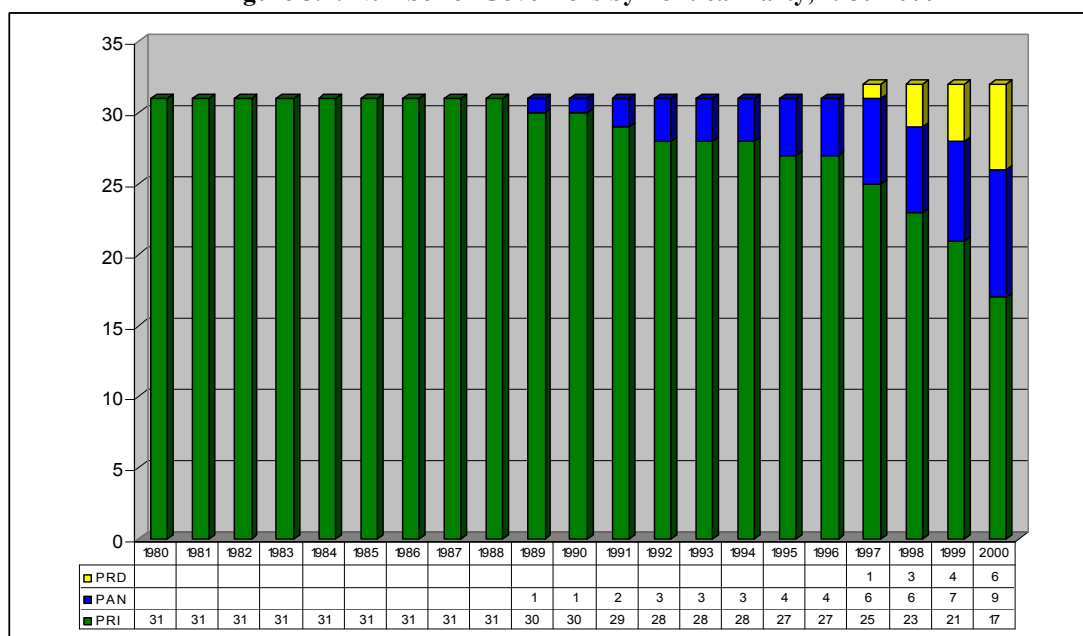
Note: Mexico City is counted as a state beginning in 1997 when elections for its "Chief of Government" were first allowed. Coalitions of the PAN and PRD are added to one party or the other: The governors of Nayarit (1999-) and Yucatan (2000-) are registered as PAN governors; the governor of Chiapas (2000-) is registered as a PRD governor. In several other cases, governors were elected as parts of coalitions that included smaller parties, but the candidates were members of the PRI, PAN, or PRD and are noted as such.
Source: Author's calculations, based on data in Enrique Ochoa-Reza, "Multiple Arenas of Struggle: Federalism and Mexico's Transition to Democracy," p. 272.

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[19] Alberto Díaz-Cayeros, Beatriz Magaloni, and Barry Weingast argue that the mid-1990s constitute the "tipping point" where a critical mass of opposition municipalities was reached and citizens stopped fearing fiscal retaliation from the federal government if they voted for an opposition government in local elections. ("Mexico: Before the Fall," in *Hoover Digest,* No. 1, 2001.)
[20] Author's calculations based on the dataset cited in Figures 5.5 and 5.6.
[21] It remained the largest party, however, and only a few seats shy of the majority. The PRI was often able to hobble together majority coalitions with small parties, but it also had to negotiate with the PAN and the PRD on major legislation.

Figure 5.5: Percentage of Municipalities Governed by Each Party, 1983-2004
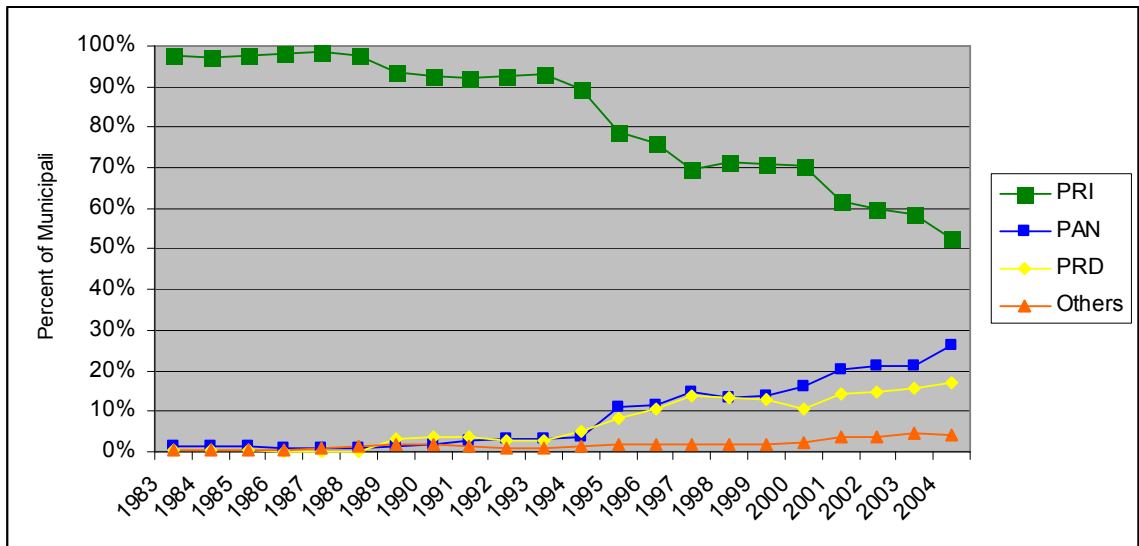
Note and Source: See Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Percentage of the Population in Municipalities Governed by Each Political Party, 1983-2004
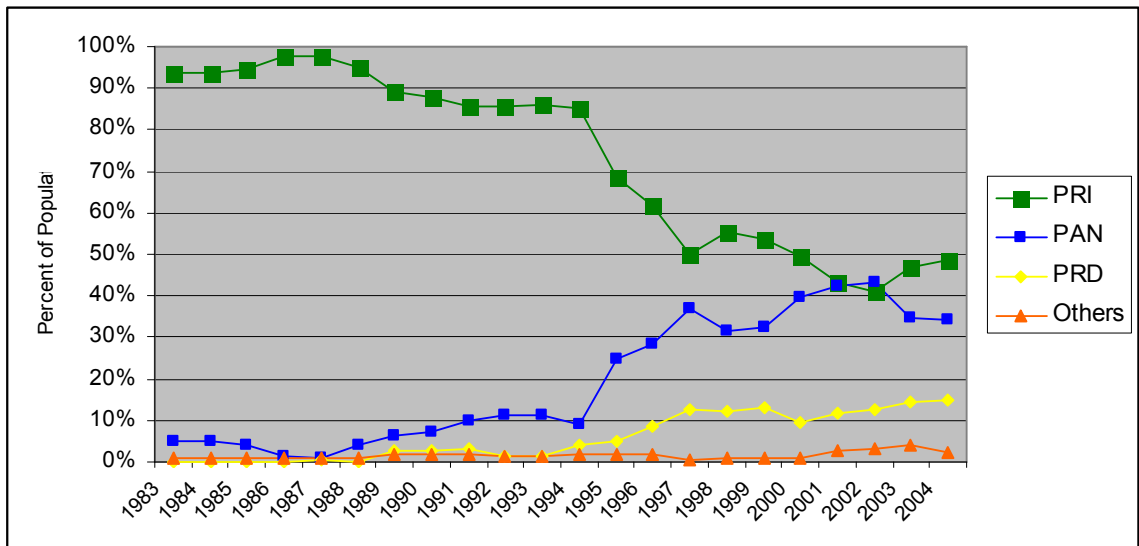
Note: These numbers exclude municipalities that are governed by customary law (*usos y costumbres*) in Oaxaca and the Federal District of Mexico City. In the case of coalitions, the municipality was assigned to the larger party. In the case of the rare PAN-PRD coalitions, a judgment was made on which party to assign the municipality in the data.

Sources: Author's calculations based on a database assembled with data from CIDAC, "Elecciones municipales, 1980-2004," available at www.cidac.org.   Data for the 1996 elections in Hidalgo were taken from *La Jornada,* and missing data for the Oaxaca elections of 2001 from Gobierno de Oaxaca, "Distritos y Municipios de Oaxaca," available at www.oaxaca.gob.mx/distmun/munidis.html, and checked against election returns reported by *La Jornada* and *El Universal*.

Mexico's gradual democratic transition has much to recommend it. It avoided

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violence, preserved stability, and privileged consensus among key political actors.

Mexico went into the new millennium with a strong party structure while many countries

in Latin America lacked stable political parties. At the same time, the exclusive reliance

on pacts among political elites meant that their interests were largely preserved in the

political system that emerged, and this happened at the expense of changes that might

have opened the democratic process.[22] The electoral changes, for example, kept the

prohibition on immediate reelection to any public office, which means that elected

officials owe their future possibilities for candidacy to party bosses rather than

constituents. Independent candidacies were prohibited at any level of government. Few

attempts were made to create clear rules and procedures for policymaking in the federal

congress or most state congresses, leaving legislation subject to informal rules and back-

room procedures that are difficult for citizens to monitor.[23] As we will see later in this

chapter, these changes also kept intact the old municipal structure, which creates

incentives for elected municipal authorities to be responsive and accountable primarily to

higher level party and government officials rather than to citizens.

5.3 Mexico's Decentralization Reforms

Decentralization took place in many countries in Latin America as quickly and

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[22] I am grateful to Tonatiuh Guillén for pointing this out. For a related argument, see Mauricio Merino, *La transición votada: Crítica a la interpretación del cambio político en México,* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003.

[23] See Alejandra Vallejo, "Transparency in Budgeting Processes in Latin America," Ph.D. dissertation manuscript in process.

dramatically as their democratic transitions.[24] In Venezuela and Bolivia, major

decentralization reforms were practically decreed overnight by national leaders seeking to

shore up their support in the midst of extreme crises of political legitimacy.[25] In

Colombia and Brazil, major decentralization reforms emerged from constitutional

conventions that marked important road markers in the countries' democratic transition.[26]

In Guatemala and El Salvador, decentralization emerged out of negotiations to end the

countries' civil wars.[27] In Mexico, on the other hand, decentralization took place at much

the same pace as democratization, through iterative negotiations over a period of two

decades. Indeed, the constant renegotiations over Mexico's democratic future spurred

decentralization reforms and set its rhythm. This process helped ensure an orderly and

gradual transfer of powers, functions, and resources to subnational governments.

However, it also meant that decentralization reforms were seen in the light of a political

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[24] For arguments about the reasons for decentralization in Latin America during this period, see Alfred P. Montero and David J. Samuels, eds., *Decentralization and Democracy in Latin America,* South Bend, IN: Notre Dame Press, 2004; Eliza Willis, Christopher Garman, and Stephan Haggard, "The Politics of Decentralization in Latin America," *Latin American Research Review,* Vol. 34, No. 1, 1999, pp. 7-56; and Andrew Selee, "Introduction: Decentralization and Democratic Governance," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew Selee, eds., *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America,* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004.

[25] Merilee Grindle, *Audacious Reforms.* See also Rosa Amelia González and Carlos Mascareno, "Decentralization and the Restructuring of Politics in Venezuela, in Tulchin and Selee, eds., *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America,* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004.

[26] On Brazil see Marcus Melo and Flavio Rezende, "Decentralization and Governance in Brazil" in Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew Selee, eds., *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America,* Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004; on Colombia, see María Antonieta Huerta Malbrán, Carlos Gabián Pressacco Chávez, Consuelo Ahumada Beltrán, Marcela Velasco Jaramillo, Jesús Puente Alcaraz, and Juan Fernando Molina Meza, eds., *Descentralización, municipio y participación ciudadana: Chile, Colombia y Guatemala,* Bogotá: CEJA, 2000. One significant exception is Argentina, which went through a significant decentralization process, geared primarily toward the provinces, in the 1990s. See Tulia Falleti, "Federalism and Decentralization in Argentina: Historical Background and New Intergovernmental Relations,", in Tulchin and Selee, eds, *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America.*

[27] See Victor Gálvez, Carlos Hoffman, and Luis Mack, *Poder local y participación democrática,* Guatemala: FLACSO, 1998. See also Luis Linares and Jesús Puente, "A General View of the Institutional State of Decentralization in Guatemala," in Tulchin and Selee, eds., *Decentralization and Democratic Governance.* For a overview of major experiences with decentralization in Latin America, see Andrew Selee, "Introduction," in Tulchin and Selee, *Decentralization and Democratic Governance.*

chess game, where each side sought to use the reforms to ensure its own political advantage in the protracted democratization process rather than to improve democratic governance. Decentralization reforms had less to do with subnational governments and their role in the state as they did with their potential to influence partisan outcomes in the electoral process.

Decentralization in an Authoritarian Regime (1983-88)

After years of gradual centralization of power, functions, and resources in the central state, President Miguel de la Madrid (1983-88) set in motion a gradual decentralization process with his proposal to reform the constitution to strengthen municipalities. He had made the proposal initially during the campaign and within five days of his inauguration formally proposed the constitutional changes to the Congress. The changes to the constitution's article 115, which regulates municipalities, were passed in 1983 and took effect on January 1, 1984. These changes altered the legal framework of municipalities significantly. Municipalities, rather than the states, could now levy property taxes, and they had full ownership over their own property, which had previously been property of state governments. Municipalities were given the right to determine their own internal processes for governance, including municipal planning, budgeting, and the passing of regulations on matters within their territory. Municipalities were also granted the right to provide basic municipal services, including water, street lighting, street cleaning, markets, cemeteries, slaughterhouses, local street building and maintenance, parks and gardens, public security, and local transportation, and to sign

agreements with other municipalities or with the state to coordinate efforts.[28] Finally, the

reform clarified the procedure through which the state governments could remove mayors

and councils, limiting the governor's discretion to do this.[29]

President de la Madrid seems to have been largely motivated by the need to

reclaim legitimacy for the Mexican state in the light of the economic crisis and serious

mismanagement by his predecessor.[30] The reforms made a significant difference to large

municipalities, which could raise new revenues through property taxes and effectively

implement their new set of constitutionally protected functions. However, many smaller

municipalities saw little difference in their status. This was especially true in mostly

rural municipalities where tax-exempt communal properties were the predominant form

of landowning. Moreover, this period coincided with the most difficult moments of the

economic crisis, so that municipal revenue-raising capacity suffered overall (and rampant

inflation undermined the value of existing revenues). Overall, municipal revenues

increased only a modest 15% in real terms in the 1983-88 period.

The federal government pursued a second approach to decentralization by

creating a new system for federal government investments in states. For the first time,

the federal government agreed to sign agreements, known as Single Development

Agreements (CUD, *Convenios Únicos de Desarrollo*) with all states to set the purpose

and nature of federal investments each year from the various ministries. Since the federal

government still managed most public investments, states, and indirectly municipalities,

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[28] According to de la Madrid, the changes were "aimed at strengthening the municipality's finances, its political autonomy, and all the faculties that somehow have constantly been absorbed by the states." Cited in Victoria Rodriguez, *Decentralization in Mexico: From Reforma Municipal to Solidaridad to Nuevo Federalismo,* Boulder: Westview Press, 1997, p. 74. For an analysis of the reforms, see p. 119; and Enrique Cabrero, *Las Políticas Descentralizadaras en México (1983-1993), Logros y Desencantos,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 1998, pp. 108-9.

[29] Mauricio Merino, *Fuera de Centro,* Xalapa, Veracruz: Universidad Veracruzana, 1992, pp. 113-17.

[30] Rodriguez, *Decentralization in Mexico,* pp. 1 and 109; Cabrero, *Las políticas descentralizadoras,* p. 17.

would now have a say in how those investments were determined. Each state was to

have a State Planning Council (Coplade) which would bring together all three levels of

government, and each municipality a Municipal Planning Council (Copladem or

Coplademun), which would bring together key social groups, municipal government

officials, and key state and federal officials.[31] According to one study, however, only 11-

15% of federal investment in the states actually went through the CUDs and the Coplades

had little influence in determining even these investments. Moreover, only 10% of

municipalities reported even creating a Copladem and most of these were dominated by

the municipal mayor.[32] Nonetheless, the requirement to create Coplades and Copladems,

set a precedent that would become important in the future.[33]

This period also saw some important changes politically. Opposition parties won

fewer municipal victories after 1983—or at least fewer victories were recognized—, but

opposition parties continued to make inroads in municipal elections. Significantly, the

1983 reforms for the first time allowed municipalities under 300,000 inhabitants to have

city council members of minority parties. In 1986, the federal electoral law was changed

to require representation of minority parties in all municipal councils, which greatly

expanded the presence of these parties in local politics for the first time.[34] Opposition

parties thus gained a foothold in local governments, and this presence greatly expanded

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[31] Rodriguez, *Decentralization in Mexico,* p. 73. Coplades were actually created in 1981 under the previous president, José López Portillo, but given expanded functions under de la Madrid. See John Bailey, "Centralism and Political Change in Mexico: The Case of National Solidarity," in Wayne A. Cornelius, Ann L. Craig, and Jonathan Fox, *Transforming State Society Relations: The National Solidarity Strategy,"* La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1994.

[32] Cabrero, *Las Políticas Descentralizadoras,* pp. 153-61.

[33] The de la Madrid administration also began a gradual decentralization of healthcare from the federal to state governments. This decentralization of healthcare services was done on a state-by-state basis, but it would greatly expand state budgets over the coming years. See Mizrahi, "Twenty Years of Decentralization in Mexico: A Top-Down Process," in Oxhorn, Tulchin, and Selee, eds., *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective* for a synopsis of this process and Kaufman and Nelson, *Crucial Needs, Weak Incentives,* for a full analysis.

[34] Ochoa Reza, "Multiple Arenas of Struggle."

their influence and desire to compete.

An Ambiguous Decentralization: Solidarity (1988-1994)

Carlos Salinas de Gortari reached the presidency in an election marked by public discontent and massive fraud.[35] Bent on rebuilding citizens' faith in government, solidifying his political base, and recreating the social pact that had existed between the government and the Mexican poor before the crisis, Salinas initiated an ambitious new social program known as Solidarity.[36] It was to be a participatory, demand-based program in which the government would provide funds to civic organizations to carry out major public works and productive projects in coordination with the government. Solidarity grew from 1989 to 1994 to involve over 6% of the programmable budget and around 13% of social spending.[37] The program included over a dozen separate funds which were managed in different ways and for different purposes. Among these, were the Solidarity Municipal Funds, which provided funds directly to municipalities for community-driven, small-scale infrastructure projects. Municipal Funds constituted around 14% of the total Solidarity budget.[38] These funds noticeably increased the resources available to municipalities for public investment. Other Solidarity funds, though not given directly to municipalities, often required their involvement with state

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[35] The governing PRI had suffered a major split, and the election computers "crashed" on election night as initial results showed an opposition candidate leading the presidential poll.

[36] Officially "Programa Nacional de Solidaridad" (Pronasol) or "National Solidarity Program."

[37] Since most of social spending is in education and healthcare, this is actually a very large number. It represented around 1.08% of GDP in 1992. Nora Lustig, "Solidarity as a Strategy for Poverty Alleviation," in Wayne A. Cornelius, Ann L. Craig, and Jonathan Fox, *Transforming State Society Relations: The National Solidarity Strategy,"* La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1994.

[38] This figure covers 1989-1992. Jonathan Fox and Josefina Aranda, *Decentralization and Rural Development in Mexico: Community Participation in Oaxaca's Municipal Funds Program,* La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1996, p. 5fn.

and federal governments for implementation.

Solidarity produced contradictory effects for both decentralization and democratic governance. On one hand, the funds created new synergies among levels of government in the implementation of projects and provided municipalities with funds for investment that did not depend on the discretion of state governors.[39] Solidarity's demand-driven approach also created new synergies between state and society, at least in some regions where authoritarian control was already weak.[40] On the other hand, Solidarity was also highly centralized and managed discretionally by the federal office of the president, where the program was located for most of its existence.[41] Critics have noted that although Solidarity had decentralizing elements, it was far from a decentralization initiative. In fact, its real intention was to recentralize power in the presidency and to reestablish the legitimacy of the president.[42] Although it provided funds to municipalities, these were discretional transfers that were not institutionalized or ensured in future years.[43] On balance we might conclude that the intention of Solidarity was to

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[39] Rodriguez, *Decentralization in Mexico.*

[40] Fox and Aranda, *Decentralization and Rural Development in Mexico,* pp. 45-50; see also Kerianne Piester, "Targeting the Poor: The Politics of Social Policy Reforms in Mexico," in Douglass A. Chalmers, Carlos M. Vilas, Katherine Hite, Scott B. Martin, Piester, and Monique Segarra, eds., *The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America: Rethinking Participation and Representation,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Solidarity is believed to have created over 150,000 local committees related to projects. While many of these were of limited permanence, some did achieve a life beyond the individual projects they set out to implement. See Wayne A. Cornelius, Ann L. Craig, and Jonathan Fox, *Transforming State Society Relations: The National Solidarity Strategy,"* La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, 1994, pp. 20-21.

[41] Starting in 1992, the federal government created the Ministry of Social Development (*Secretaría de Desarrollo Social*) to run the program; however, it remained closely tied to the presidency. On the discretional nature, see Juan Molinar Horcasitas and Jeffrey A. Weldon, "Electoral Determinants and Consequences of National Solidarity," in Cornelius, Craig, and Fox, *Transforming State-Society Relations.*

[42] Bailey, "Centralism," and Denise Dresser, "Bringing the Poor Back In: National Solidarity as a Strategy of Regime Legitimation," in Cornelius, Craig, and Fox, *Transforming State-Society Relations.*

[43] Cabrero, *Las políticas descentralizadoras,* pp. 38. Cabrero finds that most Solidarity decisions, even for Municipal Funds, continued to be top-down, with final decisions on projects made by the federal government rather than municipalities (pp. 169-81). Fox and Aranda (*Decentralization and Rural Development in Mexico*) found a more participatory approach in Oaxaca's Municipal Funds program, however.

recentralize power in the federal executive and it created few sustainable institutional

structures for decentralization or for society-driven development; however, the program

did generate new practices in the relationship among levels of government and between

government and society, which would later prove important when institutional changes

were made.[44]

New Federalism, New Funds, New Laws, New Competition (1994-2000)

The presidency of Ernesto Zedillo in the presidency marks a turning point in

Mexican federalism and the role of municipalities within it. The changes were partially a

result of a national strategy to decentralize, but also of increased political competition and

the growing bargaining power of opposition parties. Zedillo formulated an approach

known as "New Federalism" to redefine the role of all three levels of government.[45]

Within this framework, the government converted most of the budget line for Solidarity,

Ramo 26 (*Ramo* is the Spanish word for a budget line), into block grant transfers to state

and municipal governments. Instead of administering social programs from Mexico City,

they would now be administered in subnational governments.[46] Thus federal transfers

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[44] The Salinas administration also began a decentralization process in education to state governments. Most day-to-day responsibilities for schools were passed from the federal government to the states in this period, although the federal government maintained tight control over key policy decisions, including curriculum and wage levels. The transfer of education to the states would dramatically increase their share of total public expenditures, and education would come to be one of the central activities of most state governments and one of the most significant components of their annual budget.. See Mizrahi, "Twenty Years of Decentralization in Mexico," and Robert R. Kaufman and Joan M. Nelson, eds., Crucial Needs, Weak Incentives: Social Sector Reform, Democratization, and Globalization in Latin America. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004.

[45] Peter Ward and Victoria Rodriguez with Enrique Cabrero, *New Federalism and State Government,* U.S.-Mexico Policy Report No. 9, Austin, TX: University of Texas, 1999.

[46] Part of the Solidarity funds were transferred into other budget lines to be spent on federal social programs, but the bulk of the funds were converted into the bloc grants under Ramo 33.

showed a noticeable rise in 1995-1997 after many years of steady but very gradual growth. The immediate impact of these new transfers was lessened somewhat by the effects of rampant inflation, in the wake of the 1994-95 "tequila crisis," which reduced the real value of these transfers. However, it began a period of accelerated growth in federal transfers to municipalities (see Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Total Federal Transfers to Municipalities (in Billions of Pesos), 1989-2002
(Real Pesos (=2002) and Nominal Value)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Transfers (nominal value)	2.55	3.58	4.83	6.11	6.95	8.52	9.89	14.16	19.02	31.44	46.45	58.55	69.60	83.00
Transfers (real value=2002)	13.03	13.57	14.96	14.88	14.36	15.82	17.07	22.60	28.09	42.95	58.69	68.43	75.25	83.00
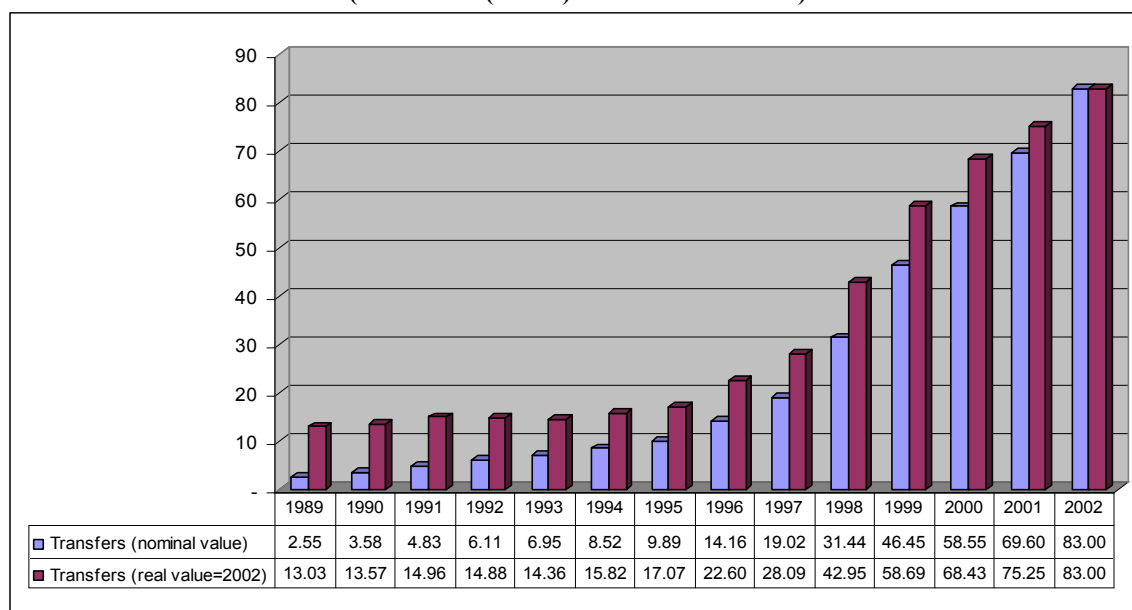
Source: Author's calculations based on data in INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos.

After 1998 federal transfers to municipalities (and to states to a lesser extent) would rise even more dramatically. In the 1997 elections, the PRI had, for the first time in history, lost its majority in the lower house of Congress, and an opposition coalition led by the PRD and the PAN took control of the chamber.[47] In the negotiations over the federal budget in 1998, the PAN managed to win approval for the conversion of Ramo 26 into Ramo 33, an automatic transfer to states and municipalities. Ramo 33 would be

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[47] The PRD and PAN could only control the chamber with the support of smaller parties, however, and the PRI was often able to win these small parties over on specific votes. Nonetheless, on major issues like the budget, the opposition coalition often held—and it was always a force to be reckoned with.

composed of several funds, of which two were specifically for municipalities: the Fund

for the Support of Municipal Social Infrastructure (FAISM, *Fondo de Aportaciones para*

la Infraestructura Social Municipal) and the Fund for Strengthening Municipalities and

the Federal District (FORTAMUNDF, *Fondo para el Fortalecimiento de los Municipios*

y las Demarcaciones Territoriales del Distrito Federal). FAISM was designed to

provide municipalities with funds for small infrastructure projects in low-income

communities. Decisions on spending FAISM funds were to be made by the Municipal

Planning Council (Copladem) or a Municipal Development Council (Codemun), which

would include key government officials and citizen representatives who would jointly set

priorities. FORTAMUNDF would provide unrestricted funds for improving the

infrastructure and performance of the municipality itself. Since 1998 Ramo 33 funds

have almost tripled in *real* terms (Figure 5.8) and come to constitute one of the most

important sources of revenue for municipal governments.

Figure 5.8: Real Growth of Ramo 33 Funds for Municipalities, 1998-2004 (millions of 2004 pesos)

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
■ FORTUMUNDF	6,733	13,097	15,030	19,536	22,327	22,888	24,096
□ FAISM	9,140	12,245	14,054	16,753	19,144	19,625	20,661
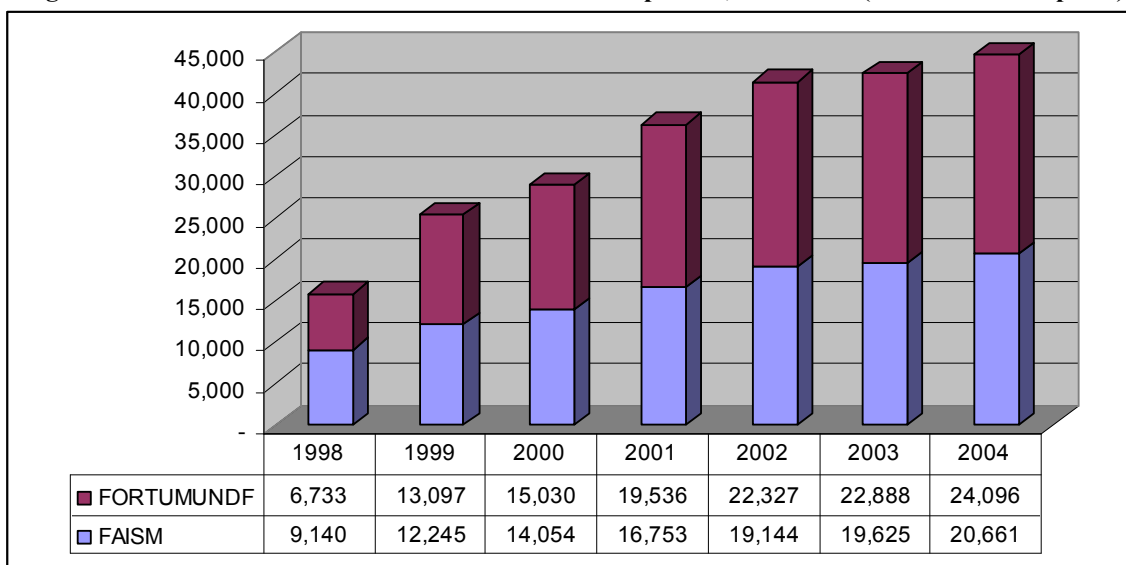
Note: Calculated in 2004 pesos.
Source: INAFED, "Finanzas Públicas Locales y Federalismo," based on data from the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público, www.inafed.gob.mx, consulted June 4, 2005.

In 1999, Congress took up the constitutional framework of municipal governments and ultimately passed an amendment to article 115 of the Constitution, which would have far-reaching consequences. Under the 1983 constitutional reform, municipalities had been given responsibilities for the provision of services, internal governance, and levying income taxes; the 1999 reform specifically designated municipalities as *political* entities, which, like states and the federal government, could set policy for local affairs within their jurisdiction. The reform also gave them the faculty to assume new powers and functions through agreements with state governments, thus moving beyond the initial list of eight functions reserved for municipalities. The 1999 constitutional changes also produced reforms in all of the state constitutions (as required), and a very small number of states actually incorporated additional reforms in their constitutions to give municipalities even greater powers.[48]

This period also saw a very important expansion of political plurality in Mexican municipalities. Opposition parties had made inroads in municipalities since the early 1980s, but by the mid-1990s, they controlled a significant number of municipal governments, and in 1997 already governed almost half of all Mexicans at the municipal level (see Figure 5.6). By 1996, a majority of Mexicans (52.7%) had previous or ongoing experience with an opposition party governing their municipality.[49] The PAN's interest in creating Ramo 33 and reforming the constitution was closely linked to these political changes. The PAN saw municipal (and also state) victories as a path to prying open

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[48] Baja California, Colima, Tlaxcala, Oaxaca, and Coahuila, for example, included local innovations in the constitutional changes. Tonatiuh Guillén and Alicia Ziccardi, eds., *Innovación y continuidad del municipio mexicano: análisis de la reforma municipal de 13 estados de la república,* Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2004. See especially the introduction by the editors.
[49] Author's calculations based on the dataset cited in Figures 5.5 and 5.6.

Mexico's political system and eventually winning the national presidency.[50]

Decentralization through Political Change (2000-2005)

The 2000 elections shifted the political calculus of decentralization dramatically. With the victory of the PAN's Vicente Fox, the majority of municipalities (57.6%) were now ruled by political parties different from that of the national government. Indeed, the country's political institutions lived through a period of impressive political plurality: the President was from the PAN; the Senate had a PRI majority; the lower house of Congress was divided among the PRI, PAN, and PRD, without a majority for any party; the majority of governors were from the PRI; the mayor of Mexico City from the PRD; and at the municipal level (excluding Mexico City), 42.4%% of the population lived under PAN administrations, 43.4% under PRI administrations, and 11.5% under PRD administrations. After years of one-party rule—and a brief interlude of greater openness after 1998—the country had truly entered a period of competitive democracy.

At the same time, the PAN, which had fought so hard for decentralization in past years, suddenly became increasingly skeptical of it. The Fox administration espoused a commitment to "authentic federalism," but in practice this largely entailed helping municipal governments work better with the resources and legal framework they already had.[51] The PAN-affiliated federal government became increasingly reluctant to pursue major new initiatives given the strength of the PRI at the state and municipal level.

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[50] Yemile Mizrahi, *From Martyrdom to Power,* South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2003.

[51] Presentation by Carlos Gadsden, director of the National Institute for Federalism, Ministry of the Interior, at the meeting by of the meeting of the High-Level Inter-American Network for Decentralization, (RIAD) of the Organization of American States, Cancún, Mexico, September 2003.

One notable exception was the Habitat program to reduce urban poverty and restore historical downtown areas. In 2004, this program injected 2.07 billion pesos into urban areas throughout the country.[52] While this paled in comparison to the over 44 billion pesos invested in Ramo 33 transfers to municipalities, it provided additional targeted funds to urban municipalities to address the challenges of growing urbanization and the restoration of center cities.

During the Fox administration, the PRI and PRD, which remained strong at the state and municipal level, saw an opportunity in reinforcing subnational governments. PRI and PRD governors formed the National Conference of Governors' Association (CONAGO, *Conferencia Nacional de Gobernadores*) in July 2002. The PAN governors refused at first refused to join, but by December 2002 had become part of the organization.[53] The CONAGO pushed for a National Fiscal Convention in which the rules of fiscal federalism could be reevaluated and recalculated. The federal government conceded, eventually, and the Convention was held from February to August of 2004. The three municipal mayors' associations (one for each party) nominally joined together to present a common set of proposals at this convention. However, in reality, partisan logics dominated all three associations and these had little force in the debates. The municipal associations thought that the federal government might find common cause with them to stave off the challenge from the governors; however, this collaboration never emerged.[54] In the end, the convention reached agreements on a few broad

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[52] Detailed data on Habitat is available in SEDESOL, *Habitat: Reglas de Operación,* Mexico City: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2004, available at www.sedesol.gov.mx/ subsecretarias/ desarrollourbano/reglas_operacion_habitat_2004.pdf.
[53] For a history of the formation of the CONAGO from one of the governors, see Miguel Alemán Velazco, *La Revolución Federalista,* Mexico: Editorial Diana, 2004.
[54] Interview, Ruben Fernández, President, Association of Municipalities of Mexico (AMMAC), March 4, 2005.

proposals, but these had little momentum behind them and never even came up for

serious debate in the Mexican congress.[55]

The logic of federalism had changed: the PAN now wanted a stronger central

government while the PRI pushed for greater federalism. As one scholar who served as

an advisor to the federal government, observed before the Convention started:

> The greatest paradox of the 2004 national convention will be that the
> PAN, which nowadays controls the national executive, and for many years
> has fought for a greater decentralization of resources as an opposition
> party, will have to behave as a conservative agent in charge of keeping in
> the hands of the federation enough power and resources to build a national
> project. In contrast the PRI, a party that developed its political hegemony
> through the centralization of all sorts of resources, will seek to shift the
> balance of power and resources to the entities [states].[56]

However, while the Fox administration and opposition parties remained stuck at

an impasse over decentralization, the Supreme Court reached a decision with far-reaching

implications. In a May 31, 2005 decision, the court found that municipal governments

had exclusive authority for policymaking in functions under their control.[57]

Traditionally, despite the 1999 constitutional amendments, state governments had

reserved the right to supersede municipalities in policymaking and regulation when they

saw fit. The court's ruling, however, established that the intent of the 1999 reform had

been to give municipalities equal standing with states and the federal government as

decision-making bodies, each with separate jurisdiction. It is as yet unclear what

practical impact this ruling would have on municipal powers, but it removed—at least in

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[55] At least as of this writing. This seemed unlikely to change before the July 2006 presidential and congressional elections.

[56] Alain de Remes, "Democratization and Dispersion of Power: New Scenarios in Mexican Federalism," Paper presented at the Conference on Challenges to Mexico's Demoratic Consolidation, American University, November 13-14, 2003. De Remes served as an advisor to the Secretary of the Interior while on leave from teaching at CIDE.

[57] Jesus Aranda, "Confirma la Suprema Corte potestades jurídicas de los municipios del país," *La Jornada,* June 1, 2005; see also the Editorial "Responsabilidad Municipal," *El Universal,* June 1, 2005.

theory—the concept that municipalities were administrative bodies subservient to states rather than a third order of government with separate policymaking jurisdiction.

5.4 The Impact of Decentralization

Municipalities in Mexico were largely irrelevant at the beginning of the 1980s, except as a stepping stone for political advancement and a mediating institution between citizens and the more powerful state and federal governments. Municipalities comprised only a little over 1% of the total public expenditures and had few functions, powers, or sources of revenue of their own. Two decades later, this had changed dramatically. Municipalities comprised almost 7% of public expenditures (see Figure 5.8) and had specific functions, powers, and sources of revenue. Moreover, decentralization did not appear to constitute a slimming down of the state itself. Total federal programmable expenditures in Mexico actually maintained themselves around 15-16% of GDP (and around13-14%, excluding Pemex, the national oil company) from the early 1990s to 2004 even while subnational expenditures expanded (see Figure 5.9).[58] How did these changes affect the authority and autonomy of municipal governments?

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[58] Programmable expenditures exclude payment of the debt and transfers to subnational governments.

Figure 5.9: Total Public Spending by Percentage at Each Level of Government, 1994-2003

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Federal Government	87.4%	84.6%	85.4%	91.0%	90.2%	90.6%	83.1%	83.0%	78.7%	75.1%	71.4%	70.1%	72.4%	72.2%	76.2%	70.4%	70.1%	68.7%	68.5%	67.4%	65.8%
State Governments	10.8%	12.9%	12.1%	7.4%	8.2%	7.7%	13.8%	13.2%	16.5%	20.0%	23.3%	22.1%	20.8%	20.6%	16.0%	20.7%	20.8%	21.8%	21.9%	22.3%	23.8%
Federal District												3.6%	3.2%	3.6%	4.0%	4.0%	3.6%	3.8%	3.6%	3.7%	3.5%
Municipalities	1.8%	2.6%	2.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	3.0%	3.8%	4.9%	4.9%	5.4%	4.2%	3.6%	3.6%	3.8%	4.8%	5.5%	5.7%	5.9%	6.6%	6.9%

Note: Federal District expenses are calculated as part of the federal budget until 1994.
Source: Author's calculations based on data in INEGI, *Finanzas Estatales y Municipales, 1989-97, 1998-2003,* and *2000-2003;* and INEGI, *Ingreso y Gasto Público en México,* 1985, 1999, 2004.

Figure 5.10: Federal Programmable Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP, 1990-2004
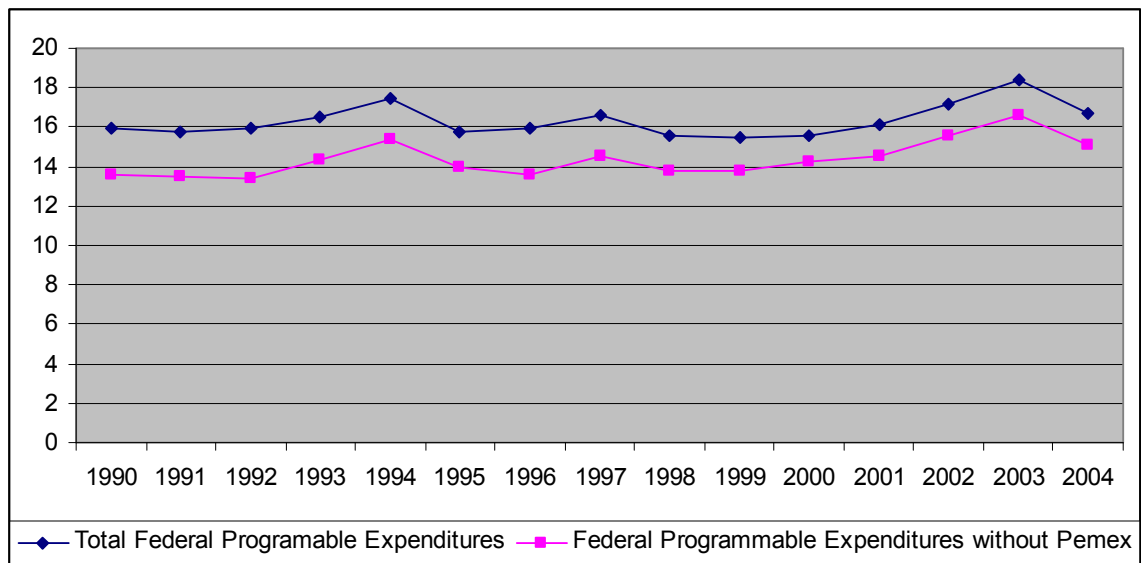
Source: Author's calculations, based on data presented in Vicente Fox, *Cuarto Informe de Gobierno,* Statistical Annex, Mexico City: Gobierno de México, 2004.

Authority

The 1983 constitutional reform provided municipalities with clear *functions* that they were authorized to carry out, primarily in the provision of basic services. The 1999 constitutional reform gave municipalities separate *powers,* with the right to make policy decisions around functions they perform within their territory. The 2005 Supreme Court resolution clarified the 1999 reforms by determining that municipalities were a separate order of government with exclusive domain over certain policy areas, which were not subject to state intervention.

5.11 Growth of Total Municipal Revenues (nominal and real value in millions of pesos), 1989-2002

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Municipal Revenue (absolute terms)	5,005	7,442	10,250	12,742	15,665	17,996	20,131	26,565	34,125	50,527	70,045	85,179	100,674	121,940
Municipal Revenue (real terms)	25,545	28,226	31,742	31,045	32,357	33,393	34,747	42,413	50,397	69,021	88,506	99,555	108,839	121,940
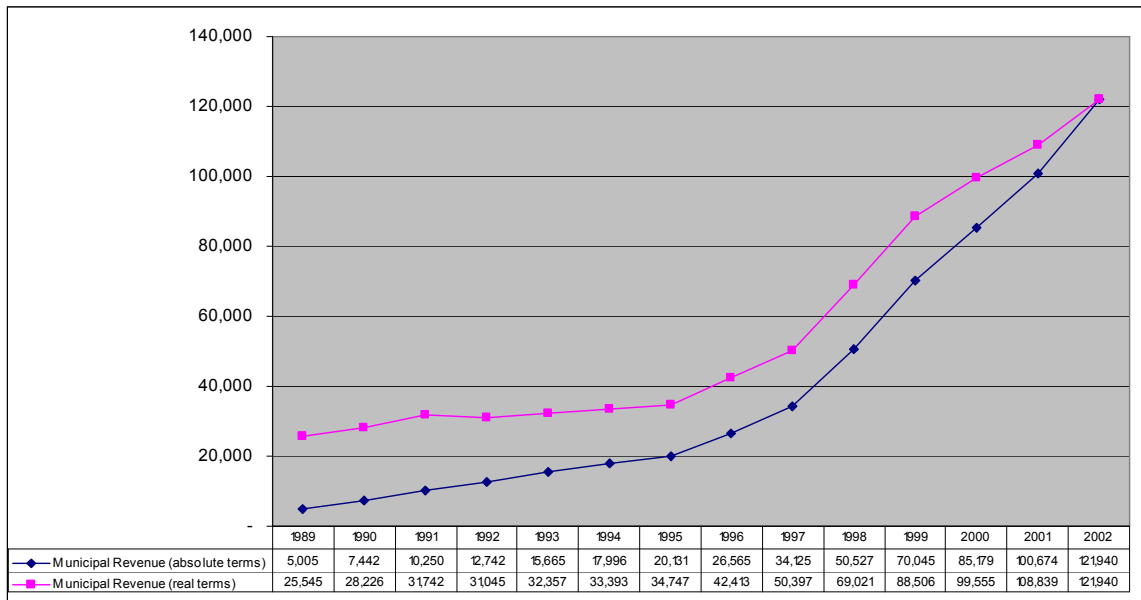
Note: Figures in millions of pesos. Real pesos calculated with control for inflation in 2002 pesos.
Source: Author's calculations, based on data in INEGI, Sistema Municipal de Base de Datos, consulted June 3, 2005.

The increase in functions and powers were accompanied by an increase in *resources*. Total municipal revenues almost doubled between 1989 and 1997 and then more than doubled from 1997 to 2002 (Figure 5.11). Not all Mexican municipalities are

created equally, however. Twenty-seven large municipalities with over 500,000 inhabitants, plus the federal district of Mexico City, make up 32.1% of the population.[59] Another 27.4% of the population lives in 127 medium-sized cities of 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants, and 32.1% lives in 864 small urban municipalities of 15,000-100,000 inhabitants. The remaining 8.5% of the population lives in 1,399 small rural municipalities of under 15,000 inhabitants (see Figure 5.12).[60] In 1989, small urban and rural municipalities had revenues per inhabitant almost half that of large urban municipalities. Medium urban municipalities fared only slightly better. By 2002, however, all size categories of municipalities had similar levels of revenue per inhabitant, with small rural municipalities actually outpacing others, with large urban municipalities in second place (Figure 5.13). As we will see in the next section, federal transfers appear to be responsible for this shift.[61]

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[59] We do not include the Federal District in calculations of municipal finances, since it is technically a part of the federal government with its own legal framework quite distinct from that of a municipality. Since 1994, the federal district has increasingly gained autonomy from the federal government, and in 1997 elected its own "mayor" (called the Chief of Government) for the first time.

[60] The distinction between small urban and small rural municipalities is entirely based on size. In practice, a municipality of 20,000 may be entirely rural and one of 14,000 might be a suburb of a city; but on balance, the division by size provides a good way of understanding different institutional challenges for municipalities.

[61] The similarity among sizes of municipalities masks important differences within each category, however. Most municipalities have annual municipal revenue in the range of 1,000 to 2,000 pesos per inhabitant, but a few municipalities register as little as 100 pesos per inhabitant or as much as 5,000 pesos per inhabitant. Author's calculations, based on author's database put together on statistics in INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos.

Figure 5.12: Number of Municipalities by Size and Total Population
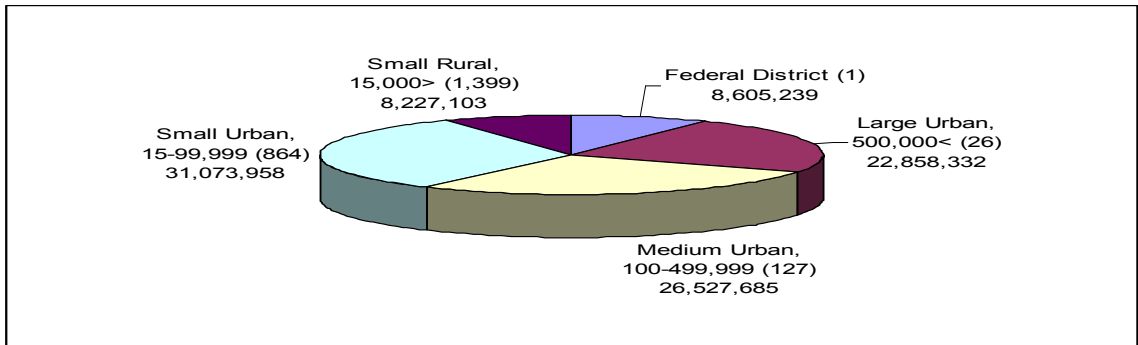
Note: Number of municipalities in each category in parentheses followed by total population in category.
Source: INEGI, Encuesta Nacional de Población y Vivienda, 2000.

Figure 5.13: **Real Growth of Municipal Revenues per Capita by Municipality Size, 1989-2002**

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Large Urban	410.2	452.9	504.3	489.0	503.8	496.6	518.3	565.6	679.6	902.9	1,151.3	1,254.8	1,325.2	1,427.7
Medium Urban	293.0	328.0	377.4	373.9	389.3	402.8	418.1	497.4	586.8	798.8	1,021.9	1,178.2	1,310.5	1,366.8
Small Urban	206.2	225.8	250.3	243.5	257.6	272.7	286.6	392.3	464.8	662.9	864.0	978.9	1,055.0	1,282.5
Small Rural	242.0	261.9	294.8	289.4	305.1	350.6	353.1	498.3	589.8	801.1	1,000.6	1,118.2	1,337.1	1,603.5

Note: In 2002 Pesos; Population is held constant at 2000 figures.
Source: Source: Author's calculations, based on data in INEGI, Sistema Municipal de Base de Datos, consulted June 3, 2005.

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Despite these impressive gains in municipal authority over a relatively short period of time, municipalities still remained relatively weak compared to federal and state governments. In 2002, municipal investment income was approximately 26.0% of all municipal expenditures, approximately 32.0 billion pesos. In contrast, federal and aggregate state investment expenditures were approximately 149.4 billion and 36.4 billion pesos, respectively.[62] This is not wholly surprising. Many federal and state investments (interstate and intrastate highways, educational infrastructure, targeted social programs, agricultural credits, and the like) are comparatively more expensive than the small-scale investments that municipalities tend to do. Nonetheless, as the case studies in chapters 6 through 8 indicate, federal and state governments still do invest directly in municipal infrastructure, though far less extensively than a decade ago. If we add in other operating expenses, total state expenditures are over three times total municipal expenditures, and federal government expenditures almost three times those of the states. In short, municipalities are more relevant as governance structures than ever before, but they are still dwarfed by other levels of government.

Autonomy

Municipal autonomy appears to have increased as well. Before, municipal governments spent their time chasing down federal agencies to carry out investments in municipal projects. Now municipalities have a much clearer legal framework and, when

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[62] Author's calculations. Based on INEGI, *Finanzas Públicas Estatales y Municipales de México, 1999-2002,* and INEGI, *Ingreso y Gasto Público en México 2004.* For states and municipalities, the investment figure is that of "obras públicas y acciones sociales," while for the federal government it is "gastos de capital." These are rough measures of investment expenditure in both cases, but give an approximation for comparison purposes.

they have sufficient funds, they can carry out separate functions that do not overlap with other levels of government. They also have their own sources of revenues, both local sources, through property and other revenue sources, and federal sources, through transfers. Since 1996, transfers have come to represent over half of all municipal revenues, and by 2002 it was over two-thirds. There is a significant difference among municipalities by size, however. Large municipalities receive only slightly over half their revenues from transfers, while all other groups of municipalities average 63-83% dependence on transfers (Figure 5.14). This new dependence on transfers had both positive and negative effects on autonomy. On one hand, these transfers have provided municipalities with a steady flow of resources to turn their constitutionally assigned powers and functions into reality. They also appear to have equalized the revenue of municipalities of different sizes. Moreover, throughout the 1990s, the formulas for assigning transfers became more transparent and less discretional, so that there was greater regularity in the amounts assigned to subnational governments. Unlike Solidarity, which was largely decided on a case-by-case basis, Ramo 33 transfers (and Habitat transfers) are based on published formulas.

Figure 5.14: Federal Transfers as a Percentage of Municipal Revenue, by Municipal Size, 1989-2002

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Large Urban	38%	36%	36%	37%	32%	35%	38%	42%	44%	50%	54%	59%	59%	54%
Medium Urban	51%	47%	47%	46%	42%	44%	47%	51%	53%	60%	63%	64%	66%	63%
Small Urban	63%	60%	58%	60%	58%	61%	60%	61%	65%	72%	77%	78%	78%	79%
Small Rural	72%	71%	66%	69%	66%	70%	71%	71%	75%	78%	84%	85%	80%	83%
All	51%	48%	47%	48%	44%	47%	49%	53%	56%	62%	66%	69%	69%	68%
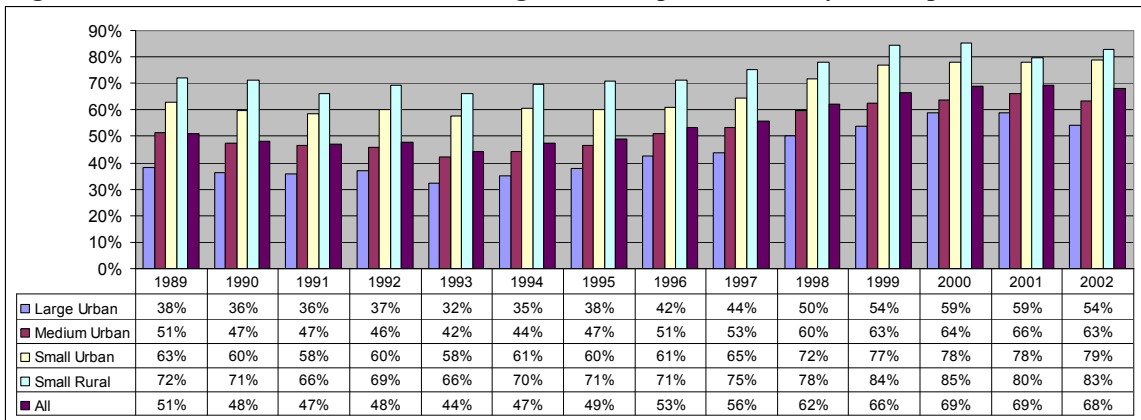
Source: Author's calculations, based on data in INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos.

On the other hand, the dependency on transfer has produced other contradictory

results that reduce municipal autonomy. Although Ramo 33 is assigned to states based

on published formulas, each state is able to create its own formula for assigning the funds

to the municipalities. State formulas vary widely from one state to the next and are often

determined by political criteria. Municipalities thus have little certainty on what transfers

they will receive year to year. Per capita transfers to municipalities in 2002 varied widely

from around 600 pesos per inhabitant to over 5,000 per inhabitant, for example, though

most fell between 800-2,000 pesos per inhabitant.[63] Equally troubling is that state

governments can alter the timing of transfers. As noted in the case studies of Tijuana

(chapter 7) and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl (chapter 8), state governments often delay

transfers either for bureaucratic or overtly political reasons, making it difficult for

municipal governments to plan expenditures. Moreover, some evidence exists that

increased transfers are correlated with decreased own-source revenues.[64] Indeed, own-

source revenues for municipalities have increased much slower in real terms than

transfers (Figure 5.15). However, this may also indicate real limitations in some

municipalities' ability to raise own source revenues.

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[63] Author's calculations, from a database constructed out of data in INEGI, *Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos.*

[64] See, for example, Enrique Cabrero Mendoza and Isela Orihuela Jurado, "Finanzas en municipios urbanos de México. Un análisis de los nuevos retos en la genstión de haciendas locales (1978-1998), *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos,* Vol 17, No. 1, January-April 2002, pp. 175-209. Uri Raich, "Impacts of Expenditures Decentralization on Mexican Local Governments," Working Paper 102, Programa de Presupuesta y Gasto, CIDE, 2002. This is also a concern frequently raised by the World Bank and other multilateral institutions that fear that transfers will undermine subnational governments' interest in seeking own-source revenue. This fear, however, needs to balanced against the need for equity, which national transfers can help address.

Figure 5.15: Real Growth of Local Revenue and Federal Transfers as a Source of Municipal Income (1989-2002, in billions of 2002 pesos)
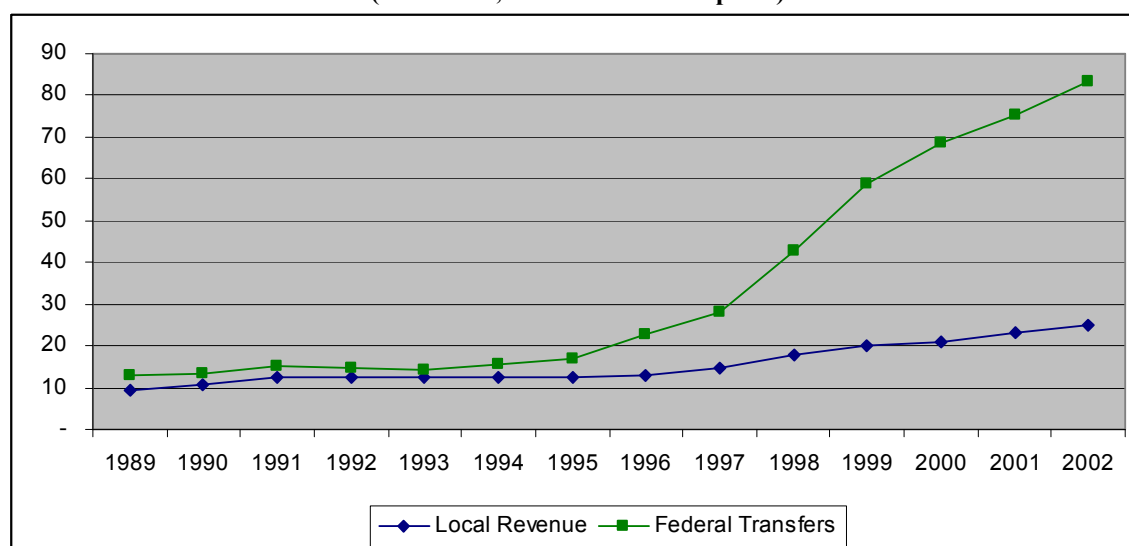
Source: Author's calculations, with data from INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Dase de Datos.

On balance, municipalities now have much greater autonomy than at any other time in recent decades. However, they still face serious constraints for ensuring a steady revenue flow, solid own-source revenues, and the ability to make effective all of their constitutionally mandated functions and powers.

5.5 The Impact on Democratic Governance

Democratic governance has improved noticeably with the end of one-party rule. However, key structural constraints remain for deepening democracy at the municipal level, since these structures have not been thoroughly updated since the change to a multiparty system. Moreover, many key social institutions that could play a role in ensuring a better quality of democracy remain far weaker in municipal arenas than on the national stage.

Systems of Representation

Municipalities have become, for the most part, vibrant arenas of electoral competition. Since 1983, three-quarters of all municipalities, where 85% of citizens live, have had at least one change of political party in power. Competition is most prevalent in large municipalities—all but one city over 500,000 inhabitants has had a change of party at least once[65]—but even small rural municipalities are surprisingly competitive (see Figure 5.16). Fully 70% of small rural municipalities (and 73.4% of citizens who live in these municipalities) have seen at least one change in power between parties. Clearly there is a correlation between the size and urban/rural condition of the municipality and the likelihood that it has been governed by more than one party; however, competition is now prevalent in municipalities of all sizes. Even in those municipalities where the PRI remains dominant, other political parties almost always do compete and often win a significant share of the vote.[66]

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[65] The one exception is El Centro, Tabasco, where the capital of the state, Villahermosa, is located. Villahermosa has had some close elections, however. It is also the smallest of the large municipalities, with just over 500,000 inhabitants.
[66] Author's calculations, based on data in Table 5.1.

Figure 5.16: Municipalities Governed by Only One Party (1983-2004)
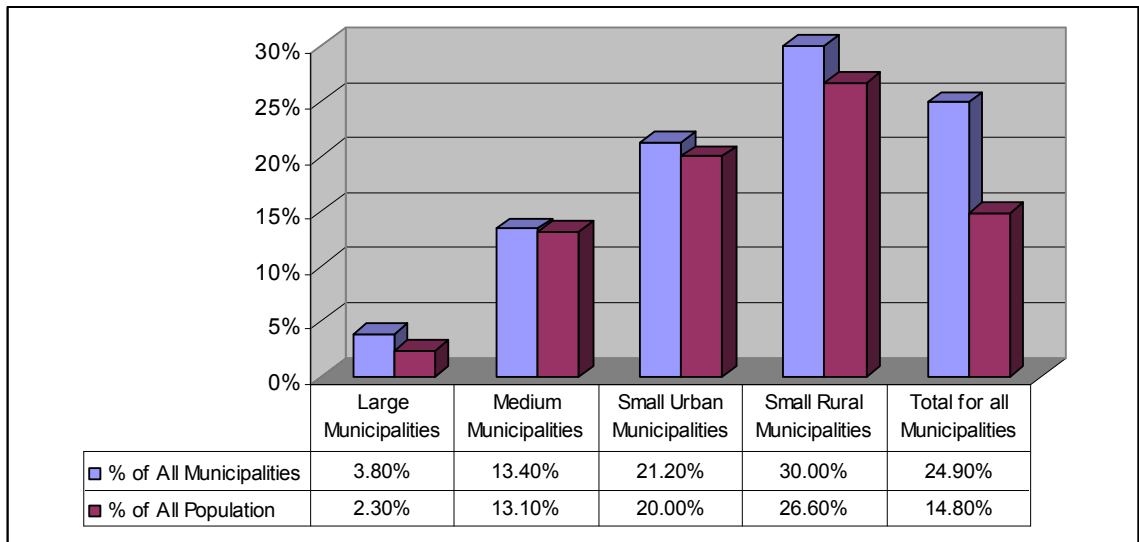
	Large Municipalities	Medium Municipalities	Small Urban Municipalities	Small Rural Municipalities	Total for all Municipalities
% of All Municipalities	3.80%	13.40%	21.20%	30.00%	24.90%
% of All Population	2.30%	13.10%	20.00%	26.60%	14.80%

Note: These numbers exclude municipalities that are governed by customary law (*usos y costumbres*) in Oaxaca and the Federal District of Mexico City.
Sources: Author's calculations based on a database assembled with data from CIDAC, "Elecciones municipales, 1980-2004," available at www.cidac.org. Data for the 1996 elections in Hidalgo were taken from *La Jornada,* and missing data for the Oaxaca elections of 2001 from Gobierno de Oaxaca, "Distritos y Municipios de Oaxaca," available at www.oaxaca.gob.mx/distmun/munidis.html, and checked against election returns reported by *La Jornada* and *El Universal.*

The introduction of autonomous state electoral institutes and electoral tribunals in the 1990s played an important role in ensuring free and fair elections. Although the autonomy and credibility of the state electoral institutes and tribunals varies from state to state, overall they seem to have achieved a significant degree of credibility in most states. Moreover, the ultimate arbiter of electoral disputes in all elections (including municipal and state elections) is the Federal Electoral Tribunal, which has achieved very substantial credibility as an impartial judicial institution.

Despite these important gains for free and fair elections, the institutions of representation in municipalities have barely been updated to respond to the demands of a democratic society. Unlike state and federal legislatures, which are chosen through a mixture of direct district elections and proportional representation, municipal councils are

selected via party lists on slates headed by the party's mayoral candidate. The result of this process is that political parties—or sometimes mayoral candidates—control the selection of candidates for the entire list and citizens rarely know who the council candidates are. Rather, they vote for the mayoral candidate they prefer and the winning candidate brings his or her whole slate to the council with him.[67] The losing candidates get part of their slate of candidates in the council in accordance with complex formulas for proportional representation.[68] Mayoral candidates dominate municipal campaigns and citizens know little about the proposals or profile of council candidates.[69]

Moreover, the mayor is guaranteed a majority on the council regardless of the percentage of votes for the winning party. Therefore, despite the diversity of voting in Mexico, parties that win pluralities in municipal elections are consistently overrepresented in the municipal council, often quite significantly. Figure 5.17 shows the aggregate vote by state for each major political party in the most recent municipal elections. In only four states (Chihuahua, Nuevo León, Sinaloa, and Tamaulipas) does any party have a majority of the votes in municipal elections. Moreover, a more detailed analysis of all municipalities shows that only 37.8% have a majority party; in the remaining 62.2%, the mayor is elected with only a plurality of the votes. Yet in all cases

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[67] Or very occasionally *her:* 96% of mayors were men in the period 2002-2004; only 4% women. Among city council members (*regidores* and *síndicos* combined), around 16.7% were women. INEGI, *Presidentes municipales por entidad federative según sexo, 2002-2004,* available at www.inegi.gob.mx; and INDESOL-INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional a Presidentes Municipales sobre Desarrollo Institucional Municipal 2002,* Mexico City and Aguascalientes: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social and INEGI, 2003, p. 59.
[68] On the problems inherent in party list systems, see Crook and Manor, *Democracy and Decentralisation in South Asia and West Africa:*, Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy.*.
[69] For a thorough analysis of this, see Tonatiuh Guillén, ""Democracia representativa y participative en los municipios de México: procesos en tensión," in Andrew Selee and Leticia Santín, eds., *Participación Ciudadana y Democracia Municipal,* Washington, DC and Mexico City: Woodrow Wilson Center and Agora, forthcoming.

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the mayor's party wins an automatic majority of the city council.[70] A study of this

system, in 1997-1998, showed that the winning party was guaranteed from 58.33% to

87.5% of city council seats, depending on the state.[71] In many states, as we will see in

the coming chapters, the second largest party is highly underrepresented while small

parties are guaranteed seats. When the PRI was the hegemonic party, this arrangement

ensured that councils appeared to be plural, with multiple parties involved, while the

main opposition party was effectively stifled.[72] Independent candidacies are barred, since

election is by party lists only. Hence, a system that was built to ensure the dominance of

a hegemonic party continues to function even after the advent of competitive democracy

and a multiparty political system.

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[70] Author's calculations, based on a database assembled using data from CIDAC; see Table 5.1 for full citation.

[71] Blanca Acedo, "Los sistemas electorales municipales en México: la incorporación del principio de representación proporcional," in Jacqueline Martínez Uriarte and Alberto Díaz Cayeros, eds., *De la descentralización al federalismo: estudios comparados sobre el gobierno local en México,* Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2003. The proportion used to be even more lopsided, however. In 1988, the majority party won 75% to 95% of city council seats, depending on the state. Sergio Elías Gutiérrez Salazar, "Autonomía política municipal y el principio de representación proporcional," *Estudios Municipales,* No. 19, January-February 1988.

[72] From the 1940s to the 1990s, there were several small parties loosely affiliated with the PRI (often called "satellite parties"), which received economic benefits from the dominant party in return for their loyalty. These parties could often win seats in the municipal council with only a small percentage of the vote, and then vote with the PRI on key issues, providing an appearance of democratic plurality. At the same time, the main opposition party in a municipality, usually the PAN or one of the left parties (or later the PRD), would be systematically underrepresented and unable to participate effectively in shaping legislation.

Figure 5.17: Average Vote by State for Each Major Political Party in the Most Recent Municipal Elections (2001-2004)
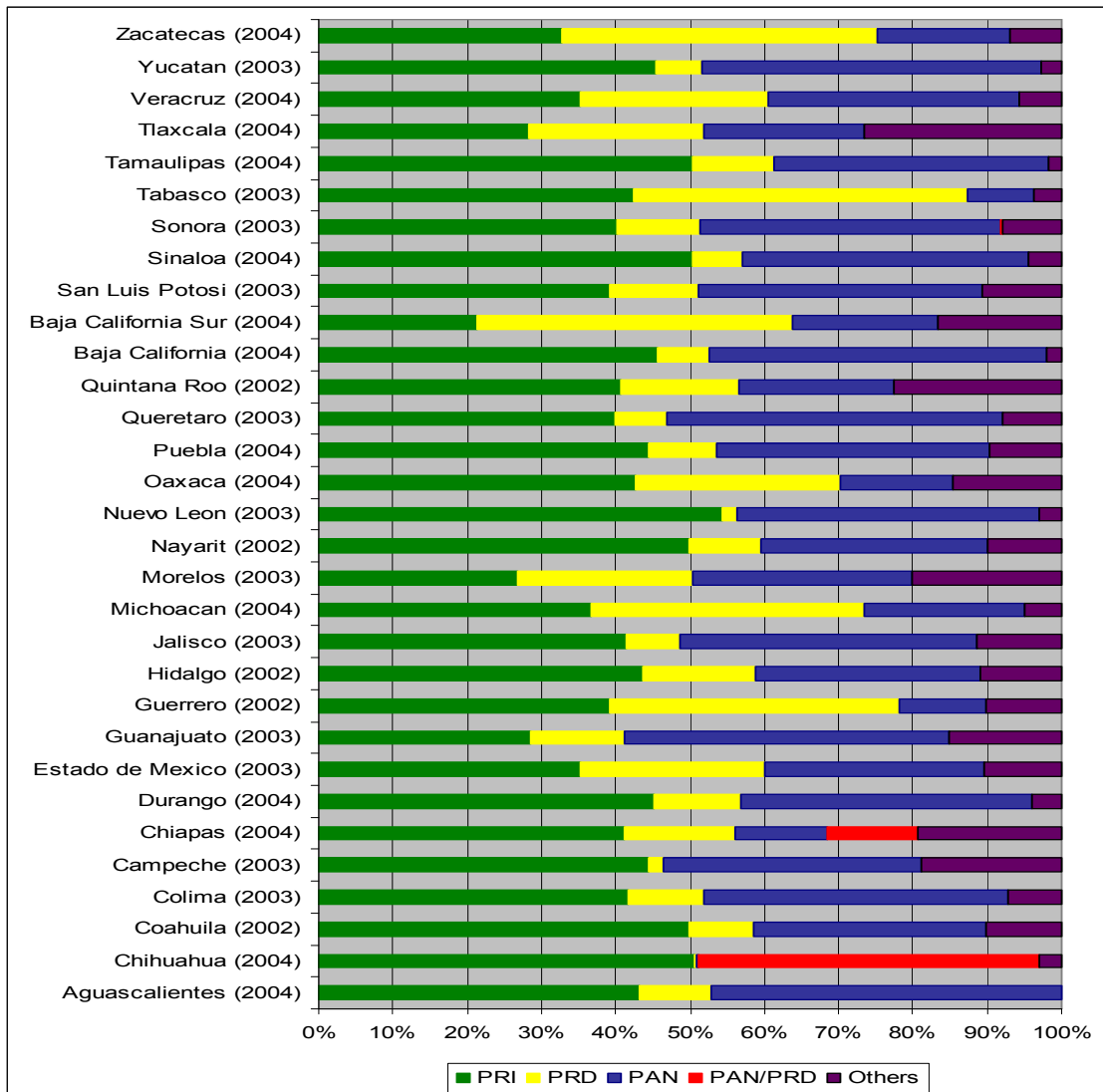
Source: Author's calculations, based on data in CIDAC, "Base de datos de elecciones locales, 1980-2004."

The deficiencies of the electoral system are compounded by the prohibition on reelection of mayors and council members. This prohibition is a long-standing tradition, which is codified in the constitution and embedded in the ideological legacy of the Mexican Revolution and its rejection of Porfirio Diaz's repeated reelections as President. Nonetheless, the absence of reelection undermines the accountability of representatives to citizens since the former have few incentives to fear punishment at the ballot box (or hope for reward). In fact, in a system with no reelection for any elected position (as is the

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case in Mexico), politicians tend to be beholden to party leaders, who determine which elected and appointed positions the party's cadres can aspire to next. The system thus creates upwards accountability to party leaders rather than downward accountability to citizens.

Transparency and Monitoring

Most incoming mayors of Mexican municipalities create a three-year plan at the outset of their administration, and then provide an annual report to the council and citizens. They often accompany the verbal report with a written report, the *Informe Municipal*,[73] which provides a list of accomplishments during the year and priorities for the future. In some cases, municipal reports and development plans can be quite revealing, giving detailed financial information, lists of public works projects with investment figures, and details on the activities of the mayor city council. In other cases, these documents provide little but rhetoric and a list of good intentions for the future. However, aside from these documents, whose content is usually discretional, municipal administrations have few obligations to reveal to citizens what they do during the year, collect in revenues, or spend on behalf of those who elected them. Nonetheless, many municipalities do share information about their activities and finances. Many large and medium municipalities—and even some smaller ones—have even made use of the internet to disseminate information. Some municipal websites give detailed information on everything from government salaries to public works investments; others seem more

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[73] 89% of municipalities produce a written report according to INDESOL-INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional a Presidentes Municipales 2002,* Mexico City: INDESOL, 2003. This report is sometimes called the *Informe de Gobierno* or by other names. We use *Informe Municipal* to designate the annual municipal reports in the three cities studied for this research.

geared towards public relations.[74]

In a recent study of 32 Mexican municipalities, the NGO Centro de Servicios Municipales "Heriberto Jara" found that 80% of municipalities publish (in print or on the internet) a list of public works projects over the past three years, 64% publish their own income and 72% the amount of federal transfers they receive.[75] Only 20% of municipalities surveyed publish their list of contractors and suppliers, and while just over half (52%) made available salaries of top municipal officials, only 20% showed base salaries, bonuses, and other financial benefits.[76] In only 8% of cases were the sessions of the municipal council's budget committee open to the public.

In 2002, the federal congress passed a law granting citizens widespread access to executive branch documents and creating an autonomous institute to oversee this process. Many states—at least twenty-two out of thirty-two (including Mexico City)—had created similar state laws as of April 2005, most with some form of autonomous or semi-autonomous agency to oversee implementation (Table 5.2). These laws have been passed by state governments led by all three major political parties. All of the existing transparency laws apply equally to states and municipalities and some have specific provisions requiring municipalities to publish their development plan. However, state laws are uneven in the degree of access they grant, the degree of privacy they grant the

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[74] I conducted a non-representative review of twenty websites of municipal governments, including ten each of large and medium-sized municipalities. The best sites give extensive information on salaries, public investments, city council resolutions, government contract, and updated budget figures. Others provide little information at all outside of contact numbers and municipal activities.

[75] Ricardo Jiménez, "Reflexiones sobre el derecho al acceso a la información y la transparencia en los gobiernos locales en México: la experiencia del Programa 'Ciudadanos por Municipios Transparentes, CIMTRA,'" paper presented at the LogoLink International Workshop on Resources, Citizen Engagement and Democratic Local Governance, Porto Alegre, Brazil, December 6-9, 2004.

[76] As several municipal council members and one member of Congress indicated to me, off-the-record, mayors often "reward" high-level officials and council members with bonuses that are never reported in official publications. These are sometimes used to "buy loyalty" from council members or to put money into the coffers of the political party or mayor's election committee for his/her next office (in these cases, the bonuses are given on condition that a percentage be donated).

requestor, and the autonomy and authority of the institution that oversees the law.[77] In all

cases, these are new laws that have been passed since 2002 (and most more recently), and

in most cases they have a long lead-time (usually six months to eighteen months) before

they take effect fully, so that a description and comparison of their actual functioning is

still difficult. Few municipalities appear to have separate transparency laws of their

own.[78]

Table 5.1: State Transparency Laws by Date Published and Governor's Party
(as of April 2005)

State	Date Law Published	Governor's Party
Sinaloa	April 26, 2002	PRI
Michoacán	August 28, 2002	PRD
Querétaro	September 27, 2002	PAN
Jalisco	January 6, 2003	PAN
Nuevo León	February 21, 2003	PRI
Durango	February 25, 2003	PRI
Colima	March 1, 2003	PRI
San Luis Potosí	March 20, 2003	PAN
Federal District	May 8, 2003	PRD
Guanajuato	July 29, 2003	PAN
Aguascalientes	July 30, 2003	PAN
Morelos	August 27, 2003	PAN
Coahuila	November 4, 2003	PRI
Mexico State	April 30, 2004	PRI
Quintana Roo	May 31, 2004	PRI
Yucatán	May 31, 2004	PAN
Veracruz	June 8, 2004	PRI
Nayarit	June 16, 2004	PRI
Zacatecas	July 14, 2004	PRD
Tlaxcala	August 13, 2004	PAN*
Puebla	August 16, 2004	PRI
Tamaulipas	November 25, 2004	PRI
Sonora	February 25, 2005	PRI
Baja California	No Law	PAN

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[77] The state laws in both Coahuila and Nuevo León, for example, apply to both state and municipal governments. For a full comparison of these laws, with great detail, see Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información, "Estudios Comparativos de Leyes de Acceso a la Información Pública," April 2005 (available from IFAI).

[78] Two notable exceptions are cities covered in this study: Tijuana (chapter 7), whose city council passed a transparency law in December 2004 shortly after a PRI-affiliated government took over after fifteen years of PAN-affiliated governments; and Ciudad Nezahualcoyótl (chapter 8), which passed a law in late 2004 and implemented it in summer 2005.

Baja California Sur	No Law	PRD
Campeche	No Law	PRI
Chiapas	No Law	Coalition
Chihuahua	No Law	PRI
Guerrero	No Law	PRD**
Hidalgo	No Law	PRI
Oaxaca	No Law	PRI
Tabasco	No Law	PRI

Note: All state transparency laws currently in effect are binding on municipalities in that state. *In Tlaxcala, a PAN governor took over from a PRD governor in 2005; ** In Guerrero a PRD governor took over from a PRI governor in 2005.
Source: Based on information in Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información, "Estudios Comparativos de Leyes de Acceso a la Información Pública," April 2005. Available from IFAI.

One reason for the difference between the push for transparency at the national level and its near absence at the municipal level has to do with the weakness of both the media and civil society organizations in local arenas. At a national level, the media and civil society organizations have played an important role both in securing passage of the access to information law and in monitoring federal government finances and decisions. For example, a group of media representatives, academics, and NGO activists, known as the Oaxaca Group (*Grupo Oaxaca*) played a pivotal role in crafting the federal access to information law and lobbying for its passage.   However, while major national media have transited from being largely dependent on government resources to greater independence, local media often continue to depend on the goodwill of a few key political or government leaders.[79] Major national media still often depend on public advertising for an import part of their revenue; however, they can diversify among different levels of government (often run by different political parties), diverse public agencies (including several autonomous agencies, such as the Federal Electoral Institute and the Central Bank), and between public and private sector advertising. Local media

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[79] Lawson, *Building the Fourth Estate*.

often depend almost entirely on a few state government departments, the dominant political parties, and major urban municipalities. This dependency often reduces their margin of autonomy considerably.

Civil society organizations face a similar problem in the municipal arena. While Mexico has hundreds of non-governmental organizations, most that deal with policy are located in the national capital. While most states (and many municipalities) have thriving third sectors and a dense web of social organizations, most are related to social service provision.[80] The organizations that work on monitoring government decisions and expenditures—organizations dedicated to transparency, human rights, and the environment, among others—tend to be overwhelmingly concentrated in Mexico City and a few major urban areas. Popular organizations tend to be locally rooted, but rarely have the technical capacity to conduct detailed monitoring of public documents or activities.

Opportunities for Participation

The discourse of participation in municipal affairs has a long tradition in Mexico. For decades municipalities have recognized official neighborhood committees and various forms of public works committees that help carry out infrastructure projects. In some cases, these organizations were related to the PRI's *seccionales* (neighborhood get-out-the-vote committees) or incorporated in other ways into the structure of the local party itself. Though these relationships were generally clientelistic in nature and involved unequal exchanges between municipal officials and citizens, mediated by local

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[80] See Gustavo Verduzgo, *Organizaciones no lucraticas: vision de su trayectoria en México,* Mexico: Colegio de México and Centro Mexicano para la Filantropía, 2003.

intermediaries (often block chairs, neighborhood council presidents, or local officials of the PRI), they, nonetheless, constituted informal channels of communication between citizens and municipal governments. Citizens used these channels to make demands on government officials, who in turn used them to mobilize votes. Citizen organizations independent from the PRI also existed and often engaged in demand-making on political authorities and in efforts at self-help within communities. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the Urban Popular Movement, a loose collection of poor people's organizations outside the PRI, gained strength in Mexico as an alternative to the traditional clientelistic organizations.

In the early 1980s, practices of municipal participation were, in theory, standardized, first through an executive decree (1981) and then through a revision of the federal Law on Planning (1983). The latter required all states to have a State Planning Council and suggested that municipalities create a Municipal Planning Council (*Consejo Municipal de Planeación*), know as Copladem or Coplademun, which would bring together citizens and government officials to create the three-year Municipal Development Plan at the start of each administration. With the implementation of Solidarity in 1989, municipalities that received Solidarity's Municipal Funds were required to create a separate Municipal Development Council (Codemun) to approve the list of projects to receive funding. With the creation of Ramo 33, all municipalities were required to have either a Coplademun or Codemun in order to receive the Social Infrastructure Fund (FAIS) within Ramo 33. In theory, municipalities would have to bring together citizens and government leaders to set priorities for financing with FAIS funds each year, in addition to the requirement for participatory planning at the outset of

each three-year administration. Several states have state laws that incorporate these structures as part of participatory planning processes as well.[81]

The available evidence suggests that many municipalities have Copladem or Coplademun, but few use this body to incorporate citizen voices into planning and decision-making. When these structures exist, they tend to be mere formalities, often an *ad hoc* group of government officials and program beneficiaries.[82] Nonetheless, according to a major study of almost all municipal mayors,[83] 58.0% of municipalities report having a Coplademun (Figure 5.18). Among municipalities, 40.8% report that they allow citizens to present proposals for the use of Ramo 33 funds and 43.4% report having meetings with citizens on setting priorities for their expenditure. However, only 8.9% involve citizens in actual decision-making on these funds and 4.1% in evaluating the investments (Figure 5.19). The structure of the Coplademun appears to be relatively widespread, but it rarely lives up to its stated purpose of engaging citizens in decisions about investment decisions and the monitoring of these.

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[81] These are sometimes laws on citizen participation (as in Baja California); other times, they are part of the state's municipal code (as in Mexico State). However, many states have no legal framework for Copladem or Codemun at all. Alison Rowland, "Population as a Determinant of Local Outcomes in Decentralization: Illustrations from Small Municipalities in Bolivia and Mexico," *World Development,* Vol. 29, No. 8, pp. 1373-89, 2001.

[82] Allison Rowland and Edgar Ramírez, *La descentralización y los gobiernos subnacionales en Méixco: una introducción,* Working Paper no. 93, Division of Public Administration, CIDE, n.d.

[83] INDESOL-INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional a Presidentes Municipales,* pp. 141-47.

Figure 5.18: Institutions of Citizen Participation, by Size of the Municipal Seat
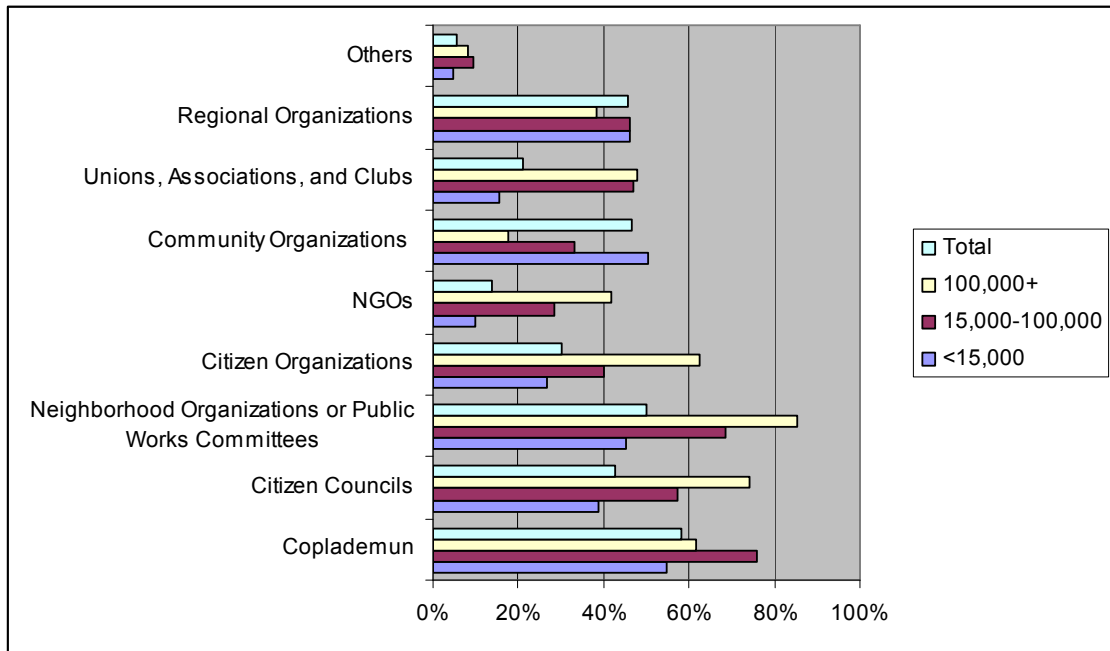
Note: See note in Figure 5.19.
Source: INDESOL/INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional a Presidentes Municipales sobre Desarrollo Social 2002,*
Mexico: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2003, p. 142.

Figure 5.19: Type of Citizen Participation in FAIS Funds, by Size of Municipal Seat

	<15,000	15,000-50,000	50,000-99,999	100,000+	Total
■ No participation	2.6%	0.7%	4.8%	0.0%	2.3%
■ Other	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	3.1%	0.7%
□ Meetings to evaluate municpality's actions	4.4%	3.6%	0.0%	3.1%	4.1%
□ Participate in decision-making	9.2%	6.1%	4.8%	11.5%	8.9%
■ Meetings to set prioritites	44.1%	43.0%	39.7%	31.3%	43.4%
□ Presentation of proposals	39.0%	46.2%	50.8%	51.0%	40.6%
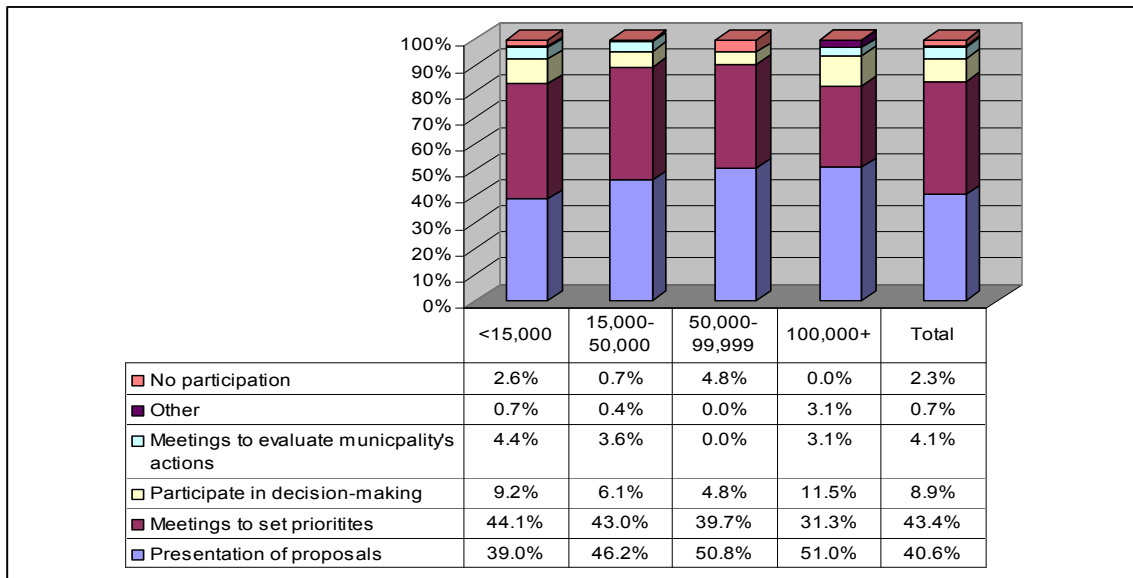
Note: Percents are of municipalities that responded to the questionnaire. N=2,429. These data are compiled according to the size of the *municipal seat,* that is, the community where the municipality's offices are located, rather than the total size of the municipality. These tend to coincide in larger municipalities, which correspond to cities, but not always in smaller ones that include several rural communities. All other data reported in this research uses municipality size, but this particular survey only lists municipal seat size.
Source: INDESOL/INEGI, *Encuesta Nacional a Presidentes Municipales sobre Desarrollo Social 2002,*
Mexico: Secretaría de Desarrollo Social, 2003, p. 145.

Despite these limitations, a few Mexican municipalities have used the figures of Coplademun and Codemun in creative ways to create channels for more robust citizen participation in planning and public policy decisions.[84] These experiences have generally taken place in municipalities where opposition parties have won for the first time. Such was the case of Cuquío en Jalisco, a small municipality which implemented a 12-year experiment in participatory planning using an expanded Coplademun, under a PRD government.[85] Berriozábal in Chiapas followed a similar pattern during two PRD administrations.[86] Two small municipalities in Veracruz, Ciudad Mendoz and Tatahuilcapán, also experimented with far-reaching participatory mechanisms under left governments.[87] Several large cities have also established extensive participatory planning mechanisms. These have included Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, under a PRD government, and Tijuana, Baja California; León, Guanajuato; Hermosillo, Sonora; and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua under PAN governments.[88] Nonetheless, the evidence indicates that most of these institutional innovations usually do not survive beyond one or two—or, when very successful, three—periods of government.

One study suggests that most institutional mechanisms for participation tend to be focused on specific projects rather than policy decisions. In his analysis of successful

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[84] See Andrew Selee and Leticia Santín, eds., *Democracia y Participación en Municipios Mexicanos,* Washington, DC and Mexico City: Woodrow Wilson Center and Agora, forthcoming; Miguel Bazdresch, "Cambio Municipal y Participación Social," in Enrique Cabrero, ed., *Políticas Públicas Municipales: una agenda en construcción,* Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2003; and Alicia Ziccardi and Rolando Cordera, eds., *Participación Ciudadana en las Políticas Sociales,* Mexico City: UNAM, 2004.

[85] Miguel Bazdresch, "Consejo democrático en Cuquío, Jalisco", in Enrique Cabrero, ed., *Innovación en gobiernos locales: un panorama de experiencias municipales en México*, México: CIDE, 2002.

[86] Leticia Santín and Victoria Motte, "Participación Ciudadana en Berriozábal, Chiapas, in Enrique Cabrero ed., *Innovación en gobiernos locales: un panorama de experiencias municipales en México*: CIDE, 2002.

[87] Carlos Rodríguez, Experiencia municipales de participación y deliberación en México; hacia la construcción de una democracia territorial de proximidad," in Selee and Santín, eds. *Particpación Ciudadana y Democracia.*

[88] Tijuana and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl are the subject of chapter 7 and 8, respectively. On Hermosillo, see Leticia Santín, "Planeación Urbana en México," paper presented at the conference on Local Innovation and Democracy at the Woodrow Wilson Center on September 2, 2005.

municipal experiences submitted for consideration of the annual prize in Innovations in Municipal Government, coordinated by CIDE, Cabrero notes that most of these innovations involve forms of citizen consultation (38%) or cooperation for project implementation (32%), while relatively few involve monitoring of government programs 18%) or citizen engagement in municipal decisions (12%; see Figure 5.20). Of these innovations, Cabrero argues that only14% can be considered "high intensity" participation, where citizens can both influence decisions and monitor outcomes. These are the kind of participation that engages citizens as deliberators in public affairs in conjunction with public authorities. Another 41% of the democratic innovations are "medium-intensity" experiences, where citizens have a consultative say in some aspect of government projects, 45% are "low-intensity" experiences where citizens were primarily recipients of government services.[89] His findings suggest that Mexico's municipalities are indeed becoming sources of democratic experimentation, but few of the institutional mechanisms truly allow for ongoing citizen participation and deliberation in public matters. Cabrero similarly notes that most of the innovations in citizen participation are weakly institutionalized. They tend to emerge with great "spontaneity and voluntarism" but rarely survive beyond this period of collective social energy.[90]

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[89] He also finds that over half of the democratic innovations are in PAN-affiliated governments. There is no way of knowing whether the submissions to the Innovations in Municipal Government prize, a private, Ford Foundation-funded project, are representative of other municipalities in the country. However, since these are self-selected "innovations," it seems likely that they are on the cutting-edge of municipal experimentation in democratic governance. Enrique Cabrero, "Participación y deliberación en la acción pública local: La experiencia municipal," in Selee and Santín, eds. *Democracia y Ciudadanos.*
[90] Cabrero, "Participación y deliberación en la acción pública local."

Figure 5.20: Types of Citizen Participation in Municipal Initiatives Submitted to the Innovations in Government Prize (2000-2004)

Types of Participation (N=136)

Decision-Making, 12%

Monitoring, 18%

Consultation, 38%

Cooperaton, 32%

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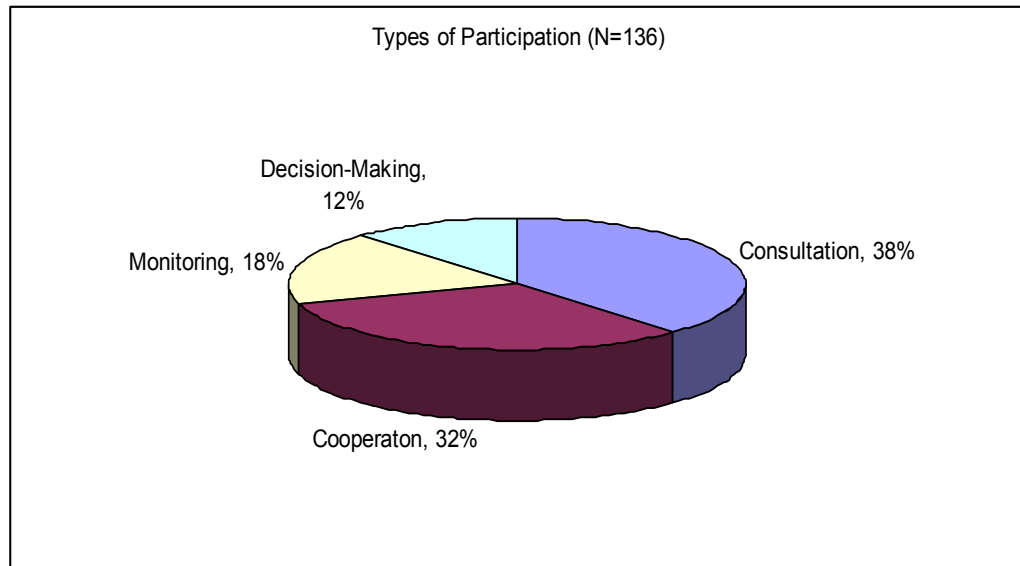
Source: Enrique Cabrero Mendoza, "Participación y deliberación en la acción pública local: La experiencia municipal," in Andrew Selee and Leticia Santín, eds., *Democracia y Ciudadanía: Experiencias de Participación y Deliberación en Gobiernos Locales Mexicanos,* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center and Agora, forthcoming.

The limited scope and durability of participatory mechanisms in Mexico is perhaps not surprising. The poor quality of representative institutions hardly creates incentives for municipal leaders to reach out to citizens. However, the weakness of participatory channels might also suggest a significant disjuncture between the emergence of a more active citizenry, on one hand and the structure of the municipality on the other. In other words, if an autonomous civil society is developing in Mexico as old clientelistic channels within the PRI lose some of their importance, then participation would have to take place at the margin of public institutions since municipal governments have created few durable channels for citizen engagement. Another possibility, however, is that there are few participatory institutions largely because traditional forms of clientelism remain the dominate means of linking citizens and the state. If this is the case, the absence of participatory institutions might reflect the permanence of old

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practices based on political intermediaries. This question will be explored with greater detail in the three case studies that follow.

5.6 Conclusions

Decentralization has given municipalities greater authority and autonomy than they had in previous decades. They now have functions, powers, and resources that were unimaginable in 1980, and the end of one-party rule has freed them from some of the unwritten rules that kept them subservient to higher levels of government. Nonetheless, the actual legal scope of decision-making power of municipalities is still being negotiated, and their dependence on discretional transfers from other levels of government undermines their ability to be completely autonomous in setting policy and planning investments. Contrary to standard definitions of decentralization that see it as a question of transfers from the national government to subnational authorities, decentralization to municipalities in Mexico has involved both a devolution of functions, powers, and resources top-down from the federal government and the bottom-up development of municipal capacities for revenue collection and service provision along with the clarification of municipal jurisdiction for decision-making. Decentralization is thus a multifaceted process that has involved all levels of government in constant negotiation with both top-down devolution and bottom-up construction of municipal authority and autonomy.

Municipalities served as tool for democratization in Mexico's long period of

political opening, but there have been surprisingly few efforts to democratize local governments since then. As a result, municipalities have structures for representation that are artifices of an older authoritarian era and have few durable institutions for transparency and citizen participation. Political parties have little interest in changing this situation because they have adapted their political practices so well to it. The structure of Mexican municipalities was developed to privilege single-party rule with limited public oversight or engagement. However, with only minor adjustments, all of the major political parties have learned how to benefit from the status quo even in a competitive political environment. Although an increasingly independent civil society and media are emerging, they often remain too weak (and, in the case of the media, too dependent on government resources) to demand reforms that could transform local governance from below. Mexican municipalities thus remain condemned to a structure that undermines their responsiveness and accountability and limits their effectiveness as arenas of public deliberation.

Part III

The View from Below

Chapter 6
Chilpancingo: The Continuation of Corporatism?

6.1 A Change in the Air

In late January 2005, three weeks before statewide elections, three young men in suits had set up a stand in the central plaza of Chilpancingo, the state capital of Guerrero, to promote the campaign of Hector Astudillo, the PRI's candidate for governor. A giant television screen broadcast the image of the candidate speaking about progress and development for Guerrero. Astudillo was Chilpancingo's favorite son, and he had done everything a native of the capital could do to prepare himself for the governorship. He had served as a city council member and then mayor of the city before going on to be chair of the state PRI and a Senator. Groomed for leadership within his party, he was confident of his victory in a state that had seen no other party in power for well over seventy years.

The PRI has long maintained its power in Guerrero through alliances with local *caciques*, who maintained control in their municipalities and helped the state government ensure order and get out the vote at election time.[1] Guerrero is one of Mexico's poorest states, representing only 1.68% of Mexico's GDP although it has 3.16% of the population. Almost two thirds of the population earns two minimum wages or less, and fully 36% earns one minimum wage or less. On average, students complete 6.6 years of schooling, the third lowest in the country, and well under the national average of 7.8.

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[1] See Armando Bartra, *Guerrero Bronco: Campesinos, ciudadanos y guerrilleros en la Costa Grande,* second edition, Mexico: Era, 2000; Carlos Illades, *Breve historia de Guerrero,* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000; Jorge Rendón Alarcón, *Sociedad y conflicto en el estado de Guerrero, 1911-1995,* Mexico: Plaza y Valdés, 2003.

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Periodically social movements have arisen to challenge the existing political and social order, but these have generally been put down with force. Starting in the 1960s, several social leaders gave up on peaceful protest and created guerrilla organizations to fight against the state and federal governments. Even today these rebellions still simmer in the mountains and the coast, the poorest regions of the state. Guerrero has been, without doubt, one of Mexico's most destitute and most openly conflicted states.

In the midst of all this, Chilpancingo has been the center of the PRI's political machine in Guerrero. As the capital, it has been the home of the state bureaucracy and the companies that depend on it for their business. Despite a growing opposition party presence in the late 1990s, the PRI had never been seriously challenged here. Chilpancingo was, by all appearances, a town where very little had changed even as the rest of the country and state lived through decades of political turmoil.

Figure 6.1: Map of the State of Guerrero
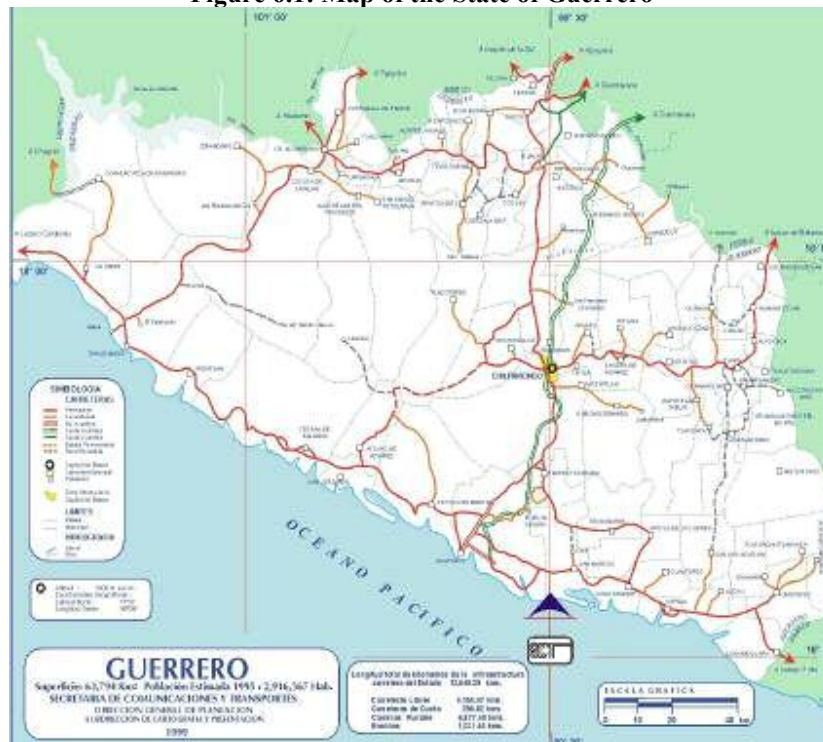
Note: Chilpancingo in yellow in the center of the state.

In fact, the city had something of a reputation for being a place where everything and yet nothing ever happened. Many of the tumultuous events taking place elsewhere in the state and the country passed through Chilpancingo, yet rarely seemed to disturb its peace.[2] Rebel commanders, army generals, social leaders, union bosses, landowners, peasant organizers, human rights advocates, and political leaders of all stripes passed through here. The city was witness to political negotiations and public debates, to protests and the planning of assassinations. However, the city itself seemed largely untouched by the dramatic events going on around it and by the decisions outsiders made within its limits.

Every three years the city returned the PRI to power in seemingly uncomplicated elections marked by little real competition. Local contestation seemed muted and easily channeled. Part of the story was city residents' dependence on state government employment and contracts. The other part was that city residents had benefited from the PRI's continued rule; not equitably, of course, but sufficiently so that political dissent could be channeled and contained. The state frequently invested in the city's development, supplementing meager municipal budgets by providing funds for extending basic services and building roads, markets, and parks. In return, the state governor and the state's principal political leaders generally influenced the selection of the city's mayor and intervened periodically in municipal decisions. The municipal government helped

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[2] Tomás Bustamante states that "Chilpancingo is one of those places which, from an early age, has not had much of a local history of its own, rather it has received the influence of transitive cultures….In each stage of its history, we find it to be the scene of social processes that have to do with other regions and social groups which determine the life of the inhabitants of the place." (Tomás Bustamante, Cruz, "Revolución e Inmigración, 1910-1940, in *Historia de Chilpancingo,* Chilpancingo: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 1999, pp. 253-4). I largely agree with Bustamante but with a slight difference in emphasis: Like any city, Chilpancingo very much has its own social and political processes that follow local dynamics, but these are also implicated with the processes taking place elsewhere in the state and cannot be understood without reference to these.

maintain peace by creating a loose network of intermediaries in each neighborhood who had ties to the ruling party and helped generate party support at election time. These intermediaries provided a channel for community demands and provided a conduit to assign resources for services and infrastructure. They also helped get out the votes at election time for the PRI.

Something was wrong on this January day, however. No one was stopping to look at the giant screen portraying Hector Astudillo or listen to his campaign promises. Instead, there was a large gathering part-way across the plaza around a small black-and-white television set broadcasting the image of Zeferino Torreblanca, a charismatic businessman and former mayor of nearby Acapulco, who was the gubernatorial candidate of the left-of-center PRD. Two poorly dressed older men, who seemed surprised by the crowd, answered questions and pointed to newspaper articles about the candidate haphazardly taped to the wall behind the television screen. Clearly something was happening in this city where nothing ever seemed to happen.

Three weeks later, in the state elections, Zeferino Torreblanca of the PRD overwhelmed Hector Astudillo, 55%-42%, to end the PRI's rule in the state. It was a stunning defeat for the party that had kept power for over seven decades. To add insult to injury, Hector Astudillo lost his hometown as well. Chilpancingo voted overwhelmingly for Torreblanca over its own favorite son and former mayor. Indeed, the PRI managed to hold on to only a few of the poorest neighborhoods around the edges of the city and some of the rural areas further away.[3] Almost the entire city—the bureaucrats, the

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[3]This judgment is based on my analysis of the election results by polling station. Detailed election data is available from the state electoral council at www.ceegro.org.mx. The electoral map of Chilpancingo, with polling stations marked, was made available by the Federal Electoral Institute. Torreblanca (PRD) defeated Astudillo (PRI) in Chilpancingo 50.8% to 47.0% according to the state electoral council's figures. The

businesspeople, and even the majority of the poor, all who had benefited from the PRI's largesse—voted for the PRD candidate. The old mechanisms for control seemed to have lost their ability to turn out votes for the official party.

Figure 6.2: Photograph of Chilpancingo along the Mexico City-Acapulco Highway

The election appeared to suggest that the city had never been quite as tranquil and uncomplicated as it had seemed. Underneath the semblance of unity around the dominant political party, dissent and dissatisfaction had been building and new cleavages developing among citizens in the city. As the municipality had undergone a process of significant growth in its authority and autonomy, it had also become more plural and contested. The increase in the municipality's responsibilities, though still contained somewhat by the state government, had given citizens something to fight over in municipal elections. Finally, in the 2005 elections, the old mechanisms of control had failed after years of silent erosion. However, it was unclear what the new forms of political mediation were.[4] What implications did these changes have for democratic

margin was notably higher in the center city that makes up three-quarters or more of the municipality.
[4] For an excellent analysis of the failure , at a state level, of the old mechanisms for mediation and its impact on the 2005 elections, see Raúl Fernández Gómez, *Elecciones y Alternancia Guerrero,* Mexico: Nuevo Horizonte Editors, 2004. The book was written slightly before the elections, but shows in great

governance in a city like Chilpancingo, where one party had ruled unchallenged for over

seven decades along with a state government of the same party? As the municipality had

become increasingly relevant to citizens' lives, what quality of democratic governance

was emerging?

6.2 Deep Historical Roots, Recent Growth

Chilpancingo was first registered as a municipality in 1693.[5] For most of its

existence it remained a sleepy, mostly rural municipality, on the highway connecting

Acapulco and Mexico City. The town emerged from its slumber, however, periodically

in the nineteenth century to take a significant place on the national stage. In 1813,

Mexico's independence leader José María Morelos y Pavón called for a constituent

congress in Chilpancingo, in an area the rebel forces controlled, to declare Mexico's

independence. The Congress of Anáhuac, as it was called, proclaimed Mexico's

independence, and Morelos issued his "Sentiments of the Nation," a statement of

principles for the cause of independence. One of Mexico's leading independence

advocates, Nicolás Bravo, and his two brothers, were also natives of the town. Bravo

would go on to become Mexico's first Vice President after independence and would

serve twice as President and two more times as Vice President in the first two decades

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detail how the PRD had built a coalition out of historical social movements, dissidents from the PRI, and those citizens in the growing urban areas who were no longer connected to the PRI through old clientelistic networks.

[5] There are references to Chilpancingo's legal status as early as 1591, but it appears to have been a ranch rather than a town at the time. Jaime Salazar Adame, "Introducción," in *Historia de Chilpancingo,* Chilpancingo: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 1999, pp. 14-15; see also Angélica Gutiérrez y Salgado and Hector Rodríguez Morales, *Chilpancingo Ayer y Hoy,* Chilpancingo: Instituto Guerrerense de Cultura, 1987, p. 30.

after independence. In the 1850s Chilpancingo reemerged as an important military garrison in the midst of the civil war between liberals and conservatives. In 1855, as the conservatives faced defeat, Chilpancingo was the site of the negotiations to install Juan Alvarez as Mexico's first liberal president and end the civil war. Benito Juárez, Alvarez's personal secretary at the time, carried out the negotiations.[6]

Chilpancingo remained a small, mostly rural municipality (see Figure 6.3). It was perhaps best known for being the site of an annual Christmas fair, which attracted regional and national attention, and for serving as a center of commerce along the Acapulco-Mexico City highway.[7] In religious matters, it depended on the neighboring municipality of Zumpango, which was the parish seat; in political matters, it depended on the municipality of Tixtla, which was the district capital and later the state capital. In 1868, however, Chilpancingo became its own parish.[8] An 1870 rebellion led by the leaders of Tixtla against the state governor convinced him to move the state capital from Tixtla to Chilpancingo on an emergency basis. In 1871, the state congress formally decreed that Chilpancingo would become the new state capital.[9]

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[6] See Gutiérrez y Salgado, *Chilpancingo Ayer y Hoy,* chapter 2.

[7] Teresa Pavía, "Centro de Poder, 1821-1870," in *Historia de Chilpancingo,* Chilpancingo: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 1999, p. 178. Starting in 1825, Chilpancingo was the first city in modern-day Guerrero authorized to have an annual fair without the participants paying state and federal taxes; in 1857 it was still one of only 15 annual fairs in the country, and it still operates today.

[8] Pavia, "Centro de Poder," p. 186; Gutiérrez y Salgado and Rodríguez, *Chilpancingo Ayer y Hoy,* p. 37.

[9] The governor cited two reasons for this: the rebellion in Tixtla (which he had successfully contained) and Chilpancingo's advantageous location on the Acapulco-Mexico City highway. Pavía, "Centro de Poder."

Figure 6.3: Population of Chilipancingo, 1849-1900
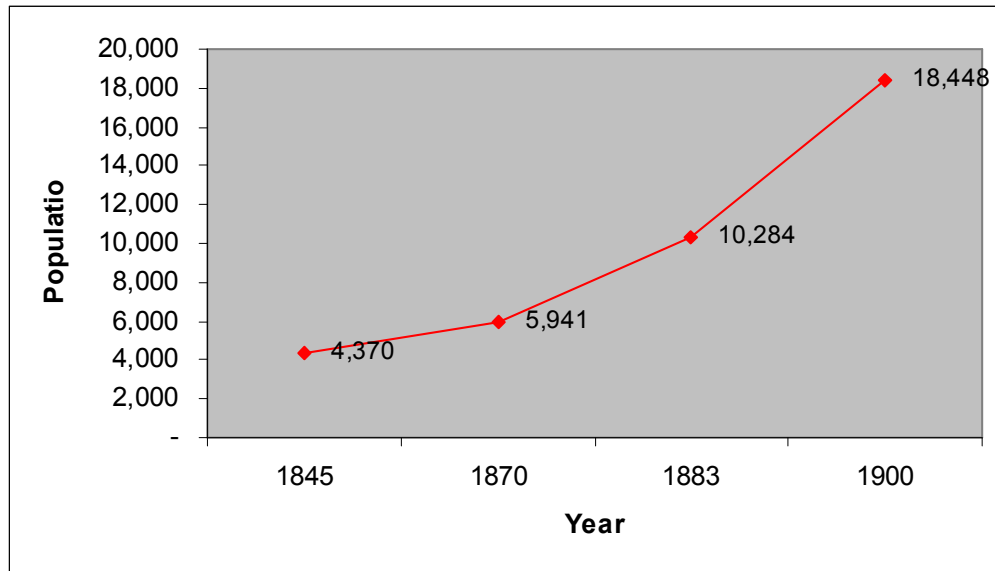
Source: Angélica Gutiérrez y Salgado and Héctor Rodríguez Morales, *Chilpancingo Ayer y Hoy*
Chilpancingo: Instituto Guerrerense de la Cultura, 1987, pp. 38, 41; Tomás Bustamante Alvarez,
"Revolución e inmigración, 1910-1940," in Jaime Salazar Adame, ed., *Historia de Chilpancingo*,
Chilpancingo: Asociación de Historiadores de Guerrero, A.C., 1999, p. 277.

With its new political status, the city attracted a new elite of landowners from

elsewhere in the state who moved to the city to take part in politics.[10] According to

Bustamante:

> In Chilpancingo several families emerged that began to create the new
> social power tied to the institutions of government; they continued to be
> the owners of land, ranchers, farmers, traders, etc., but increasingly were
> integrated with the institutions of government.[11]

The emergence of Chilpancingo as a state capital coincided with the era of Porfirio Díaz,

an era that was marked by rapid economic growth. The city would have to survive two

major earthquakes in 1902 and 1907, however, and the ravages of the Mexican

Revolution.

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[10] "The majority of members of the new political class who came to power in the different levels of the
state government came from the class of landowners formed in the shadows of the policies of the *Porfiriato*
[administration of President Porfirio Díaz, 1877-1910]." (Bustamante, "Revolución e Inmigración," p.
255).

[11] Bustamante, "Revolución e Inmigración," p. 288.

Figure 6.4: Photograph of a Festival in Chilpancingo

Source: Website of the State of Guerrero, www.guerrero.gob.mx.

The city was centered on four *barrios,* traditional neighborhoods, each with its own church and annual religious festival.[12] However, after 1950s, the city's growth accelerated. The expansion of the state bureaucracy and the growth of the state's autonomous university served as a magnet to attract new residents. At the same time the endemic poverty in the rest of the state pushed people out of their own localities in search of new opportunities, generally to one of the larger cities in the state (Acapulco, Chilpancingo, Iguala, and Taxco). After 1960, a majority of inhabitants of the municipality lived in the city and this increased in size dramatically from just over 50% in 1960 to 74% in 2000, and the population more than quintupled from 35,838 to 192,947 (and to over 200,000 by 2004) (see Figure 6.5).[13]   The city's first map, which covered

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[12] For a description of city life in the four barrios—San Mateo, San Antonio, Santa Cruz y San Francisco— and the city's gradual urbanization, see Wences, Chilpancingo ayer y hoy, los personajes, etc.

[13] The municipality is probably much more urban than the 74% figure suggests if we include many of the small villages around the city that have been effectively absorbed by it. Less than 10% of the population of

the four *barrios* and twenty-nine *colonias* (low-income neighborhoods)*,* was not developed until the late 1960s.[14] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the number of *colonias* exploded, reaching over 400 by 2004 (see Table 6.1). Many of these were initially irregular *colonias,* that is, they were the product of "land invasions" that political leaders, community organizers, or the migrants themselves, who lacked land titles. By 2004, approximately four-fifths of the *colonias* had land titles according to official figures.[15]

Figure 6.5: Population of Chilpancingo, Guerrero (City Center and Municipality), 1900-2000

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Municipal Population	18,448	17,958	16,120	19,663	22,729	30,721	35,838	59,087	98,266	136,164	192,947
Urban Population	7,497	7,994	5,955	8,315	8,834	12,673	18,022	36,193	67,498	97,165	142,746
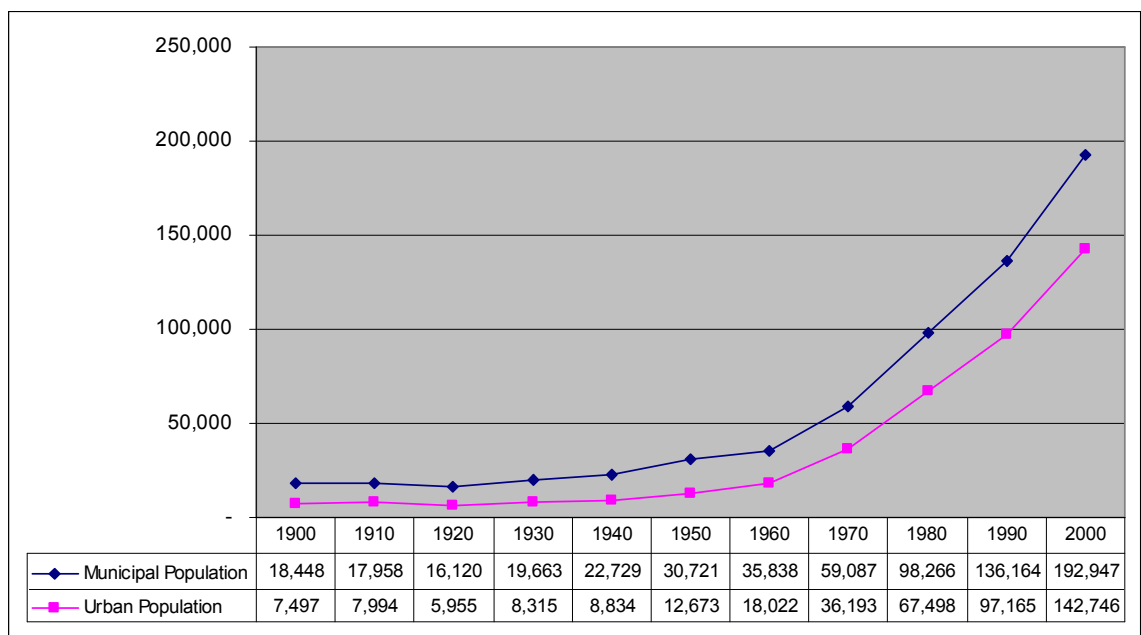
Source: Raul Velez Calvo and Rafael Rubí Alarcón, "El Paisaje," in *Historia de Chilpancingo*, Chilpancingo: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 1999, p. 19; INEGI, *Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 2000.*

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the municipality is involved in agriculture (see Table 7.3).

[14] The first map of the city, made in the late 1960s, is available as an attachment in the book by Zaida Falcón de Gyves, *Chilpancingo: Ciudad en Crecimiento,* Mexico City: UNAM, 1969. The map's development is discussed on p. 7.

[15] Informe Municipal 2004, p. 66. However, the director of the city office for *Colonias* and *Barrios* (*Procurador de Barrios y Colonias*) noted that there were over 100 irregular *colonias.* Interview with José Luis Lozena, director of Colonias and Barrios, April 20, 2005.

Table 6.1: Growth of Colonias in Chilpancingo, Guerrero (1960-2004)

Year	Colonias (total)	Regular Colonias	Irregular Colonias
1960	2	2	0
1969	23	n/d	n/d
1980	120 (approx.)	n/d	n/d
1999	368	292	76
2004	409	330	79

Note: Regular colonias are those where most residents have land titles; irregular colonias lack land titles. Source: Data taken from several sources: 1960 and 1969, de Gyves, p. 31; 1980, Wences Román, p. 156; 1999, Plan Municipal de Desarrollo 1999-2002, and 2004, Informe Municipal 2004, p. 66. The 1987 Informe Municipal (p. 8) notes that over half of the colonias are regular, while a third are irregular and the rest are in the process of regularization.

As it grew, the city remained largely dependent for employment on the government and services related to it. A significant secondary source of employment was in commerce and business, often tied to the commercialization of agricultural products from other municipalities in Guerrero. A study in the 1960s suggested that around 45% of the workforce was either in the city and state governments or in services directly tied to them.[16] By 2000, a full 29.4% of the population worked in government (including teaching and medical services), and another 15.2% worked in commercial enterprises. Less than a twelfth of the workforce in the municipality was in agriculture (7.9%) and manufacturing (7.8%) each, while most other workers were in service occupations that depended directly or indirectly on government and business: construction (10.3%), transportation (4.8%), hotels and restaurants (5.0%), professional services and service to business (3.1%) (see Figure 6.6).[17] There was little local industry.[18] The city had achieved higher income levels than the average for the state (and close to national averages), but it had more low-wage workers than most medium-sized cities (see Figure

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[16] De Gyves, *Chilpancingo,* pp. 37-39.

[17] The remaining occupations are all in the service sector as well. Data are taken from INEGI *Cuaderno Estadístico Municipal: Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2002, based on data from the *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2000.*

[18] The city's Municipal Development Plan for 1999-2002 notes that "Manufacturing has not managed to develop as an industry; the activity is limited to small economic units, usually family-based, even though there is a large demand for products of this type." (Plan de Desarrollo Municipal 1999-2002, p. 8).

6.7). There were significant educational opportunities available, however, and these showed dramatic improvement in the 1980s and 1990s (see Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.6: Employment by Sector in Chilpancingo, Guerrero (in Percent of Workforce), 2000
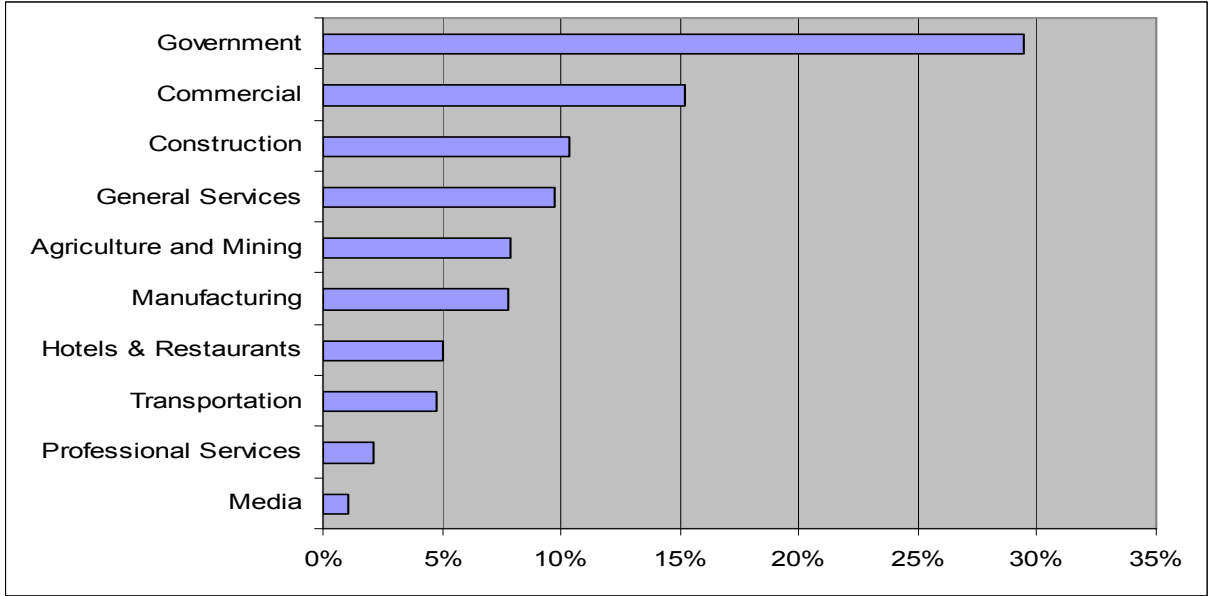
Note: The remaining occupations are all in the service sector as well.
Source: INEGI, *Cuaderno Estadístico Municipal: Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2002, based on data from the *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2000.*

Figure 6.7: Distribution of Income in Chilpancingo by Multiples of the Minimum Wage (compared with the distribution nationally, in Guerrero, and in other medium-sized cities)

	<1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 5	5 or more	No data
☐ Chilpancingo	21.1	26.8	17.4	18.8	11.2	4.7
■ State	35.9	30.2	12.7	10.5	5.8	4.9
☐ National	20.7	30.3	17.6	14.1	11.8	5.4
☐ Medium Cities	14.3	31.2	19.5	15.8	13.8	5.4

Source: INEGI, Censo de Poblacion y Vivienda, 2000.

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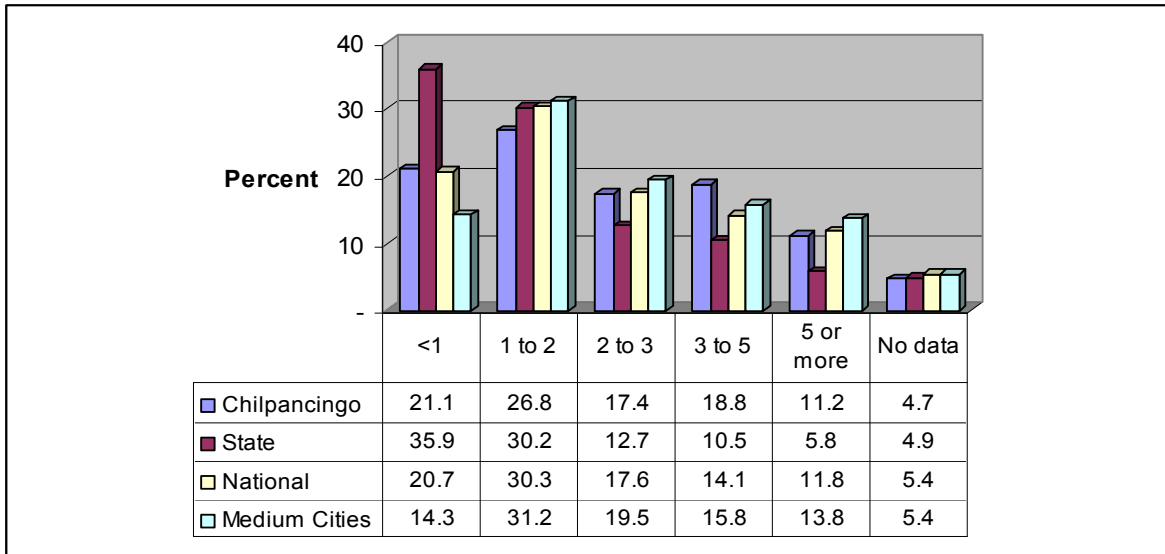
Figure 6.8: Education Indicators in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000
◆ % Adult illiteracy	20	15	11
■ % Adults w/o primary education	21	17	14
▲ % Children (6-14) not in school	26	13	9
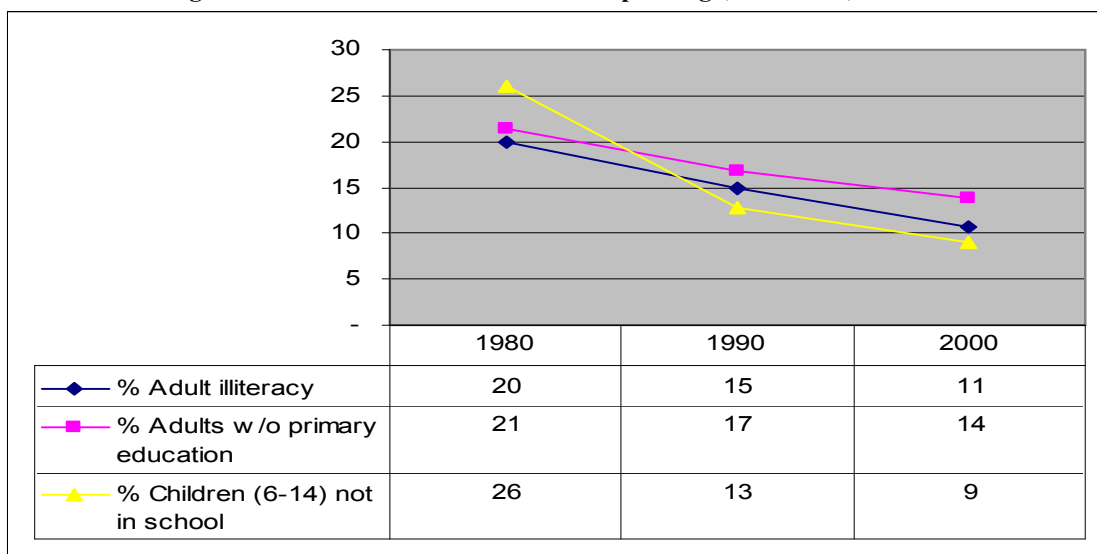
Note: Adults are those 15 years old or older.
Source: INEGI, Censo General de Poblacion y Vivienda, 1980, 1990, 2000.

6.3 Strategies of Control, Moments of Rebellion (1960-1995)

Among Chilpancingo's first inhabitants in colonial times were people with the family names of Adame, Leyva, and Alarcón.[19] Three hundred years later, those family names still resonated: between 1986 and 2005 there were mayors of the city named Florencio Salazar Adame, Efraín Leyva Acevedo, and Saúl Alarcón Abarca. This fact highlights one of the central truths of politics in the city: family names, *apellidos,* matter. The elite of the city has hardly been static over the centuries; it has grown and changed with migration and especially with the movement of elites from the rest of the state to Chilpancingo after it became the state capital. However, there is little doubt that the city's elite has been composed almost exclusively of a small set of families with

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[19] Gutiérrez y Salgado and Rodríguez, *Chilpancingo Ayer y Hoy,* p. 30.

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recognizable *apellidos*.[20] These families live in the city, generally in one of the four

traditional *barrios,* and often have ties to other elites throughout the state. There have

been times when the popular sectors have risen to prominence—notably after the

Revolution, when the popular Greens and the elite Reds faced off in election after

election—but over time and until recent times, the *apellidos* have dominated politics..

The selection for municipal office has often required a negotiation among these families,

mediated by powerful state-level political leaders.

In the nineteenth century, Chilpancingo was ruled by a *cabildo* (city council)

elected for one-year terms, with the mayor chosen from the collegial body.[21] The

municipal government was responsible for organizing elections, resolving disputes other

than major crimes, maintaining elementary schools, taking care of public buildings and

the cemetery, maintaining roads, and carrying out basic improvements to municipal

infrastructure. The municipality had funds from fines and taxes on public spectacles,

sales, common property, and the transport of goods through the jurisdiction.[22] The city

was subject to vigilance by a prefect who served the district of Tixtla and reported

directly to the governor. The prefect had the ability to review the finances of the

municipality and intervene on behalf of the governor in local decisions.

The post-Revolutionary governments cancelled the figure of the prefect, but the

tradition of a rotating city council with one year terms continued until the 1940s. In

1936, Aurora Meza Andraca became the first woman to serve as mayor in Mexico's

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[20] The key family names include: Adame, Memije, Calvo, Alarcón, Acevedo, Tapia, and Leyva. Time after time in interviews, political leaders noted the importance of *apellidos* in the political process, although they often recognized that this was now changing (as we will discuss later).

[21] For a detailed description of the number of city council members over time, see Jaime Salazar Adame, "De Ciudad a Capital," in *Historia de Chilpancingo,* Chilpancingo: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 1999. At several points throughout the nineteenth century, Chilpancingo, like most of Mexico, had auxiliary mayors who served in localities outside the main city.

[22] Pavia, "Centro de Poder", p. 165-66.

history, ten years before women's suffrage for local elections was enshrined in the

Constitution. Eventually the terms were extended to three years with no reelection

allowed, and the members of the city council were elected on a joint slate with the mayor.

The number of council members varied over the years; however, one constant, until 1989,

was that all members were part of the mayor's slate, ensuring mayoral dominance over

the council and single-party rule. Indeed, the PRI won all elections in Chilpancingo with

little effort from the 1940s until the 1990s (see Figure 6.9).

The state government—and key state political leaders—also maintained tight

control over municipal elections. At least by the 1950s, it was common for the state

government, in consultation with key local *caciques,* to name the candidates for mayor

and city council in most of the state's municipalities. The state frequently removed

mayors as well, either through decree or through unofficial pressure. Even though the

prefects had been eliminated and the Mexican Constitution forbade any intermediate

authority between the state and municipality, the state constitution allowed the governor

to appoint inspectors to "examine accounting, verify entrance and exit of funds, oversee

public services, and inform on the labors of the municipal government."[23] Mayors were

thus elected at the will of the state governor and had to serve at his pleasure as well.[24]

In the case of Chilpancingo, the tutelage of the state government was even more

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[23] Moisés Ochoa Campo, *Guerrero: Análisis de un estado en problema,* Mexico City: Editorial Trillas,
1964, pp. 35-41, quote from the state constitution in effect in 1960 on p. 35.
[24] See also Armando Bartra, "Donde los sismos nacen," in Tomás Bustamante Álvarez and Sergio
Sarmiento Silva, eds., *El Sur en Movimiento: La reinvención de Guerrero del siglo XXI,* Mexico: Editora
Laguna, 2001, p. 45. State leaders were not immune to federal interference either, however. From 1925
until 2005 only seven governors served their entire term in office. In other words, in eighty years, there
was elected governor serving for only forty-two years. The federal governor had formal and informal
mechanisms for forcing governors to resign in the same way that the state governor could do to
municipalities (see Chapter 4). In Guerrero, where conflict often spiraled out of control, the federal
government frequently saw that it was in their interest to remove elected governors. See Carlos Illades,
Breve Historia de Guerrero, p. 120.

direct than in most municipalities. The city had little own-source revenue and few

possibilities for investment in infrastructure. As one study in 1960 noted, "Chilpancingo,

despite being a capital, remains in the worst state of abandonment….the lack of resources

and help is translated into a lack of drinking water, sewage, pavement, and schools."[25]

Soon the state government began playing a conspicuous role in upgrading the city's

infrastructure. In the period 1981-87, for example, Governor Alejandro Cervantes

Delgado undertook a major investment strategy for the capital primarily in roads, water,

and sewage infrastructure.[26] When Florencio Salazar Adame took over as mayor in 1987,

he recognized that many of the functions that the municipal government should be

performing were actually being done by the state government. He noted in his first

yearly report:

> We received a public administration…with modest public functions,
> without decision-making authority in the execution of public works,
> constrained to provide insufficient services, and always leaning on the
> support of the State Government, which substituted, in large part, the
> responsibilities of the municipality…We would greatly appreciate the
> respectful decision of the Governor not to interfere in municipal
> responsibilities…we have proposed to overcome the inertia that made our
> citizens see in the State Governor also the Mayor. For that reason, we
> have assumed all of our functions, which has meant...setting about the
> performance of our tasks with our resources. The inhabitants of
> Chilpancingo now know that municipal matters are dealt with and
> resolved in the Municipality.[27]

Despite this bold declaration, municipal finances remained fragile and over 78% of

Salazar's municipal budget the following year was still composed of federal and state

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[25] Ochoa Campo, *Guerrero,* p. 122.

[26] This initiative, known as "Plan Chilpancingo," transformed the physical appearance of the city (Gutiérez y Salgado and Rodríguez, *Chilpancingo Ayer y Hoy*, pp. 72-75).

[27] Informe Municipal 1987, p. 3 and p. 26. It should be noted that Florencia Salazar would go on to be a prominent PRI politician in Guerrero before, in a surprise move, throwing his support to Vicente Fox in the 2000 presidential elections. He was rewarded with several high-level government appointments in Fox's administration including Secretary of Agrarian Reform.

transfers.[28] In the mid-1990s, the state government continued to carry out major

investments in Chilpancingo, even producing a small report to boast of the state

government's investment in the city.[29] The dependence of the municipal administration

on the mayor was, therefore, compounded by the mayor's almost total dependence on the

state government and on the state governor in particular.

The control of the state government and the state political elites over municipal

politics was never complete, however, and a great deal of controversy and contestation

did take place within municipalities, including Chilpancingo. In the case of the capital,

the most visible moment in which the dominant system was challenged was in 1960,

when a popular protest spun out of control of the government and set off a series of

events that transformed life in the city and in the state. A confluence of factors, including

a rise in taxes and increasing repression, led to protests throughout Guerrero in 1960.

Students and faculty of the Autonomous University of Guerrero, based in Chilpancingo,

soon joined the protests and added to them a demand for full autonomy of the university.

The state government cracked down on the protests, killing eighteen people.[30] The

federal Congress quickly forced the governor to resign, and the new state government

granted autonomy to the university. The events of 1960 have remained a powerful

symbol in the collective consciousness of Chilpancingo, as well as "a turning point in the

history of Guerrero…, a symbolic reference of popular mobilization, and a point from

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[28] Informe Municipal 1988.

[29] The report notes that "From the beginning of this [state government] administration, it has been a priority objective to improve the image of the city of Chilpancingo." The report only mentions the municipal government in passing. *Construyendo un nuevo Chilpancingo,* Chilpancingo: Gobierno del Estado de Guerrero, 1995, quote on p. 12.

[30] Alba Teresa Estrada, Castañon. *El movimiento anticaballerosta: Guerrero 1960*: *Crónica de un conflicto*. Chilpancingo: Editorial Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 2001, pp. 49-90.
Castaños Alba Teresa. *El movimiento anticaballerista: Guerrero 1960*. "Crónica de un conflicto". Editorial, UAG. Guerrero, México. 2001, Pág. 49-90.

which some of the central actors in the conflicts to come emerged."[31] These events also produced divergent responses from protest leaders. The most visible leader of the protests, Genaro Vásquez, tried for some time to lead a political struggle outside the PRI but, after considerable repression, ended up towards the end of the 1960s founding a guerrilla organization in the mountains of.Guerrero. Vásquez's efforts would also spawn a second guerrilla organization, the Party of the Poor, which began in the late 1960s and continues indirectly today (through a new organization, the EPR, which sees itself as a continuation). Other leaders, like Jesús Araujo Hernández and Josefat Acevedo, remained with the official party and went on to serve in positions in the public administration in the following decades.[32]

The PRI managed to reassert control over most dissent in the state—leading some opposition leaders like Vásquez to take up arms—but the illusion of harmony had been broken. Over the years, several other forms of protest and contestation outside of the official party would emerge. In the mountains and coast of Guerrero, rural unions became especially influential, and the 1990s saw the emergence of human rights organizations to defend rural activists who were often threatened, jailed, or killed.[33] In Chilpancingo, as the number of *colonias* grew, so too did organizations that represented the urban poor in the city. Some of the strongest organizations, such as the Unión de Colonias Populares de Chilpancingo, were affiliated with the PRI.[34] Others like the

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[31] Illades, *Breve Historia de Guerrero,* p. 131.
[32] Araujo would go on to be chief justice of the Superior Court and Acevedo an interim mayor of Chilpancingo. See Illades, *Breve Historia,* p. 136 on Araujo; and on Acevedo, see Felix J. López Romero *Del mundo chilpancingueño,* Chilpancingo: Ayuntamiento de Chilpancingo, 1995..
[33] See Armando Bartra, *Guerrero Bronco,* for a more detailed discussion of these movements.
[34] Union of Popular Neighborhoods of Chilpancingo. It later changed its name to Movimiento Territorial de Chilpancingo (Territorial Movement of Chilpancingo). Interview with Clementino Navarrete, one of the former leaders of the Union and former president of the Development Committee of the Tatagildo neighborhood, April 10, 2005.

Consejo Popular de Colonias, were close to the Trotskyite PRT and to other left-wing parties.[35] The Urban Popular Movement (MUP), as the non-PRI organizations were called, created concern among PRI leaders and forced them to invest in regularizing land titles and providing services to undercut the strength of the organizations.[36] At the same time, a dissident teachers' movement within the official National Union of Education Workers (SNTE), Mexico's largest union, caught on in Guerrero and won adherents among teachers in Chilpancingo. Although the dissidents never broke openly with the national union, they openly challenged the state and federal government on teacher pay and education investments. In the process they both received ongoing support from the PRD and provided one of its most consistent bases of support.[37]

In Guerrero left-wing political parties and the right-of-center PAN developed small but loyal followings and competed in state and municipal elections starting in 1980 (see Figures 6.9, 6.10). The candidacy of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas awoke the population in 1988 and he officially won 36% of the state vote in the presidential elections of that year, though his actual totals might have been much more (Figure 6.11). From that point on, the left became particularly successful in challenging the PRI in local elections in Guerrero and gaining a foothold in the state congress. However, in Chilpancingo, the opposition parties lagged behind their performance elsewhere in the state, and through most of the 1980s and 1990s the PRI seemed immune to the winds of change blowing

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[35] Popular Council of Neighborhoods. This was the major alliance of non-PRI neighborhood organizations begun in 1988; in 1989 it became the Frente de Lucha de las Colonias Populares (Front for the Struggle of the Popular Neighborhoods) in a merger with other organizations. Interview with Daniel Acatitlán Ramón, April 10, 2005, and "Se Integró el Consejo Popular de Colonias," *Expresión Popular,* January 11, 1988; "Colonos acusan a funcionario municipal," *El Sol de Chilpancingo,* May 26, 1989; "Constituyen aquí el Frente de Lucha de las Colonias Populares," *El Sol de Chilpancingo,* September 12, 1989.
[36] The Informe Municipal 1990 of Mayor Efraín Leyva Acevedo is particularly clear in this regard.
[37] On dissidence in the SNTE, see Joe Foweraker, *Popular Mobilization in Mexico: The Teachers' Movement 1977-87,* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

elsewhere in Guerrero (see Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.9 Municipal Elections in Guerrero (State Averages), 1980-1996

	1980	1983	1986	1989	1993	1996
PRI	87.6%	86.7%	85.3%	58.3%	58.3%	50.2%
Left*	6.8%	7.7%	7.7%	25.3%	29.6%	35.8%
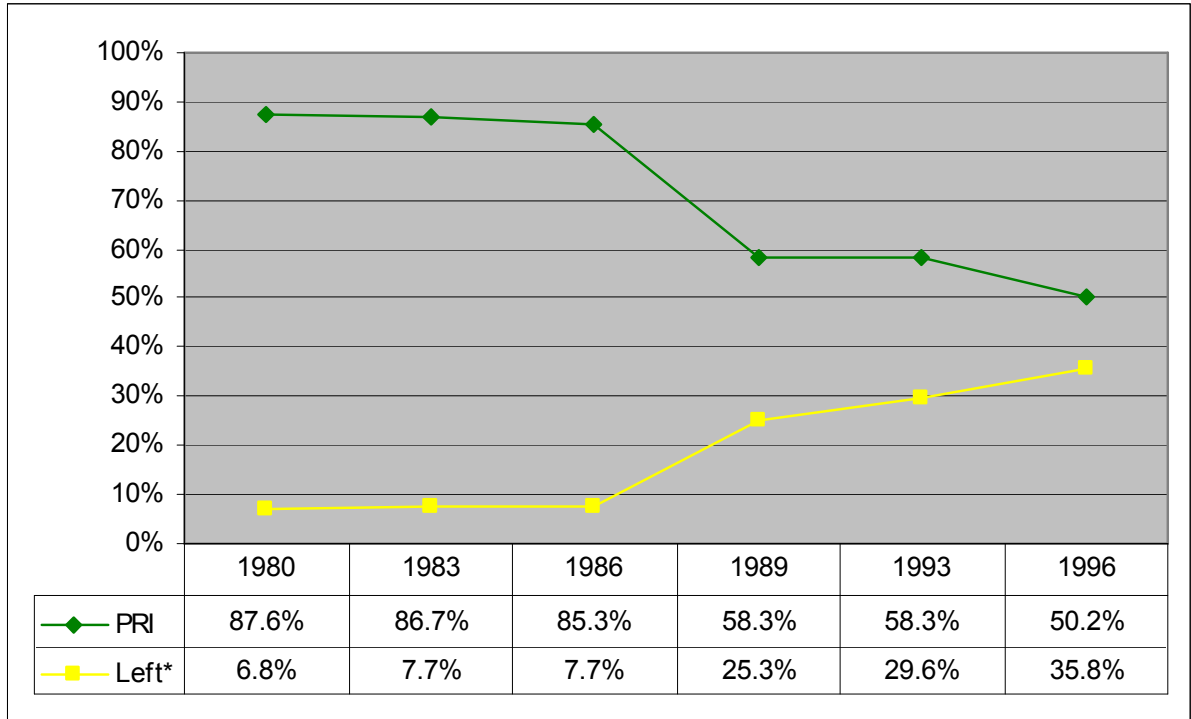
* Left is a composite of left parties from 1980-1986; after 1989 vote is for the PRD only.
Note: The PAN has generally registered 1 - 4% of the vote, except in 1996 when it reached 8.5%.
Source: Alba Teresa Estrada Castanon, "Guerrero en los 90s: Realineamiento Electoral y Movimiento Social," in David Cienfuegos Salgado and Humberto Santos Bautista, eds, *Guerrero: Los Retos del Nuevo Siglo,* Chilpancingo: Fundacion Academica Guerrerense, 2000.

Figure 6.8: Municipal Elections in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 1977-1996

	1977	1980	1983	1986	1989	1993	1996
PRI	99.4%	86.1%	86.5%	88.9%	58.8%	71.5%	60.6%
PRD/Left*	0.0%	8.6%	6.2%	5.2%	24.6%	16.5%	24.9%
PAN	0.4%	2.0%	1.4%	0.8%	1.7%	1.8%	5.4%
Others	0.2%	1.8%	3.8%	4.1%	9.0%	10.3%	11.0%
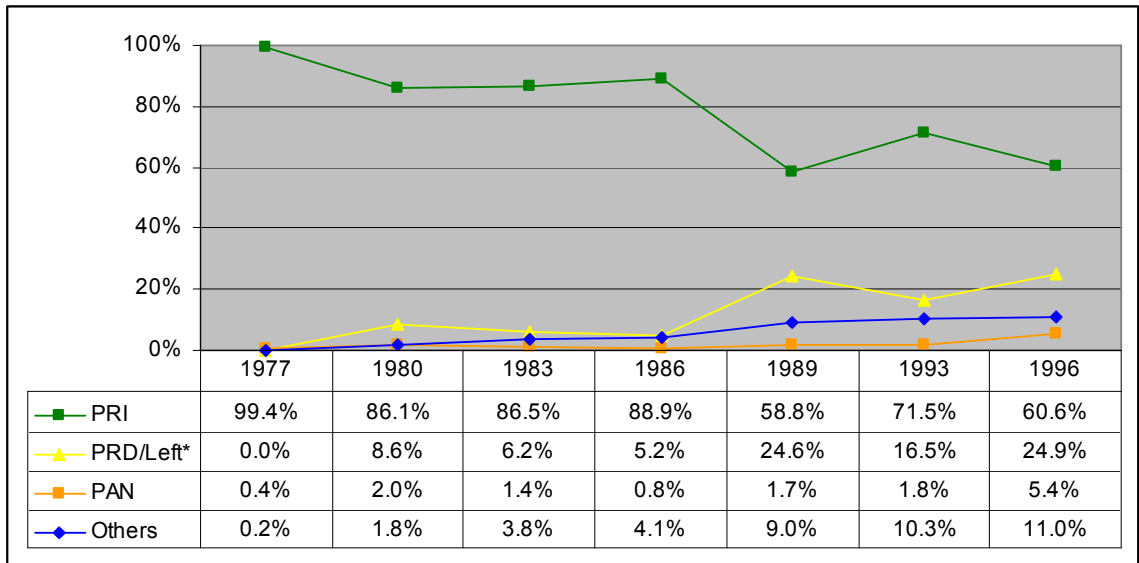
Note: * = PCM in 1980; PSUM in 1983 and 1986; PRD after 1989
Source: Consejo Estatal Electoral de Guerrero

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Figure 6.11: Official Vote Totals in 1988 Presidential Elections, State of Guerrero, 1988

	Percent of Vote
■ Carlos Salinas de Gortari (PRI)	60%
□ Cuahtemoc Cardenas (FDN)	36%
■ Manuel Clouthier (PAN)	2%
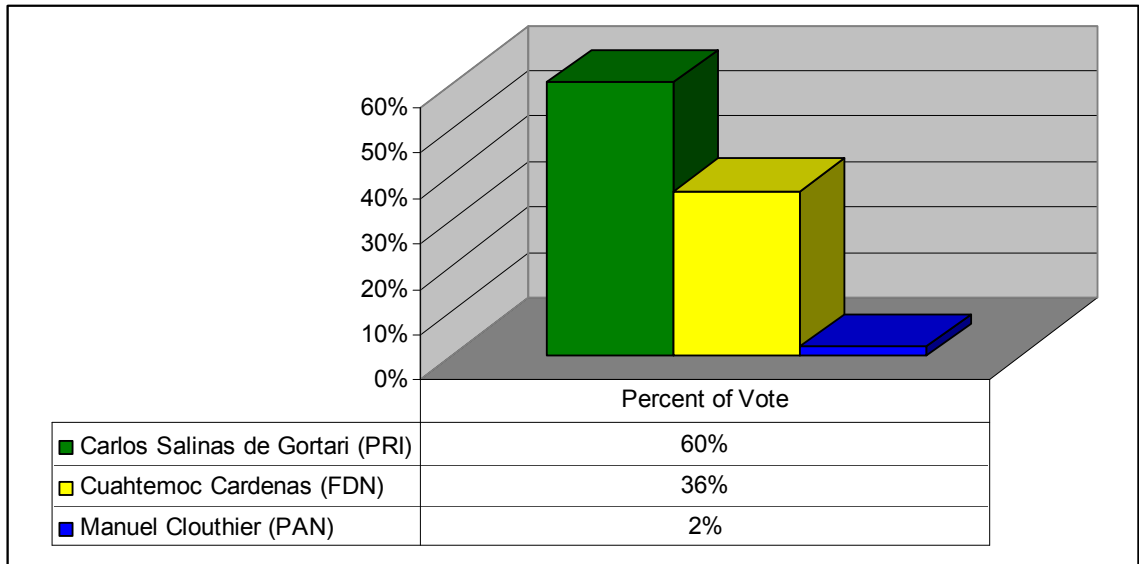
Source: Alba Teresa Estrada Castanon, "Guerrero en los 90s," p. 44; Bartra, *Guerrero Bronco,* pp. 141-42.
Note: Vote for Cárdenas was probably much higher than reflected in the official total.

6.4 How Much Decentralization (1996-2005)?

Authority

Chilpancingo, like all other municipalities in Guerrero, has long struggled to raise local revenues to finance local government expenditures. Chilpancingo lacks industry and, as noted earlier, is largely dependent on the state government. This dependency, in turn, reduces the city's potential tax base. On the other hand, the proliferation of commercial enterprises, the services related to government, and the annual fair, which is heavily attended from all over the state, do provide some opportunities for taxation. Overall Chilpancingo fares better than many other municipalities in Guerrero by

diversifying its revenue sources and has for several decades.[38] However, Chilpancingo

fares poorly when compared to other municipalities of the same size in Mexico.

Chilpancingo has historically depended on revenue transfers from the federal and state

governments, complemented, especially in the mid-1990s, by loans for major projects

(see Figure 6.12, 6.13), and this dependency has increased over time. The creation of

Ramo 33 and later Habitat have bolstered the city's revenues and its capacity for

investment; nonetheless, even with the growth in federal transfers, Chilpancingo

remained a poor city in per capita municipal revenue compared to other cities of the same

size (Figure 6.14).

Figure 6.12: Real Municipal Revenue, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 1989-2004
(in millions of 2002 constant pesos)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
■ Unspent Funds	0	0.19	0	0	0.87	0	0	0	0	1.36	2.86	0.1	0	0
□ Other	0.56	24.4	39.6	0	0	1.3	0	0	10.7	29.5	76	8.83	1.54	0.92
□ Debt	3.01	7.65	8.13	3.03	21.4	44	45.2	78.9	0	1.64	0	0	6.49	0
■ Local income	22.8	20.3	32.7	43.5	24	19.3	19.7	21.2	24.6	25	30.7	35.2	39.9	35.9
■ Federal transfers	29.9	19	18.3	26	13.6	13.9	15.8	18.4	21.8	77.9	23.2	103	156	136
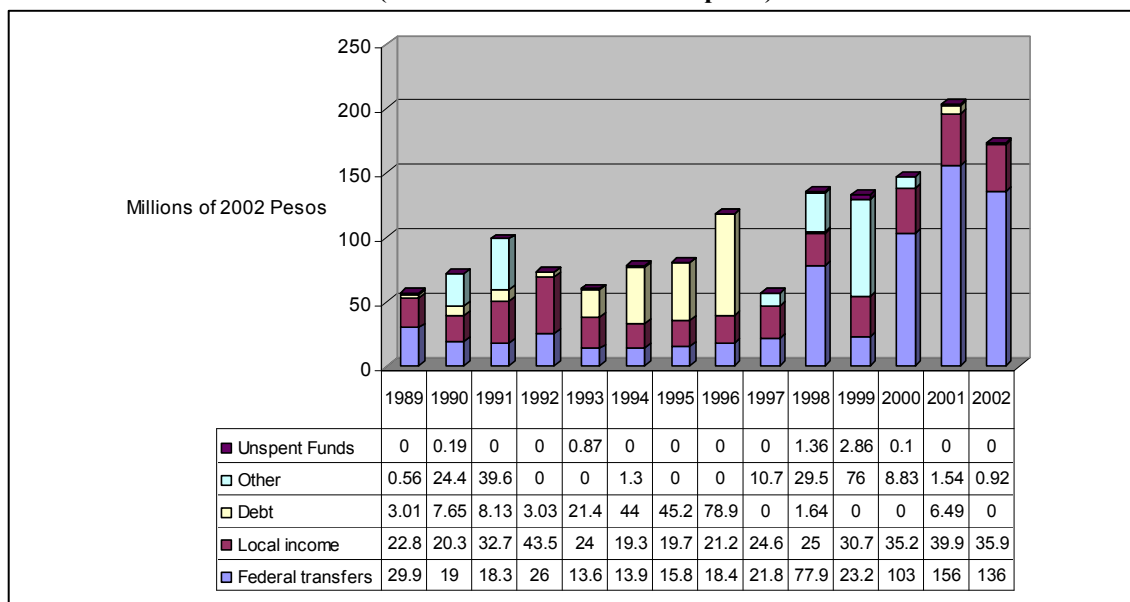
Source: INEGI, *Finanzas Estatales y Municipales, 1989-97* and *1998-2002.*

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[38] This was true in 1960 and is still so today based on a review of financial statistics in the nacional municipal financial database (INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos). For 1960 see Moisés Ochoa Campo (*Guerrero: Análisis de un estado en problema,* Mexico City: Editorial Trillas, 1964.

**Figure 6.13: Growth of Transfers through Ramo 33 and 20, Chilpancingo, 1998-2004
(in Millions of Pesos)**

Millions of Pesos	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
☐ FORTAMUNDF	12.6	27.0	31.0	38.9	44.5	45.6	47.1
☐ FAISM	19.9	29.8	37.8	45.1	51.1	51.6	54.7
☐ Habitat						10.0	5.7
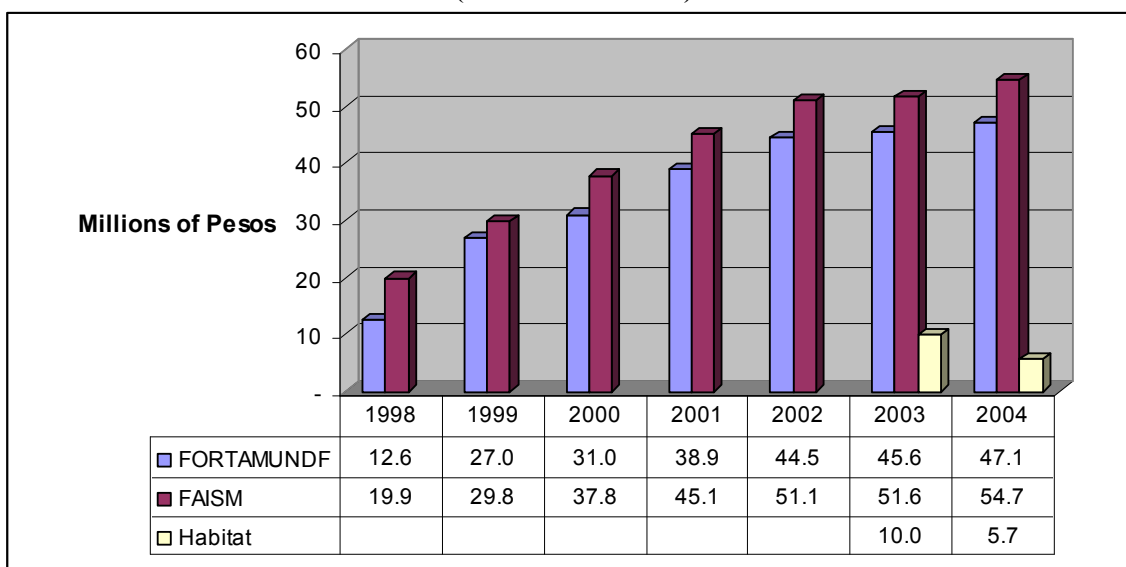
Source: For Ramo 33, INAFED, "Finanzas Públicas Locales," available at www.inafed.gob.mx; for Habitat, *Informe Municipal* 2003, 2004.

**Figure 6.14: Comparison of Municipal Revenue per capita between Chilpancingo and the Average
for Medium-Sized Cities (100,000-499,999 inhabitants), 1989-2002**

Pesos per capita	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
◆ Average for Medium Cities	57.4	86.5	122	153	188	217	242	312	397	585	809	1008	1212	1367
■ Chilpancingo	57.2	97.9	165	154	150	219	243	385	200	513	545	654	976	895
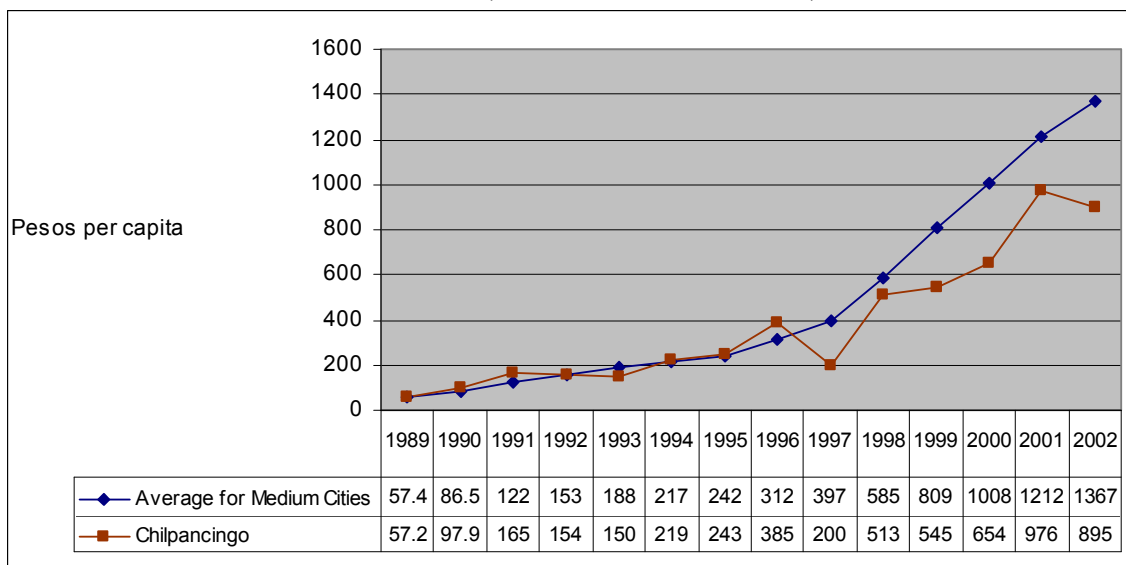
Source: INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos.

Autonomy

The city's weak finances are partially compensated by the state's direct investment in Chilpancingo. As noted previously, the state government has taken a particular interest in improving the city's infrastructure, particularly because it is the state capital, but this investment has come at a price to the municipal government's autonomy. Mayors, like Florencio Salazar Adame (see section 6.3 below) have tried to separate the municipal administration from the overbearing presence of the governor, but this strategy has never been fully possible. The governor and key state political leaders of the PRI have traditionally paid close attention to the selection of the PRI's candidate for mayor, and the governor lives and works within the city.[39] Moreover, the city depends on occasional injections of state resources to complement its meager investment budget. This was particularly noticeable during the early 1990s under the Solidarity Program. Despite being one of the three least poor municipalities in the state, Chilpancingo received more Solidarity funds than any other municipality except Acapulco and more funds per capita in the period 1990-1992 than all but two small municipalities. Indeed, Chilpancingo concentrated 10.09% of all Solidarity investments in this period, despite comprising only 5.2% of the population.[40] Nonetheless, the arbitrariness of transfers has been reduced over time with the implementation of Ramo 33 and Habitat, which are formula-based (see Chapter 5). Although the state government continues to provide

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[39] It should be noted that the state administration has gradually moved most of its functions to the city's southernmost side, creating a greater physical distance than once existed when both municipal and state offices were concentrated around the central plaza.

[40] See Isabel Osorio Salgado, *Eradicación o Radicación de la Pobreza? Pronasol y Territorio en el Estado de Guerrero,* Chilpancingo: Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, 1995, especially charts on pp. 126 and 185.

occasional investments out of the state budget,[41] transfers appear to be far more equitable

than before. Indeed, Chilpancingo received around 6.0% of all federal and state transfers

in 2002 and makes up just under 6.3% of the state population.[42]

The lack of municipal autonomy is confirmed by interviews with major political

leaders. Mayor Saúl Alarcón (2002-2005), for example, recognized that he occasionally

had to negotiate with the governor around priorities.[43] Opposition council members were

more direct. One council member observed that "Since it is the capital of the state, there

is a total interference of the governor."[44] Another stated that "Who governs in

Chilpancingo is the governor."[45] The truth probably lies in between the two positions.

On most issues the municipal government sets priorities and conducts business without

the governor paying much attention. Nonetheless, the governor is able to influence

priorities when he wants to. This influence is based both on the control over resources

the city needs and on the metaconstitutional powers that governor has through his

political connection to the mayor. With the victory of the PRD in the state elections in

2005, the influence of the governor in municipal decision may thus be sharply reduced.

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[41] City council member Rigoberto Ramos (PAN), for example, noted the state government's investment in the reconstruction of a major city market in 2004 with funds that came directly from the state budget.
[42] Author's calculations, based on figures from INEGI, *Censo de Población y Vivienda 2000* and INEGI, *Finanzas Públicas Estatales y Municipales de México, 1999-2002.* This figure includes *participaciones,* Ramo 33, and Habitat.   The fact that the city received slightly less than its population share in transfers is to be expected, since the Ramo 33 formula includes calculations based on poverty indicators, which are relatively low in Chilpancingo compared to other municipalities in the state.
[43] Interview with Mayor Saúl Alarcón Abarca (PRI), March 11, 2005.
[44] Interview with Rigoberto Ramos Romero (PAN), March 11, 2005.
[45] Interview with Julio Cesar Aguirre (PRD), March 11, 2005.

6.5 Changes in Democratic Governance (1996-2005)

Historically Chilpancingo was run not only by the PRI, but, as mentioned earlier, by a small number of traditional families that were the city's economic elite and also the dominant groups within the PRI. Every three years, state political elites, who had a direct interest in the capital, and city elites would negotiate over who would become the candidates for mayor and city council and draw the names from the ranks of the privileged families. Even a cursory look at the names in the city council and high-level municipal officials gives a sense of some of the leading political families: Memije, Abarca, Calvo, Tapia, Adame, Acevedo, and Leyva. The poor were not excluded entirely, however. Grouped into corporate organizations of the official party, they turned out the vote every three years and influenced decisions between elections through the party structure and their links to individual politicians. Nonetheless, by the beginning of the new millennium, the political rules had begun to change, albeit slowly.

System of Representation

State and municipal elections became increasingly competitive in the state of Guerrero in the 1990s, especially after 1996 (see Figure 6.15). The PRD even won more votes than the PRI in the 2002 municipal elections (though the PRI won slightly more votes in the congressional races). Indeed, of the state's five large cities, the opposition has won four of them—Acapulco, Iguala, Taxco, and José Azueta (Zihuatenejo)—at least once since 1996. The fifth city, Chilpancingo, remained the only major city in the state

solidly in the hands of the PRI (see Figure 6.16).

Figure 6.15: Municipal Election Totals in Guerrero (State Average), 1996-2002

	1996	1999	2002
PAN	8.5%	1.7%	8.7%
PRI	50.2%	49.7%	39.4%
PRD	35.8%	47.8%	41.2%
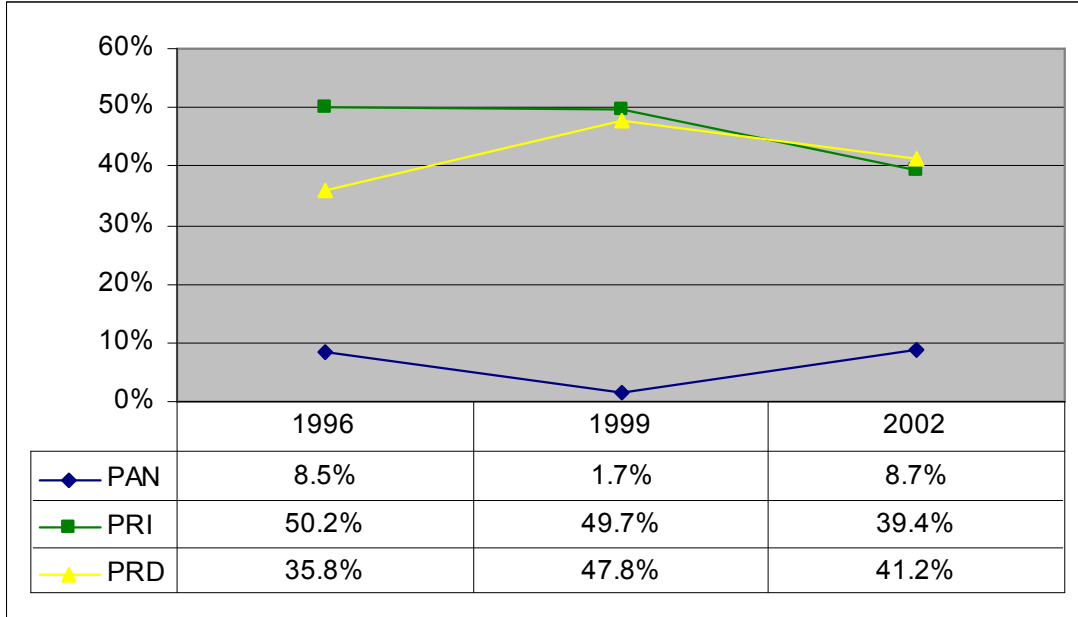
Source: Estrada Castañon, "Guerrero en los 90s"; Consejo Estatal Electoral de Guerrero, *Memoria: Proceso Ordinario de Diputados y Ayuntamientos 2002,* Chilpancingo: CEEGRO, 2002.

Figure 6.16: Municipal Elections in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 1996-2002

	1996	1999	2002
PRI	61%	55%	47%
PAN	5%	3%	9%
PRD	25%	38%	36%
Other parties	11%	3%	5%
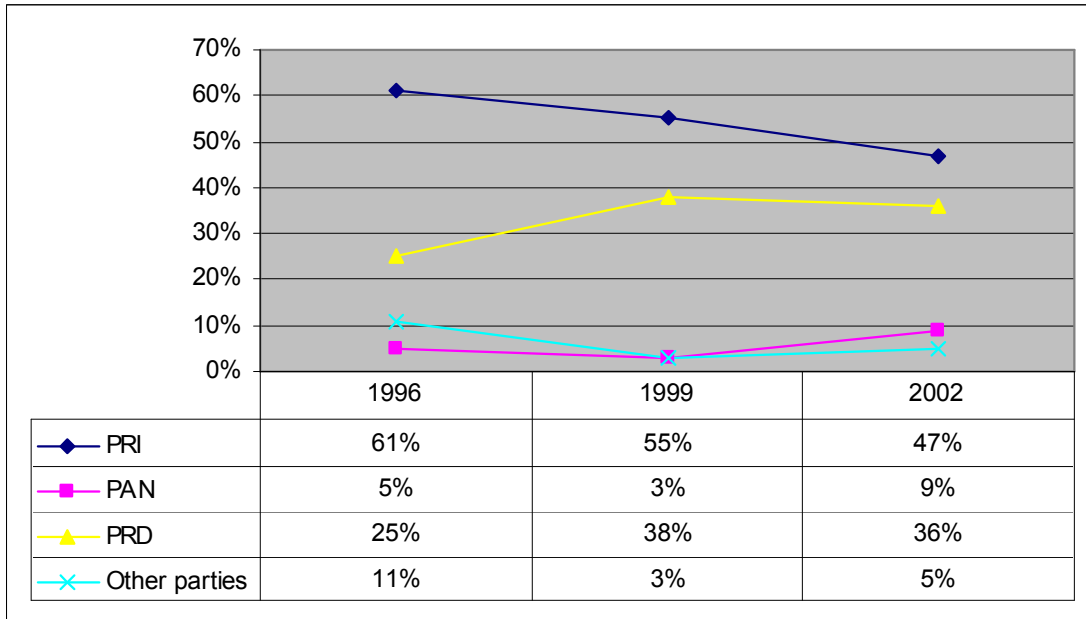
Source: Consejo Estatal Electoral de Guerrero.

Even in Chilpancingo, however, the electoral climate began to change after 1997.

In that year, one of the PRI's leading figures in the city, Píoquinto Damián Huato, broke

away from the party after not being selected as the party's candidate for congress. The

historical leader of the store owners in the city, a former secretary general of the state

PRI, and then the state's Secretary of Education, he bolted to the PRD and ran as that

party's candidate for congress in the 1997 federal elections.[46] He won election, defeating

a former city mayor, 44.6% to 40.7%, the first defeat ever for the PRI in the city.[47] The

PRI's municipal structure remained largely intact after these events, and the PRI would

continue to win every other election afterwards (including the 1999 mayoral race against

Damián).[48] Nonetheless, his departure from the official party gave the PRD a boost,

adding dissident teachers and some neighborhood leaders to the PRD's base of support.

Even though the party failed to repeat its success in subsequent years, it came to be seen

as a major alternative to the PRI in the city for the first time.[49]

As the state moved gradually away from single-party dominance, the state created

an autonomous electoral council and passed an improved electoral code. In 1996, the

State Electoral Council of Guerrero (CEEGRO) was created as an autonomous body with

citizen counselors to oversee elections.[50] Although opposition parties often questioned its

credibility, it effectively removed the organization of elections from the governor's direct

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[46] For news coverage, see Hector Gutiérez, "Pioquinto Damián Huato 'candidato popular,'" *Vértice,* March 20, 1997; Daniel Genchi Palma, "Pioquinto Damián renunció al PRI y se fue al PRD," *Vértice,* March 20, 1997.

[47] Election results for the seventh district of Guerrero, available from the Instituto Federal Electoral (www.ife.org.mx).

[48] Interviews, Pío Quinto Damián, April 13, 2005 and April 20, 2005, and Miguel Angel Mercado Durán, Director of the PRI's Training Institute, April 15, 2005.

[49] Interviews with City Council members Julio Cesar Aguirre (PRD), March 11 and April 19, 2005; Rigoberto Ramos (PAN), March 11, 2005; and Bertín Cabañas (PRI), March 11, 2005.

[50] See history on the webpage of the Council, www.ceegro.org.mx.

control and opposition parties began to win municipal elections and gain a significant presence in the state congress. .

Similarly, the state allowed opposition parties to have increasing representation within the city council. Until 1989 opposition parties had no representation at all within the city council.[51] After 1996 this representation grew substantially, although the winning party continued to have an overwhelming majority of council seats and the second largest party always was heavily underrepresented in the council (see Table 6.2). Moreover, the PRI, faced with challenges from the opposition, was forced to look for candidates outside the traditional families, candidates who could appeal to the growing number of low-income communities around the city. Whereas the party had been traditionally dominated by candidates of "a certain last name and barrio," the rising star in the municipal PRI in 2004-2005, in fact, was Mario Moreno, a charismatic federal congressman who had come from one of the low-income communities himself.[52]

Table 6.2: City Council Composition, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, 1996-2005
(with Over/Underrepresentation of Top Three Political Parties)

Election Year	Party	Vote	Council Seats*	% Council	Over/under-representation
1996	PRI	61%	11	65%	+4%
	PRD	25%	3	18%	-7%
	PAN	6%	3	18%	+12%
1999	PRI	55%	10	62%	+7%
	PRD	38%	4	25%	-13%
	PAN	3%	1	6%	+3%
	PVEM		1	6%	
2002	PRI	47%	9	53%	+6%
	PRD	36%	4	24%	-12%
	PAN	9%	2	12%	+3%
	PVEM		1		
	Convergencia		1		

Note: Electoral law was changed to alter the number of city council members and the assignation of síndicos. There were 17 members in 1996-99, 16 in 1999-2002, and 17 in 2002-2005, including the mayor. Source: Data courtesy of the Municipal Secretary's office (Ayuntamiento de Chilpancingo 2002-2005, Secretaría de Gobierno), checked against records of the PRI, PRD, and PAN municipal party offices.

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[51] See *Informe Municipal 1990,* pp. 41-42.
[52] Interview, Aguirre.

Despite their minority position, council members of the PRD and the PAN began

having increasing influence in municipal decisions due to their political strength in the

state and country as a whole. Council members noted that they were able to use their

influence with the state congress and federal government agencies to influence key

decisions, playing a sort of two or three-level game where their influence in municipal

political derived from their influence in other spheres of government. This was the case

with the municipal revenue budget for 2004, which the PRD and PAN joined together to

block by going to their party delegations in the state congress. The PRI had only a

minority in the state congress after 2002 (21 out of 46 seats[53]) and together with smaller

parties the two major opposition parties were able to get the congress to deny approval of

the municipality's revenue budget until technical errors were corrected, giving them some

limited negotiating room on the budget.[54] The two leading opposition parties also played

a role in stopping the state congress from privatizing the water system in Chilpancingo by

appealing to their party colleagues in the Congress.[55] In this case, the PAN and PRD

turned out to be key allies of the mayor, who was also opposed to the privatization. And

the two PAN members of the city council found they could play an important role as a

liaison with the federal Department of Social Development (Sedesol) in helping get funds

for local development projects and following up when these funds were not adequately

accounted for.[56]

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[53] See Consejo Estatal Electoral de Guerrero, *Memoria,* p. 129.

[54] Interviews with Aguirre (PRD) and Ramos (PAN). The decision of the Congress is available as
Congreso del Estado de Guerrero, "Ley No. 119 para los Ingresos de los Municipios del Estado para el
Ejercicio Fiscal 2004," December 19, 2004, especially pp. 3-4, available on the website of the Guerrero
State Congress, http://www.conggro.gob.mx/consulta/leyes/119.pdf.

[55] Interview, Ramos (PAN).

[56] Interview, Ramos (PAN). The PAN had only two seats in the city council, but one of the two was later

Nonetheless, in most decision-making matters, the Chilpancingo government continued to be strikingly centralized in the figure of the mayor, as it had always been, with occasional influence of the governor. In questions of municipal investment in public works, the mayor seems to have the final say despite the legal requirement that city council members decide these matters. "There is a deep-seated presidentialism…" one PRD council member alleged, "Public works are negotiated with the mayor, not even with the council." He and a colleague from the PAN each noted that they had been promised funding for certain public works in 2004 but that this pledge had not been honored. In 2005 they were reduced to negotiating instead for tons of cement for projects.[57] This comment was supported by PRI council members and officials of the municipal administration, who noted that public works requests from communities were generally made directly to the mayor himself and occasionally copied to council members.[58] One PRI city council member, who chairs the public works committee, noted that "The mayor is in charge of the relationship with the neighborhoods, but I help as a council member."[59] Even the current mayor saw this way of proceeding as the natural order of things. When asked how citizens make requests for public works, he answered "They come to me as mayor with requests" (*me gestionan a mi como presidente municipal*). He added that once the proposal for public works was ready, the council could comment on it, but it was basically his responsibility to decide these matters.[60]

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expelled from the party after he supported the PRD candidate for governor in 2005.
[57] Interview, Aguirre (PRD).
[58] Interviews with José Arroyo, Chief of Planning, March 11, 2005; Lozena, Chief of Barrios and Neighborhoods, April 20, 2005; Cabañas (PRI council member).
[59] Interview, Jaime González González, city council member (PRI), April 20, 2005.
[60] Interview, Saul Alarcón, Mayor 2002-2005 (PRI).

Transparency and Monitoring

A few advances have occurred in transparency and monitoring of municipal decisions, but these changes are few and far between. Different administrations have produced bulletins and newsletters to advertise their activities.[61] The current administration has listed the municipal budget on the website and recently added the base salaries of employees by category. However, the salary table does not list bonuses or other forms of compensation. The annual municipal report generally lists the budget, although the level of details varies considerably from year to year. The 2004 report noted investments through Ramo 33, a significant advance in transparency. At the same time, there are few formal structures to allow citizens to monitor whether what is reported is accurate. As of this writing, an ongoing dispute is taking place between the federal and municipal governments over the use of funds from Habitat (Ramo 20): the federal government claims the funds were used for purposes other than areas of high poverty concentration.[62] No regulations seem to govern the disclosure of information to the public. Hence, efforts to increase transparency appear to be entirely discretionary.

Moreover, city council meetings are rarely open. Table 6.3 shows, for selected years for which data could be obtained, the number of council meetings and those meetings that are open. Overall, it appears that no more than 12% of meetings are public (and usually fewer) and most of the council's business is conducted behind closed doors. One PRD council member, who publishes his own annual report, stated that he "proposed

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[61] The current administration uses bulletins, which are posted on their website, though these seem to be quite infrequent and not readily available in print form at the municipal offices. The *Informe Municipal 1988* lists an ongoing newsletter, while the *Informe Municipal 1999* lists a municipal bulletin.
[62] Interviews, Ramos (council member PAN) and Arroyo (Chief of Planning, Municipality).

that the sessions of the council be held openly, with the purpose of making the work and actions of the municipality transparent, something which was achieved on only one occasion during the year."[63] There appears to be little serious discussion in the council about changing its closed-door policy, however.

Chilpancingo has several newspapers and radio stations, and local affiliates of the national television networks, yet there appears to be little critical coverage of the municipal government. Indeed, the seemingly passive role they have played in pushing for greater transparency may be because of the dependence of the newspapers and radio stations (though less of the television stations) on city and state government advertising revenues. However, further research would be necessary to establish if this is correct.

Table 6.3: City Council Meetings and Percent Public, Chilpancingo, Guerrero, selected years

Year	1988	1999	2003	2004
Total council meetings	41	65	23	17
Regular meetings	13	55	6	10
Extraordinary meetings	22	3	15	5
Solemn public meetings	2	5	0	0
Public working sessions	4	2	2	2
% Working sessions public	10.3%	3.3%	8.7%	11.8%

Note: Percent of working sessions public is the percent of all regular and extraordinary meetings that are open to the public (i.e., it excludes the solemn public meetings, which are meeting commemorating events). We have used figures from the mayor's own annual report, but note that the coordinator of the PRD in the council cites only one open meeting in 2004.
Source: *Informes Municipales 1988, 1999, 2003, 2004.* Aguirre, *Informe de Actividades 2002-2003.*

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[63] Julio Cesar Aguirre, *Informe de Actividades 2002-2003,* Chilpancingo: Regiduría de Educación, Cultural, Recreatción y Espectáculos, 2003, p. 7.

Opportunities for Participation

Citizen participation has long been a central term used in PRI-run municipal administrations in Chilpancingo, so much so that in 1991 the city published a book on "participatory municipal democracy."[64] Indeed, this was one of two central thrusts for the municipal government of the period 1989-92.[65] It has been echoed, in one form or another, as a major thrust of every recent municipal administration. The most recent municipal development plan notes that the city's first priority is to "promote citizen participation as a fundamental key to consolidate the plans and programs of government."[66] Mayor Saúl Alarcón observed that his priority was to "do more with less" by "getting the society to participate" (*"metiendo a la sociedad que participe"*).[67] However, what PRI leaders have generally meant by participation is that citizens be active in authorized political channels, carefully controlled by the PRI, and contribute their effort in order to lower the cost of providing public services.

The primary means for citizen participation in municipal affairs has officially been through the development committees (*comités de desarrollo*), which are supposed to exist in each neighborhood; an array of *ad hoc* public works committees convened around specific projects; and the Planning Council for Municipal Development (Coplademun). The development committees have a particularly long history in

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[64] This book, *Democracia Participativa Municipal,* by José Gilberto Garza Grimaldo does not deal with the city specifically. See the review by Beatriz Parra in *Crítica Jurídica,* No. 10, pp. 217-18, 1992.

[65] According to the *Informe Municipal 1990,* corresponding to the first full year of the administration of Efraín Leyva Acevedo. The two axes were "consolidation of municipal autonomy and reduction of the social need in marginal zones" and "strengthening participatory democracy through solidarity and co-responsibility between people and government," a clear echo of the federal Solidarity program. The cites are on page 2.

[66] Ayuntamiento de Chilpancingo, *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo 2002-2005*, p. 38. See also the previous plan, Ayuntamiento de Chilpancingo, *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo 1999-2002,* especially pp. 3 and 24.

[67] Interview, Alarcón.

Chilpancingo, possibly going back several decades, and in the early 1980s the first law was published to regulate their election and activity. A revision of this law was published in 1999.[68] According to the law, the committees should be elected in every neighborhood every two years in a non-partisan election, in the presence of the responsible municipal authority, and serve to "motivate citizens to unity, to achieve the social development in benefit of the population." The actual functions are not terribly specific, however, despite considerable detail on the structure and form of election of the committees.[69]

Various municipal documents make reference to the development committees, though not all neighborhoods have them.[70] In detailed interviews with sixteen community in six different neighborhoods (see Table 6.4), it became clear that at least in these neighborhoods, the committees were active. All had been elected in public assemblies witnessed by the Chief of Barrios and Neighborhoods (*Procurador de Barrios y Colonias*), as the law requires. However, they varied a great deal in their degree of support, level of activity, ways of functioning, and length of service. Some seemed to have minimal activity, while others had several ongoing projects. Some committees served for the full two-year term; others for up to seven years. Some assemblies to elect the committees had generated a large turnout; others did not even meet the legal quorum to elect the committee. Most committees seemed to be primarily concerned with basic services (where these were lacking) or secondary infrastructure (pavement, access roads). Several of the committees were involved in issues around public security and

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[68] Interview, José Luis Lozena, Municipal Chief of Barrios and Colonias, April 20, 2005.

[69] Author's analysis of the law. The regulation was passed on April 23, 1999 as "Reglamento para la organización de barrios, colonias, fraccionamientos y unidades habitacionales del municipio de Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero," and published in the *Gaceta Muncipal* in May 1999.

[70] The *Informe Municipal 2003* refers to having contact with 74 development committees during the year (of the more than 400 neighborhoods in the city). The *Informe Municipal 2004* notes that 42 committees were "renewed" during the year. Further back, the *Informe Municipal 1999* refers to the election of 115 development committees.

transportation. For the most part, they seemed to operate in almost complete isolation

from each other, except in rare cases where there was a demand for better transportation

services or a common access road or bridge. This style was in sharp contrast to the late

1980s and early 1990s when large organizations linked neighborhood committees.

6.4: Neighborhood Interviews Conducted

Neighborhood	Year founded	Number of families	Socioeconomic level	Number of interviews
Colonia Independencia	1978	139-40	Low-income	2
Colonia Plan de Ayala	1983	700+	Low-income	2
Colonia Tatagildo	1983	336-37	Low-income/working class	4
Colonia del PRI	Late 1950s (oldest in city)	Several thousand	Working class (some low-income and middle class)	4
Fraccionamiento Reforma	Early 1980s	100-105	Middle and working class bureaucrats	2
Colonia Guerrero 200	Early 1980s	200+	Middle class bureaucrats	2

Note: Interviews were conducted with at least one PRI member and one opposition supporter in each neighborhood. In all cases, the president or vice president of the neighborhood was interviewed in addition to other current or previously elected officials. Where there were splits in the neighborhood, interviews were conducted with the opposition committee. Interviews conducted March 28-30 and April 3-5, 8, 10, 12-13, 20, 2005.
Note: Colonia and Fraccionamiento mean neighborhood (usually colonia is a popular neighborhood and a fraccionamiento a planned wealthier one, but these distinctions are not always kept in practice).

The Coplademun, on the other hand, does not really exist for any practical

purpose. The Coplademun is convened each year to approve the proposal for public

works under Ramo 33, as required by law. Indeed, in 2004, the meeting included 245

people.[71] However, the municipal government only invites the presidents of those

neighborhoods that have been selected by the mayor to receive.[72] Development

committee leaders confirmed that the only times committee leaders were invited to the

Coplademun was when they had already negotiated a public works project from the

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[71] Ayuntamiento de Chilpancingo, *Boletín No. 56,* April 2, 2004.
[72] Interviews with council members Cabañas (PRI), Aguirre (PRD), and Ramos (PAN).

municipality.[73] The body thus serves not as an institutional framework to discuss and negotiate demands let alone deliberate and decide on a policy, but rather as a ceremonial occasion to bring together beneficiaries of public works projects and representatives of the three levels of government responsible for funding and executing those projects.

Indeed the only institutional channel that exists to bring demands to the attention of municipal authorities is through a written letter followed up by informal political negotiations.[74] Most of the development committee leaders interviewed indicated they maintained close relationships with city council members or municipal officials as necessary elements in getting their petitions heard. In several cases they cited direct communication with the mayor himself, but they also noted the role played by several of the PRI city council members, the secretary of the municipality (the mayor's second-in-command), the director of public works, and even the federal congressman Mario Moreno. They reported different levels of responsiveness from the municipality, however. One committee president noted with frustration that "The people from the municipality only show up in the neighborhood when they want us to support some candidate." Others seemed to have a much more fluid relationship with the municipality, but these leaders were largely the same ones whom opposition supporters accused of campaigning for the PRI during the 2005 state election. In fact, there seemed to be a direct relationship between those leaders who reported a close relationship to the municipality and those who were signaled by their opponents as partisan. Being politically connected helped get demands met, but it also meant using the development committee for partisan purposes.

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[73] Based on three interviews in which leaders noted they had been invited to Coplademun meetings.
[74] Interview, Lozena.

All of the committees in the six neighborhoods studied were run by members of the PRI, as are most committees in the city.[75] It was particularly evident, however, that competition had increased a great deal in recent years. Although committee presidents had been historically imposed by municipal officials, elections are now increasingly competitive between the PRI and the PRD.[76] In all of the neighborhoods studied, the PRD (and in some cases dissident PRI factions) had competed actively and, in at least two neighborhoods, won in past elections. Even the Colonia del PRI, the largest and oldest neighborhood in the city (outside of the four traditional *Barrios*), had elected a PRD development committee at one point. However, the municipal official in charge of development committees explained that the PRI leaders tended to be "better at getting results" than PRD leaders, which explained that party's dominance. He pointed out that when the PRI lost a neighborhood, it would form an alternate committee using the section structure of the PRI (the party's grassroots neighborhood unit) and compete with the official committee for funds and projects.[77] Of course, the fact that the PRI controlled the resources for community investments through the mayor's office helps explain the PRI's continued dominance of the committees.

Opposition sympathizers (and dissident PRI members) often claimed that the official committees had been put together by the municipal government as structures of

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[75] Lozena and council members Cabañas (PRI) and Aguirre (PRD) noted in interviews that most official development committees were run by PRI leaders.

[76] The PAN has little neighborhood level organization. PAN council member Rigoberto Ramos noted that "We do not have a social base [but rather] the image of a serious party…there are no PANista neighborhoods." Instead, he noted, the PAN has often drawn support from the city's professionals. PRI council member Bertín Cabañas simply stated that "The PAN is a club of friends." Interviews, Ramos and Cabañas.

[77] Interview, Lozena.

control and partisan promotion. One former committee president (and local PRI official) noted that his neighborhood's committee was put together "through the imposition of the municipality." They noted that the PRI would often come through with handouts for residents (food, cardboard, and cement) before elections took place. In four of the six neighborhoods, citizens sympathetic to the PRD had formed their own organizations, which usually brought together several families in different neighborhoods. Each of these organizations was linked to a PRD leader (city council member or leading political figure), except for one which seemed to be a product of the 2005 governor's election (which included PRD, PAN, and dissident PRI members). Since these organizations had little influence within the municipality, they tended to find high-profile issues (lack of transportation services in one case; an access road in another) around which they could protest and pressure the authorities. In the new climate of plurality, these organizations appeared to have a degree of success in achieving their objectives.

6.5 Conclusions

The municipality of Chilpancingo was once a mere caretaker of day-to-day local issues with major decisions taken care of by the state government. Decentralization has changed this relation of subordination. The municipality still lives in the shadow of the state government (and the state governor in particular), but increasingly the municipality has its own functions, powers, and resources and sufficient discretion to decide what to do with these. With the election of an opposition party to the state governorship in 2005, it is likely that the municipality will break away from many of the remaining informal

constraints on its autonomy.

However, decentralization clearly has not produced the kind of democratic governance that theory might suggest. The form of governance that still dominates in Chilpancingo is, on the face of it, the same that was set up during the period of one-party hegemonic rule. The mayor is largely all-powerful and he largely controls the agenda of the city council. The council members, in turn, serve primarily as an occasional conduit for petitions from community organizations to the mayor's office. Council meetings are closed and citizens have few ways of knowing what their municipal government does between elections. The PRI controls most spaces of social organization, including a broad array of neighborhood organizations that belong almost entirely to the same party and serve as tools for partisan mobilization as much as conduits for citizen demands. The prevailing opportunities for citizen participation are extremely thin and more like lobbying than deliberative rule by the people or their elected representatives. Indeed, they almost always involve citizens approaching their authorities through intermediaries, either neighborhood leaders tied to the PRI or city council members of the same party who can serve as conduits with the mayor. In a state where political competition has become normal, Chilpancingo still seems on the surface like a relic from the past.

However, under the surface, a great deal of contestation has developed and alternate forms of conducting politics are beginning to take place. Opposition city council members have found new strength in allying with representatives of their own parties in the state congress and in federal agencies. Municipal leaders have felt pushed to publish at least some information about official finances and activities. At a community level, considerable competition takes place for some neighborhood

committees, and opposition groups are building broad (though not yet deep) coalitions across neighborhoods.

Nonetheless, all of the new ways of doing politics share one key element of the old ways of doing politics: they rely on informal institutions. They are more means for partisan lobbying than for collective problem-solving. The underlying structure of politics has changed, but the institutional channels for processing these changes remains the same. Opposition parties need to rely on two-level games—playing off other federal and state institutions against municipal institutions—to make their voices heard within the elected city council. Citizens must rely on well-placed political intermediaries or pressure through numbers to make their demands known to authorities or to obtain information about their activities. In a city where poverty is widespread, public services limited, and the application of justice often arbitrary, political brokers serve a vital purpose for people's everyday survival. Little, if any, public debate takes place, and those spaces of citizen participation that do exist serve only to mask the top-down nature of political decision-making. The city lacks independent organizations, a strongly autonomous media, or even consistently competitive opposition parties. Much is changing in Chilpancingo, but bringing government closer to people alone has done little to make it more representative, transparent, and participatory. The permanence of old political institutions that create upward accountability with the weakness of civil society and the press that could push for further democratic opening have conspired to undermine the possibilities of real change.

Epilogue

On October 2, 2005 the inhabitants of Guerrero went to the polls to elect their municipal authorities and state Congress. As in the gubernatorial election in February, the PRD emerged triumphant, winning 40 of the state's 73 municipalities and seventeen of the 28 congressional districts. Of the five largest cities, only one went to the PRI— Chilpancingo, where the PRI trounced the PRD by an almost two-to-one margin.[78] Once again, the traditional party of the city had reasserted its power to win the local elections decisively even while the rest of the state was turning against the once dominant PRI.

The PRI won, in large part, because it remains the only political party with a broad base in the city. Its leaders have skillfully prevented the emergence of other political options and controlled most of the existing social organizations. At the same time, the PRI also won because it was willing to adapt in order to survive. For the first time, the party put forth a candidate who did not come from one of the city's elite families. The winning candidate, Mario Moreno, is a PRI leader who came out of the party's popular organizations and has his own political base in the poorer communities in the city. Faced with pressures from the PRD, the PRI turned to its most popular candidate, even though it meant that the city's elite families had to give up their historical monopoly on mayoral candidacies.

Everything in Chilpancingo remains the same, yet it is changing at the same time...

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[78] The final vote was 61.11% for the PRI, 32.33% for the PRD, with the PAN and smaller parties winning a handful of votes. Statistics available from the State Electoral Council, www.ceegro.org.mx.

Chapter 7
Tijuana: Citizen Democracy?

7.1 The End of an Experiment

Shortly before midnight on August 1, 2004, Jorge Hank Rhon, millionaire casino

owner, accused smuggler, and suspected assassin, came out on stage in front of his

supporters to declare victory in the mayoral race in Tijuana, Baja California.[1] His claim

was supported by the official electoral results, which gave him a slim lead of one

percentage point over his opponent of the ruling National Action Party (PAN). Hank's

followers went wild. After fifteen years in the opposition, the PRI was finally returning

to power in Tijuana, Mexico's largest and most modern city on the northern border.

To many observers, Hank's victory seemed startling. Tijuana had been the

greatest urban bastion of the center-right PAN for the past decade and a half. In 1989, it

had become the first city of its size—soon to surpass a million inhabitants—to throw out

the long-ruling PRI and hold onto power in subsequent elections. In the same election,

Tijuana had led the way in electing a PAN governor, the first opposition governor in

Mexico since 1929. National politics certainly influenced the outcome of the election:

then-President Carlos Salinas de Gortari was looking to boost his country's image

internationally and recognizing an opposition victory in a distant border state seemed like

good politics.[2] However, there is no question that Tijuana's particular characteristics also

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[1] It should be noted that Hank has never been convicted of any crime and was only charged once with smuggling rare animal skins across the border (but later cleared when it was "proved" that they were not real). However, accusations against him have been legion in the city, and two of his bodyguards were convicted of killing the city's most popular journalist, Hector Gato Felix, co-editor of *Zeta* newspaper. The paper has run a weekly statement since 1988 asking Hank to clarify whether he ordered the assassination.
[2] A few months later Salinas would pursue a free trade agreement with the United States. At the time of the election he was already looking at his options for expanding Mexico's commercial relationships—hoping

played a role in creating a margin of victory for the PAN that President Salinas felt

obligated to respect.

Figure 7.1: State of Baja California showing Tijuana
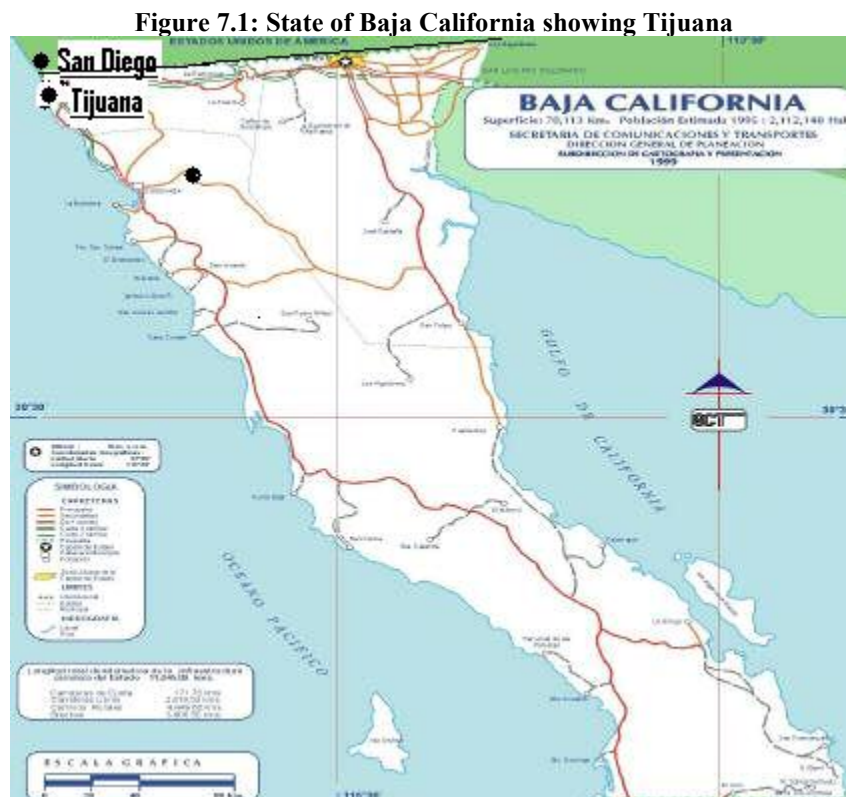
Tijuana's motto is "the fatherland begins here," and city residents are proud of

being the entry point to the nation. For many in Mexico, however, including the

country's political leaders, Tijuana was always been seen as a distant city and one of the

hardest to control. Political control was further complicated by rapid demographic and

economic growth. Tijuana's population increased seven times in four decades, leaping

from 165,000 inhabitants in 1960 to over 1.2 million by 2000. Although this rapid

growth led to a dramatic deficit in urban infrastructure, it was fueled by economic

opportunities in tourism, trade, and the foreign-owned factories, known as *maquiladoras*,

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originally for a trade agreement with Europe.

as well as in the construction boom that these activities generated. As a result, a chronic

shortage of basic urban services co-existed with a comparatively well-off population that

felt they had real opportunities to get ahead economically.

The right-of-center PAN, which advocated individual rights, efficient

government, and free markets, seemed ideally suited to this individualistic, dynamic city.

The party consistently won a quarter to a third of the votes in municipal and state

elections starting in the late 1950s—while it barely registered elsewhere in the country—

and almost certainly won a majority in the municipal elections of 1968 (although these

were annulled). So it was hardly surprising that as Mexico took its first steps on the path

of democratic opening, Tijuana, in 1989, would become the first major city to elect a

PAN government.

The new PAN governments set about to destroy the legacy of corporatism

implanted by the PRI and to create a new model of democratic governance based on

individual citizenship, civic participation, and transparency. Carlos Montejo, the first

PAN Mayor of Tijuana, summed up his party's commitment to these values in his

inaugural address:

> I understand that true politics should be directly oriented towards
> organizing social activity, but never absorbing it. Political realities should
> always be at the service of society. That is why every citizen has the right
> to have his voice heard by the authorities, to express his opinions freely, to
> monitor the actions that the government engages in, and know the real
> results of the government's performance.[3]

This was a bold declaration of principles long cherished by PAN leaders: to create an

administration that was transparent, responsive to citizen concerns, and created clear

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[3] From the inauguration speech of Mayor Carlos Montejo, 1989. Cited in the *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo, 1990-92,* Tijuana: Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, 1989, p. 5.

channels for their voices to be heard.

During the fifteen years they governed, the PAN would be given an unprecedented opportunity to implement these principles. This period coincided with the country's gradual process of decentralization. The municipality slowly gained authority and autonomy, using the functions, powers, and resources that were devolved to it and increasing its own local resource base though aggressive application of its new fiscal powers. Moreover, the PAN governments in Tijuana played an important role in accelerating Mexico's decentralization process: the municipality started the first mayors' association in the country, filed the first municipal lawsuit against the federal government over jurisdictional issues, and created the first project for private bank financing of public investments. One of the municipality's former leaders even sponsored the legislation in Congress that created the Ramo 33 transfers to municipal governments.

How, then, could the PAN lose an election fifteen years later to one of the city's most controversial and polarizing figures?[4] Part of the answer lies in the way the party governed during its five terms, a style that earned it great success administratively but also failed to build a durable base of support. The first PAN governments tried to implement the lofty principles, which Mayor Montejo had articulated, by building a more responsive and transparent local government with institutional channels for citizen's deliberative engagement with policy decisions. But subsequent municipal governments ultimately lacked the will and the incentives to sustain these initiatives and returned to a style of democratic governance that showed little consistency with these commitments.

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[4] Hank, the renegade son of a famous PRI leader and former mayor of Mexico City, was so controversial that most of the business leaders, who had traditionally supported the PRI, refused to endorse him.

Figure 7.2 Downtown Tijuana

Source: Government of Baja California, www.bajacalifornia.gob.mx

7.2 Location, Mobility, and Dynamism

Tijuana began as a small settlement around 1889, in what was then the Northern District of the Territory of Baja California. It grew into a major city in the period after World War II, when it experienced a sustained period of explosive growth that has made it one of Mexico's ten largest cities today.[5] Three processes characterize Tijuana and have conditioned its particular political dynamics: location, mobility, and dynamism.

Tijuana is the city in Mexico most distant from the national capital. This fact has shaped patterns of political control and people's feelings towards centralization. The state

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[5] In the 2000 census, it was the sixth largest municipality in the country. Adding in Mexico City, it would be the seventh largest city in the country. In reality, municipalities four through six (Ciudad Nezahualcóytol, Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana) have just over 1.2 millions inhabitants each. Since all are cities with large migrant populations, it is hard to know for certain which is largest.

of Baja California was originally part of the Mexican territory of California, but after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which concluded a war between Mexico and the United States, the northern region of California was ceded to the United States and Baja California (divided into northern and southern districts) became Mexico's northern territory, under direct tutelage of the federal government, until it achieved independence as a sovereign state within the federation in 1953.[6] This distance from Mexico City shaped political attitudes towards centralization and generated a sense of self-reliance. Until the late 1930s, the territory was poorly connected to the center of the country and developed something akin to a frontier mentality at the extremity of the country.

Distance also weakened the ability of federal authorities—and the PRI—to establish the kinds of political arrangements that made control possible in other states in Mexico. Although the same corporatist organizations affiliated with the PRI existed in Baja California as elsewhere in Mexico, they were often weakly linked to the national organizations and maintained a greater degree of autonomy than similar organizations elsewhere. As a territory, Baja California also had no territory-wide elections until it became a state, and only briefly had municipal elections from 1915 to 1927. Consequently, in the crucial period after the Revolution, the PRI did not need to mobilize voters regularly, which had become the underlying logic of the party elsewhere. The PRI thus existed and dominated local politics as elsewhere, but its structures were less closely tied to the national structures, and its capacity for political mobilization was less tested by electoral demands.

Distance from Mexico City has been complemented by proximity to the United

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[6] The southern district of Baja California, which remained a federal territory for most of the twentieth century, became a separate state, Baja California Sur, in 1975.

States, which has produced considerable economic interdependence and allowed for a cross-border flow of ideas between the two countries. The nature of that interdependence has changed over time: during Prohibition in the United States, bars and casinos in Tijuana became a major attraction; when gambling was outlawed (1935), the city (and state) became a free zone exempt from the tariffs imposed elsewhere in Mexico; and during World War II, Tijuana became an industrial city that helped supply the allied war effort. In 1965 the Mexican and U.S. governments negotiated an agreement to create *maquiladoras,* foreign-owned industrial plants that would process goods for tariff-free export to the United States.[7] By 2000, employment in the *maquiladora* sector in Tijuana accounted for approximately 8 percent of all workers in the city; however, many more were in related manufacturing.[8] In addition, another 8 percent of the economically active population of Tijuana works in the United States. Moreover, many city residents have family members on both sides of the border, and the media treat the two sides of the border as a single market in many cases.[9]

Population mobility has also shaped Tijuana, making it one of the fastest growing

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[7] These companies, principally U.S.-owned, wanted to produce goods for the U.S. market using lower wage labor in Mexico. However, by the 1990s, many companies from other countries, especially Japan, South Korea, and Sweden, also had set up maquiladoras in Baja California in order to produce goods for the U.S. market. In principle, this program was designed to create jobs in Mexico to absorb excess labor after the termination of the *bracero* program, a guest-worker program that had brought hundreds of thousands of Mexicans to the United States as seasonal workers starting after World War II. The *maquiladoras*, however, would become an importance source of employment in the city and a magnet for migration to the city. *Maquiladoras* almost always maintain operations in both Tijuana and San Diego.

[8] *Plan Estratégico Tijuana, 2003-2025.*

[9] Television stations and most radio stations serve both Tijuana and Spanish-speaking communities in San Diego. Tijuana newspapers cover San Diego as part of local news; and the San Diego *Union-Tribune* covers Tijuana as local news for San Diego residents as well. Both the *Union-Tribune* and Los Angeles' two major papers, the *Times* and *La Opinión,* are commonly sold at Tijuana newsstands (and far easier and less expensive to acquire than Mexico City papers). When the federal and state governments began to harass one of Tijuana's leading newspapers, *Zeta,* in the 1980s, the publisher began printing the paper in San Diego and importing it to avoid censorship. See Andrew Selee and Heidy Servin-Baez, "Writing Beyond Boundaries," in Rossana Fuentes-Beraín, Andrew Selee, and Heidy Servin-Baez, eds., *Writing Beyond Boundaries: Journalism Across the U.S.-Mexico Border,* Washington, DC and Mexico City: Woodrow Wilson Center and *Foreign Affairs en Espanol,* 2005. See also the chapter in the same volume by Sandra Dibble, reporter for the *San Diego Union-Tribune,* "The Stories that Whisper."

cities in the western hemisphere and a "cultural mosaic" of people from all over Mexico (as well as other countries).[10] The population exploded from 1960 to 2000 (see Figure 7.3). Migration has been driven employment opportunities and sometimes the desire to cross the border into the United States. In 2003 slightly over half of Tijuana's population was born outside of the state, and growth continues at a rate of around 4.9 percent annually.[11]

Figure 7.3: Population Growth in Tijuana and Baja California, 1920-2000

	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Tijuana population	1,028	11,271	21,997	65,364	165,690	340,583	461,257	747,381	1,210,820
State population	23,523	48,327	78,907	226,965	520,165	870,421	1,177,886	1,660,855	2,487,367
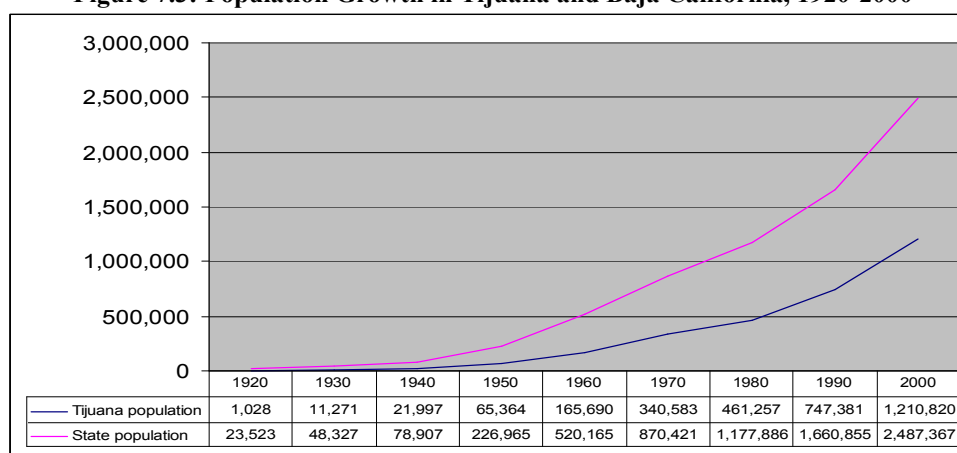
Source: Data for 1950-2000 from INEGI, *Tijuana,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2000, based on census data from the Population Surveys of the various years. The data for 1920-1940 are drawn from *Monografía Tijuana,* Tijuana: XVI Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, 2000, based on INEGI census data.

Finally, Tijuana represents a pattern of dynamic economic expansion coupled with a deficient provision of basic services to meet the needs of the growing population. The city remains primarily dependent on the service sector (52.5%)**,** but with a sizable percentage of employment in manufacturing (32.5%) and construction (7.9%) (see Figure 7.4). Income has increased noticeably over time, with over half of residents earning three times the minimum wage or more (compared to 27% nationally; see Figure 7.5) and almost full employment. Few residents of the city are illiterate (2.9% versus 9.5%

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[10] I borrow the term "cultural mosaic" from Tonatiuh Guillén, "Presentación," in Tonatiuh Guillén with José Negrete, eds., *Baja California,* Mexico City: UNAM, 2002, p. 16.
[11] *Plan Estratégico Tijuana, 2003-2025,* p. 43.

nationally).[12]

Figure 7.4: Major Economic Activities in Tijuana, 2000
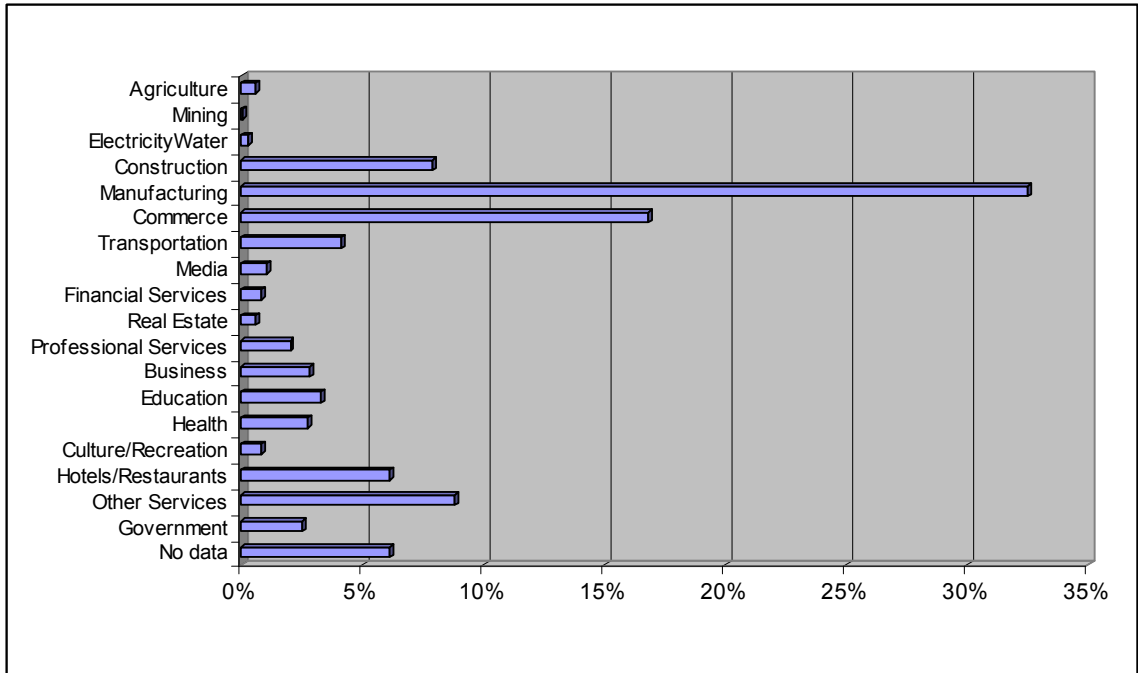
Source: INEGI, *Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 2000.*

Figure 7.5: Income of Workers in Tijuana and Nationally as a Multiple of the Minimum Wage, 2000
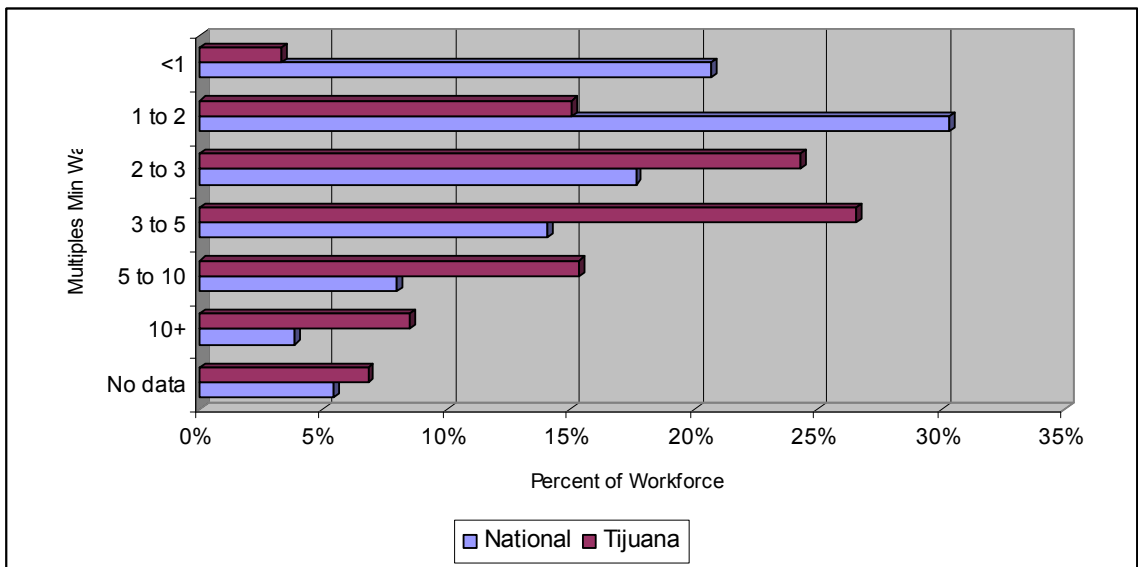
Source: INEGI, *Censo de Población*, 1990 and 2000.

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[12] Educational statistics from the 2000 census (INEGI, *Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda, 2000*, available in INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos).

However, these figures mask considerable needs in the city. Although incomes are significantly higher than the national average, the cost of living is also significantly higher, with most goods imported from the United States. Moreover, rapid growth has generated an important deficit in basic services, including electricity, water, and sewage. Federal government statistics show that the coverage of services is in the 80-95 percent range (Figure 7.6); however, these statistics often fail take into account many of the newest neighborhoods in the city. There are over 300 neighborhoods in Tijuana without legal land titles, most (but not all) of recent creation. The city's long-term strategic plan lists the coverage of sewage services as only 60 percent, compared to the federal statistic of over 80 percent.[13] Relatively high opportunities for employment co-exist with high living costs and important deficits of residential infrastructure.

Figure 7.6: Percentage of Households Covered by Basic Services in Tijuana, 1970-2000
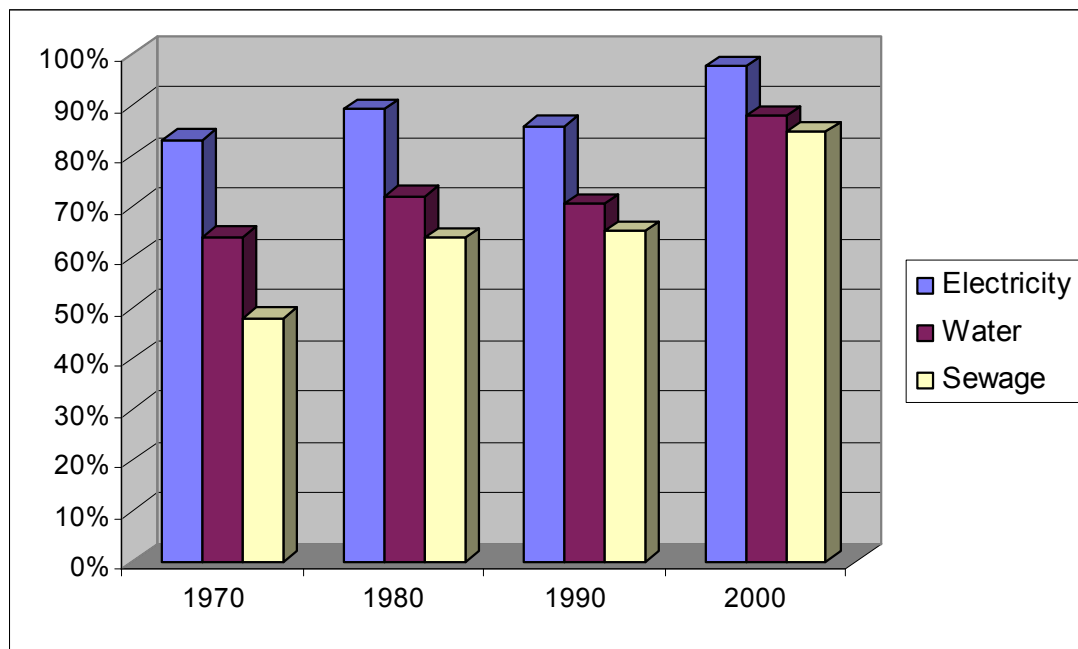
Note: These figures are the oficial census figures; however, the Tijuana city government's statistics show a much coger coverage of services. Census figures traditionally undercount neighborhoods where residents do not have legal title to the land; and these are precisely the neighborhoods that most often lack services. Source: *Cuaderno Estadístico Municipal: Tijuana,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2003.

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[13] *Plan Estratégico Tijuana, 2003-2025,* p. 40.

7.3 Weak Control, Strong Resistance (1930s-1989)

The state of Baja California was born out of a long-term struggle for autonomy. A local movement first developed in 1917, during the national constitutional convention, to demand that the territory have a civilian governor who would be a native of the territory.[14] This movement gained strength in 1931 with the founding of the Committee for a Free and Sovereign State of Baja California (Comité Pro-Estado Libre y Soberano de Baja California), which also demanded statehood for the territory. As the population and electoral importance of the state grew, the federal government gradually warmed to the idea of statehood and in 1952 created the state of Baja California. In the first state-wide elections in 1953, Braulio Maldonado, one of the founders of the Committee, was elected the first governor of the state of Baja California. His election set off an uninterrupted period of PRI rule that would last until the 1980s. However, in Baja California, the PRI would face its greatest sustained challenge anywhere in the country from an opposition and, at times, the party's grip on power seemed on the verge of slipping away.

The PAN elsewhere in Mexico was a small opposition party, designed to do little more than express disagreement with the ruling party; however, in Baja California it acquired a real electoral capacity and a relentless desire to win elections. In 1945, the PAN included only 65 people, but it soon spread to all of the major cities of the state, including Tijuana. While the PRI-affiliated Committee fought for statehood, the PAN argued for the restoration of municipal autonomy, which had existed starting in 1915 but

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[14] This paragraph draws on the account of Baja California's independence struggle in Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, "La evolución de las instituciones políticas de Baja California," in Tonatiuh Guillén with José Negrete, *Baja California,* Mexico City: UNAM, 2002.

then been suppressed in 1927.[15] Although the PAN barely presented any resistance in the

first state elections in 1953, the party made strong showings in the 1958 presidential and

1959 gubernatorial elections, winning over a third of the vote in 1959.[16] In 1968, the

PAN made another strong showing, almost certainly winning the municipal elections in

both Tijuana and the state capital Mexicali. In this case, the state congress annulled the

elections without releasing the results and changed the state constitution so that it could

appoint a caretaker government. The PAN entered a difficult period as many of its

supporters lost faith in the possibilities of change through elections.[17] Nonetheless, the

PAN continued to command an average of a quarter to a third of all votes in city and state

elections between 1971 and 1986 (Figures 7.7, 7.8). In 1986, the PAN won its first

recognized municipal election in the small municipality of Ensenada, just south of

Tijuana, with a charismatic candidate named Ernesto Ruffo, although the party fared

poorly in the Tijuana mayor's race that year. Ruffo would go on to play an important

role in state politics three years later.

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[15] José Negrete Mata, "Historia política y alternancia en Baja California, 1952-1989," in Guillén with Mata, eds., *op. cit.,* p. 58-59 and 59f.
[16] PAN leaders claim they won both elections, including a clean sweep of all Tijuana polling stations in the 1958 presidential elections (Negrete Mata, "Historia política y alternancia," pp. 62-3).
[17] Negrete Mata, "Historia política y alternancia," pp. 64-65.

Figure 7.7: Municipal Elections Tijuana, 1971-1989

	1954	1956	1959	1962	1965	1968	1971	1974	1977	1980	1983	1986	1989
PRI	99.0%	99.0%	58.7%	74.2%	75.5%		65.5%	64.2%	57.2%	61.0%	64.1%	60.7%	32.0%
PAN			41.3%	25.8%	24.5%		32.9%	31.9%	40.3%	25.6%	28.2%	24.1%	45.3%
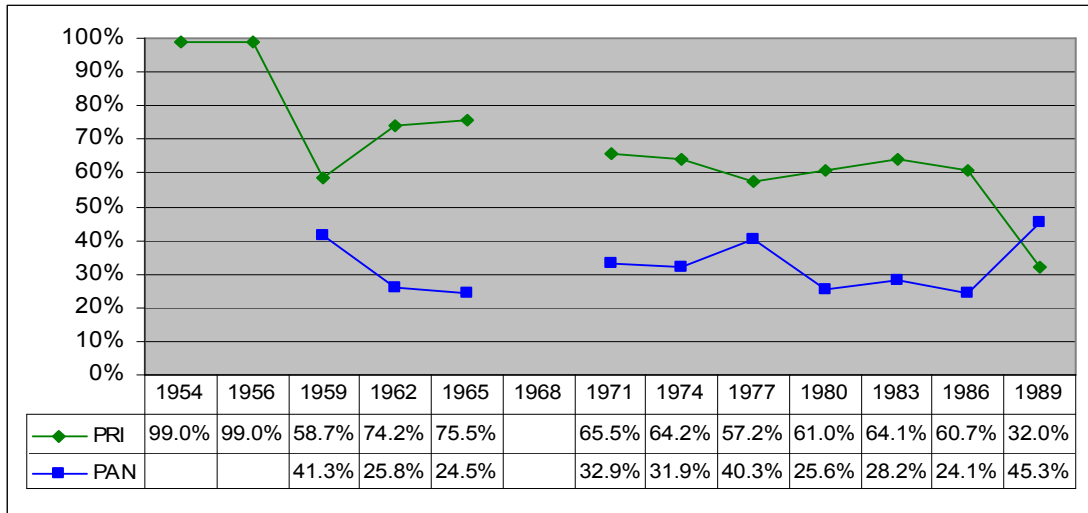
Source: Compiled from data sources available from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Baja California, www.ieebc.org.mx, consulted March 2005. Percentage for PRI and PAN only.

Figure 7.8: State Elections for Governor in Baja California, 1953-1989

	1953	1959	1965	1971	1997	1983	1989
PRI	90%	66%	74%	63%	65%	65%	42%
PAN	7%	34%	26%	35%	32%	30%	52%
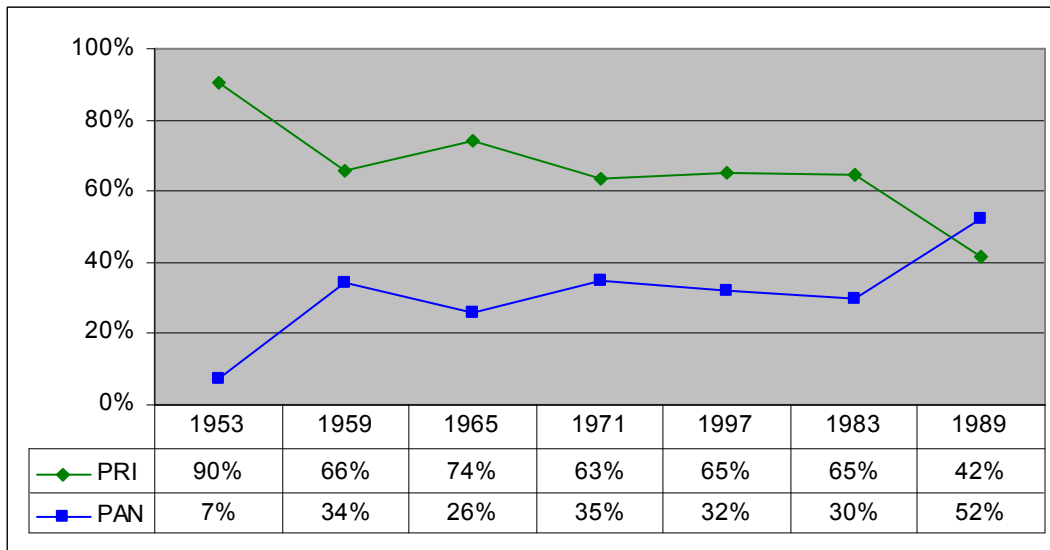
Source: Compiled from electoral data available from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Baja California, available on the website www.ieebc.org.mx, consulted March 2005. Percentage for PRI and PAN only.

At the same time, through a variety of social organizations and political parties, the Mexican left developed a presence in Tijuana. In addition to an early role in student organizations, the left came to play a decisive role in the 1970s and 1980s in the struggle

for land and services for urban migrants. Many of these migrants had established

shantytowns throughout the city, especially along the banks of the city's river. These

neighborhoods became particularly politicized as the result of two acts of repression

against the urban poor that have become an indelible part of the collective memory of the

city.[18] As the city grew in the 1970s, the government and business leaders wanted to

reclaim much of the land along the river near the downtown area and convert it into a

zone of tourist and financial services. In 1973 these plans led to the forced removal of a

community known as *Cartolandia* ("land of cardboard"), an area of precarious homes

made from cardboard boxes and scraps of wood and metal. In order to pave the way for

the development of downtown, the state government removed residents of the area at

gunpoint and relocated them to a distant area.[19] The forced removals would continue

sporadically in other precarious neighborhoods along the river throughout the 1970s. As a

justification, the government often cited the danger posed by flooding. In January 1980,

during an especially strong period of rains, the governor, without warning to city

residents, gave the order to open the gates of Tijuana's dam, flooding the remaining

settlements along the river. Several people died, and hundreds lost their homes in the

flood, and whole communities had to move to other areas of the city.[20]

     The flooding of 1980 galvanized a nascent organization among the city's poor,

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[18] During the five years I lived in Tijuana (1992-97), I frequently heard references among the city's poor and working class residents to these two incidents. These events have resonance even among some city residents who had arrived in the city after the 1970s, since they remain important reference points for what the government might do even today to those who live in precarious circumstances in the city.

[19] Officials relocated residents to a newly built neighborhood called Centro Urbano 70-76 where the city sold them homes. In an especially shocking statement, one business leader involved in the project stated to the press that "if they do not wish or cannot pay for the houses that the federal government has given them, the residents of Centro Urbano 70-76 will have to go live in the hills; we will not allow any more zones of misery (*cinturones de miseria*)." Cited in José Manuel Valenzuela Arce, *Empapados de Sereno: El Movimiento Urbano Popular en Baja California (1928-1988),* Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 1991, p. 104. This book also contains an account of the removal of Cartolandia, pp. 99-115.

[20] Valenzuela, *Empapados de Sereno.,* 136-42.

CUCUTAC,[21] which residents who lived in the communities along the river had started in 1978 as a means of defending their homes. Once forced out, some were relocated by the government and others began a series of land invasions around the city to establish new communities where residents could begin their lives anew. The organization would come to have a significant presence throughout the city, especially in the neighborhoods known as Sánchez Taboada, El Tecolote (in La Gloria), and Florido-Mariano Matamoros. After 1989, the leaders of CUCUTAC would become significant political figures as city council members and state legislators. However, throughout the 1980s, the groups fought primarily for land titles and the provision of basic services (electricity, water, and sewage) for the communities that emerged from the floods, and for new communities that sprang up all over the city to accommodate poor migrants from the south.

Figure 7.9: Low-Income Community in Tijuana

Source: Photo by Julio Sevla Saavedra, Primer Taller Fotodocumental Tijuana, available at http://www.f8.com/FP/TIJUANA/PROJECTS/Julio1.htm.

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[21] CUCUTAC stands for Comité Unión de Colonos Urbanos de Tijuana, A.C. (Committee Union of Urban Residents of Tijuana, Civil Association).

As migration to Tijuana continued unabated in the 1980s, the PRI developed an army of brokers who helped landless residents invade areas and set up new communities. The largest community developed by the PRI, Grupo México (now known as Camino Verde), became one of the largest blocs of votes for the party in the city and at one point, when the municipal PRI leadership ignored them, negotiated successfully with the national party to remove the PRI's municipal leader.[22] The PRI similarly led land invasions in Florido-Mariano Matamoros and throughout many other parts of the city. In 1984, under a new governor, the state government, in hopes of staunching the wave of land invasions, opened a program to grant land to residents who needed it,. This program initially increased the pace of land invasions, as the organizations involved sought to strengthen their bargaining position with the government. In the long-term, however, the program reduced the demand for land and undercut the growing strength of the organizations that sponsored land invasions (including both CUCUTAC and the various PRI-affiliated organizations).[23]

Tijuana entered the late 1980s with considerable competition among diverse approaches to organizing political power. The PRI remained dominant and ensured its continuation in power, although it occasionally had to resort to fraud to win. The official party had a strong presence in many of the urban settlements, where their leaders served as brokers for regularizing land titles and getting services. PRI also had affiliated unions among transportation workers, hotel and restaurant employees, and public sector workers.[24] However, these organizations only covered a small percentage of the city's

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[22] Valenzuela, *Empapados de Sereno,* p. 163.
[23] Valenzuela, *Empapados de Sereno,* pp. 83-97, and 203-4.
[24] For a description of the PRI's corporatist organization in Baja California, see Victor Alejandro Espinoza Valle, *Alternancia política y gestión pública,* Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2000.

residents. Many other city residents were not involved in any form of social or political organization. Unless they lived in a party-organized community, owners of small businesses, *maquiladora* workers, construction workers, and those who worked in the United States were outside the PRI's corporatist system. The PAN had built a base of sympathy among these unaffiliated citizens, but the party membership itself was relatively small. CUCUTAC and other smaller organizations on the left were involved in organizing the migrant poor. At the margin of these more politically active organizations, the city had also seen the rise of non-governmental organizations, primarily devoted to education and social assistance, and often affiliated with the Catholic Church or small Protestant churches.[25] Tijuana had a large number of citizens whose vote was up for grabs for any party that could offer a convincing platform.

In 1988, the campaign of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the presidential candidate of a left-leaning coalition, found echo among these unaffiliated voters as well as among the left and disaffected sectors of the PRI. His organizers in the state included the state's first governor, Braulio Maldonado, who had split from the PRI, Catalino Zavala, the leader of CUCUTAC, and many other local political leaders. Cárdenas won the state outright, with 165,497 votes to 157,190 for the PRI's Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Baja California was the only northern state that Cárdenas officially won. The PAN ended up a disappointing third with 101,164 votes (see Figure 7.10). Within a year, however, the left had divided in Baja California, as elsewhere in Mexico, and could not capitalize on the

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[25] The number of NGOs would grow dramatically in the 1990s to around 186 in 1999. Many of these organizations had links to the Catholic Church, Protestant churches, or U.S.-based NGOs. A study by Benedicto Ruíz in 1999 indicates that 22% of the 186 NGOs in existence at that time had started in the 1980s or before. Unlike in other cities in Mexico, however, few of these NGOs were engaged in political or policy-oriented activities. Several policy-oriented NGOs would emerge in the 1990s, including organizations (and coalitions) dedicated to human rights, women's issues, and advocacy around AIDS. Benedicto Ruíz, "Las ONGs en Tijuana: Un perfil general," *El Bordo,* No. 4, 1999.

growing discontent in the state. With the charismatic mayor of Ensenada, Ernesto Ruffo,

as their candidate, the PAN trounced the PRI in the state governor's election. A largely

unkown businessman named Carlos Montejo became the first opposition mayor of

Tijuana, riding Ruffo's coattails to victory.

Figure 7.10: 1988 Presidential Elections, Vote for three major candidates

	Percentage of votes
□ Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (FDN)	39%
■ Carlos Salinas (PRI)	37%
■ Manuel Clouthier (PAN)	24%
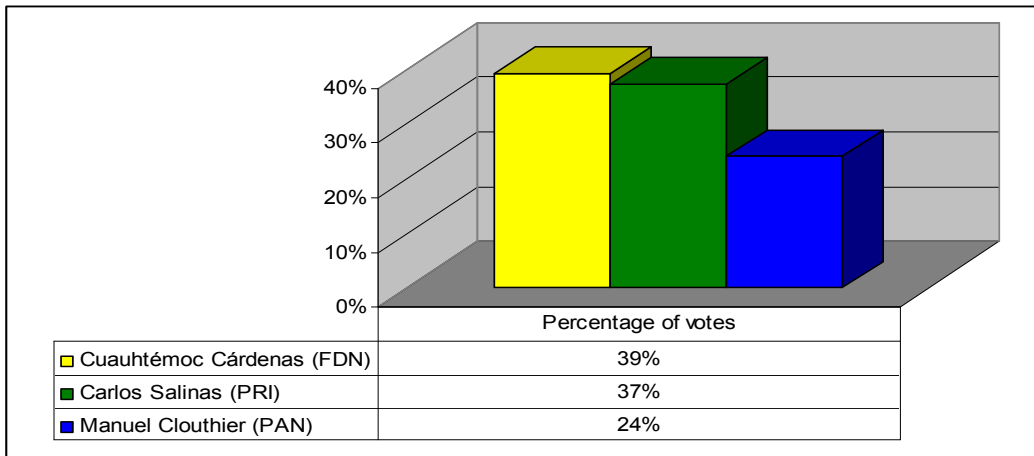
Source: Negrete Mata, "Historia política y alternancia," p. 83. Note: Percentage is the percentage of votes among the three main candidates; it does not include other candidates or blank votes. Cárdenas' total includes all votes for him distributed among the political parties that were part of the coalition.

The PAN was a party that had attracted the votes of unaffiliated citizens, who had

individually expressed their rejection of the PRI's corporate style of governance. It was,

moreover, a truly liberal party that believed that government should establish a direct

relationship between individual citizens and the state rather than one mediated by

corporate organizations. A perfect match seemed to exist between the city—distant from

the center of power, mobile, and dynamic— and the party—federalist, liberal, and

capitalist—that voters had chosen to entrust with their future. How would the PAN go

about implementing its new style of democratic governance? Could it create new

channels to mediate between citizens and the government and to replace the PRI's old

corporatist channels? And if so, would the municipal government have sufficient

authority and autonomy for any innovations to be meaningful?

7.4 How Much Decentralization (1989-2004)?

The victory of the PAN in Tijuana in 1989 coincided with a period of expansion of municipal authority and autonomy in Mexico. Under five successive mayors elected from the PAN (see Table 7.1), The Tijuana government both benefited from this expansion and, in the 1990s, led the way in promoting it. Municipal finances more than tripled in *real* terms times between 1989 and 2004 (Figure 7.11).

Table 7.1: Mayors of Tijuana, 1989-2004

Mayor	Term	Party	Margin of victory
Carlos Montejo Favela	1989-1992	PAN	13.3%
Hector Osuna Jaime	1992-1995	PAN	2.4%
Guadalupe Osuna Millán	1995-1998	PAN	12.4%
Francisco Vega de Lamadrid	1998-2001	PAN	6.9%
Jesús González Reyes	2001-2004	PAN	9.2%

Figure 7.11: Real Growth of Tijuana Municipal Finances by Income Source, 1989-2002 (in Millions of Constant 2002 pesos)
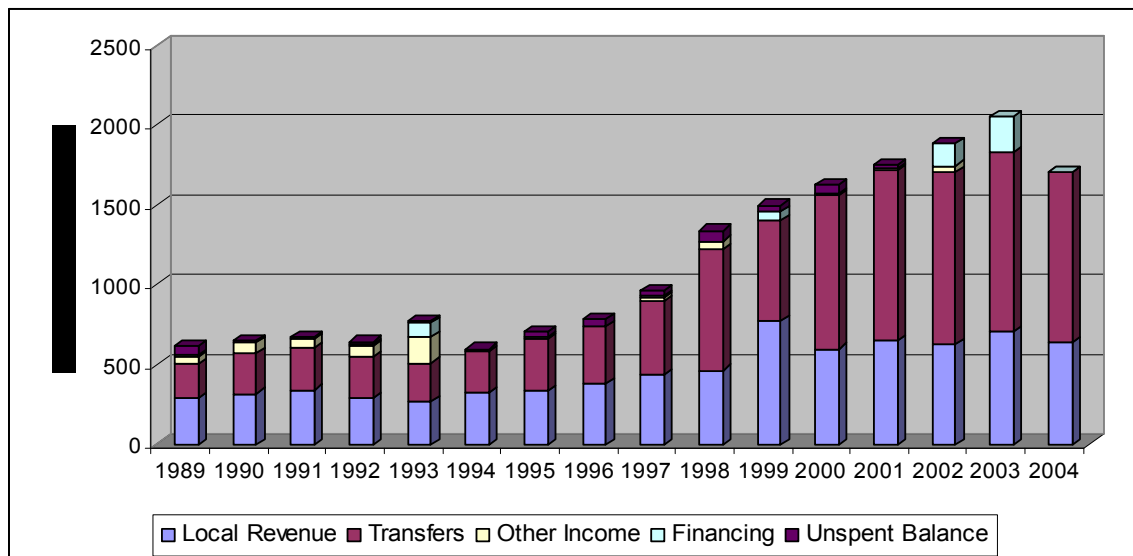
Source: for 1989-2002, INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos; for 2003-2004, Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, *Presupuesto de Ingresos*, 2003, 2004, available on the municipal website, www.tijuana.gob.mx, and INEGI, *Finanzas Públicas Estatales y Municipales 2000-2003,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2004.

Increased federal transfers accounted for much of this increase; however, the city government took great pains to exercise its agency and expanded its locally-generated revenue (Figure 7.12). The first PAN administration, under Carlos Montejo, updated the registry of properties and increased property tax rates;[26] the second administration, under Hector Osuna Jaime, took out a loan from Banobras, the federal government's bank for subnational governments, to create a comprehensive new system for tracking property taxes.[27] The third administration, under Guadalupe Osuna Millán, created the first detailed city map, which allowed the government to determine property that had not been included in the registry.[28] Overall, compliance with property taxes significantly increased from 47.9% in 1989 to 71.3% by 2003, and property tax revenue skyrocketed from under 7 million pesos to over 100 million pesos (see Table 7.2). At the same time, the city found new sources of locally-generated revenue, largely tied to taxation of business in the city, so that even while revenue from property taxes increased, other forms of locally generated revenue expanded even faster (Figure 7.8).

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[26] Property tax rates are the exclusive province of the state legislature. In this case, Montejo used a calculation from an autonomous government commission to determine the rates and then took the proposal to the state legislature. See Tonatiuh Guillén López and José Negrete Mata, "Tijuana" in Guillén, ed., *Municipios en transición: actors sociales y nuevas políticas de gobierno,* Mexico: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1995..

[27] For more information on this topic, see Tim Campbell and Travis Katz, "The Politics of Participation in Tijuana, Mexico: Inventing a New Style of Governance," in Harald Fuhr and Campbell, *Leadership and Innovation in Subnational Government : Case Studies from Latin America,* Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2004. Campbell and Katz argue that municipal governments in Mexico had used loans from Banobras primarily for public works projects, and this fact may have been the first time a municipal government used a Banobras loan to increase its own tax-generation capacity.

[28] Interview, Martín de la Rosa, May 3, 2005.

**Figure 7.12: Real Growth in Locally Generated Revenue, including Taxes, 1989-2002
(in Millions of 2002 Constant Pesos)**
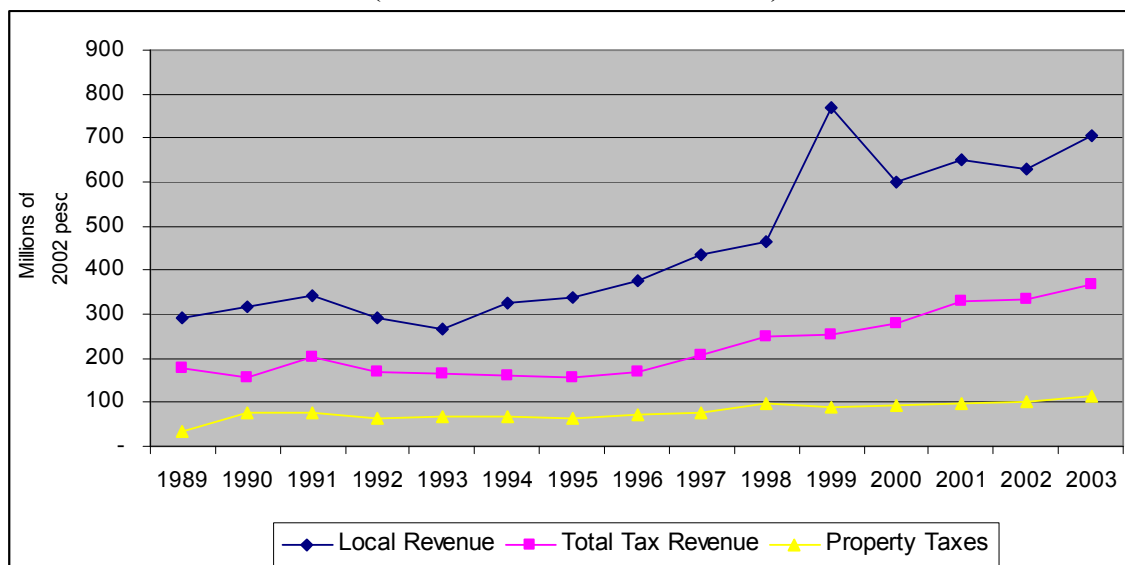
Source: Calculations for Property Tax based on data in Table 7.2; for Total Taxes and Locally Generated
Revenue: for 1989-2002, INEGI, Sistema Nacional de Base de Datos; for 2003-2004, Ayuntamiento de
Tijuana, *Presupuesto de Ingresos*, 2003, 2004, available on the municipal website, www.tijuana.gob.mx,
and INEGI, *Finanzas Públicas Estatales y Municipales 2000-2003,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2004.

Table 7.2: Increase in Property Tax Compliance, 1989-2003

	Properties	Properties paying tax	% Compliant	Property Tax Income*
1989	143,285	68,642	47.9	6,778
1990	172,901	105,558	61.05	19,536
1991	180,925	114,063	63.04	24,524
1992	196,378	115,965	59.05	25,381
1993	206,714	126,714	61.3	31,813
1994	217,080	134,310	61.87	37,053
1995	220,561	143,469	65.05	37,776
1996	228,851	149,938	65.52	44,499
1997	285,247	157,456	55.13	51,646
1998	310,000	209,456	67.57	72,533
1999	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	70,220
2000	n.d	n.d.	n.d	79,450
2001	315,291	207,109	65.7	89,449
2002	324,094	219,945	67.9	99,802
2003	336,598	240,000	71.3	112,000

Source: *Informe Municipal*, 1998, 2000, 2003.
* In thousands of pesos. Some years (1998, 2000, 2003) are approximations.
No data on properties taxed were available for 1999 and 2000.

The city also experimented with new approaches to municipal debt. In addition to the Banobras loan to improve tax collection infrastructure, the second PAN administration, under Osuna Jaime, created a plan, known as the Plan de Activación Urbana (Urban Activation Plan) or PAU, that would have allowed for private financing of a comprehensive strategy for major infrastructure development. It was the first attempt in Mexico to combine private loans, state and city funds, contributions from business, and a betterment levy to create a major package for modernizing the city's infrastructure.[29] The idea of the PAU emerged out of a major flood that devastated the city, took over 60 lives, and left whole communities cut off from the city for days.[30] It also responded to a clear political logic: the PAN government wanted to urbanize the city without being dependent on federal government loans that could lead to greater federal control over city decisions.[31] Ultimately, however, the city was forced to scrap plans for the PAU. The 1994-95 economic crisis had led to a 50% devaluation of the peso against the dollar and had sent interest rates skyrocketing. The innovative idea of the PAU set the precedent for later, more modest loan packages from private sources.

Mayor Osuna Jaime also took a step towards ensuring greater municipal autonomy when he created a national conference of PAN mayors. The organization, which would eventually become the Asociación de Municipios de México (Mexican Association of Municipalities, AMMAC), met for the first time in Tijuana, and Osuna

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[29] The package included 40 major infrastructure investments, 70% of which were roads with drainage systems and 10% of which were flood control. 20% of the payment on the loan for the US$170 million project would have come from a betterment levy on residents who lived near the new infrastructure; 40% from residents who lived further away; 15% from business taxes; and 25% from state and municipal funds. For a detailed description of the project, see Campbell and Katz, "The Politics of Participation in Tijuana, Mexico."

[30] Interview, Hector Osuna Jaime (Mayor, 1992-1995), February 25, 2005; Campbell and Katz, "The Politics of Participation."

[31] Guillén and Negrete, "Tijuana."

became its first president.[32] Under Osuna Jaime, the city of Tijuana, alleging that the federal Solidarity Program was being used for political purposes in the city, would also file the first municipal lawsuit against the federal government. The Supreme Court ultimately found in favor of the federal government, but not before Tijuana had set a precedent of municipal autonomy that dozens of other municipalities would copy in subsequent years.

By the late 1990s, municipal authority and autonomy expanded even further. The creation first of Ramo 26 (1997) and then Ramo 33 (1998-) led to an dramatic rise of city finances under increasingly clear rules. Political and bureaucratic conflicts between the state and city governments sometimes led to financial transfers being delayed, which in turn generated problems for the planning and implementation of programs. Such was the case, for example, with public security funds in 2003 and 2004, which were delayed by bureaucratic infighting and political disagreements between the PAN-run state government and PAN-run city government.[33] Nonetheless, the city largely had a guaranteed source of external revenues in addition to its own-source income.

The fact that the city comprised almost half of the state population and over half of its economic activity also meant that the city had a certain degree of leverage within political and policy debates in the state. As a result, the Baja California state government

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[32] Although at first a relatively small association, the AMMAC would grow to become the most influential municipal association in Mexico. Gradually weakening its relationship to the PAN and expanding its reach to include municipalities governed by other parties, by 2004 AMMAC would reach over 250 members, including mayors of most of the country's largest cities. Based on author's review of current AMMAC director Ruben Fernández, March 4, 2005. The AMMAC's current membership, available on the association's website at www.ammac.org.mx, accessed March 2005.

[33] In an interview, city council member Arnulfo Guerrero (PAN, 2001-2004), February 24, 2005, for example, noted that state funds for public security were transferred in October, which made it impossible for the city to deploy these funds fully. Sometimes delays represent bureaucratic difficulties between the state and city governments; in other occasions, they appear to have been the result of political infighting between state and municipal officials.

recognized its five municipalities as political interlocutors in major policy decisions and

created, after 1996, a series of mechanisms to gather formal input from municipalities in

decisions that effected them. A major reform of the state law on municipalities in 2001,

which emerged from negotiations among the municipalities and state government,

explicitly recognized the regulatory authority of municipalities in a range of areas where

the law was previously unclear. The new law transferred full authority for property

registry and taxes to the municipalities and allowed for concurrent responsibility in

regulating transportation and alcoholic beverage sales.[34]

7.5 Changes in Democratic Governance (1989-2004)

System of Representation

Competitive Elections

After the PAN won both the city and state government, Baja California began to

innovate in electoral reforms. In 1991, the state created its own registry of voters; in

1992, its own secure election credential with a photograph; and in 1994, an autonomous

state electoral institute with citizen counselors elected by the state congress. These

measures, designed to eliminate vote fraud, preceded similar actions by the federal

government, which did not create an updated registry of voters and a voting credential

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[34] For further discussion of this, see Tonatiuh Guillén López, "Una reforma municipal en dos tiempos: Baja California," in Tonatiuh Guillén and Alicia Ziccardi, eds., *Innovación y continuidad del municipio mexicano: análisis de la reforma municipal de 13 estados de la República,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2004.

with photograph until 1994 and an autonomous electoral council until 1996.

Although the PAN won every Tijuana municipal election and Baja California
state election from 1989 to 2004 (see Figures 7.13, 7.14), the PRI and other parties
competed actively. In fact, the PRI won the federal elections of 1994 outright, winning
every congressional district in the state, and frequently won the other municipal
governments in the state (though never Tijuana). In addition, the PAN failed to win a
majority in the state legislature from 1989 through 1995 and again from 1998 to 2001, so
the PRI and PRD shared considerable influence in the state legislature. Electoral reforms
in 1994 and 1996 actually expanded the representation of minority parties in the state
legislature and city councils.[35]

Figure 7.13: Election for Governor in Baja California, 1989-2001

	1989	1995	2001
PAN	52.3%	49.6%	48.7%
PRI	41.7%	41.2%	36.7%
PRD	2.1%	3.2%	4.2%
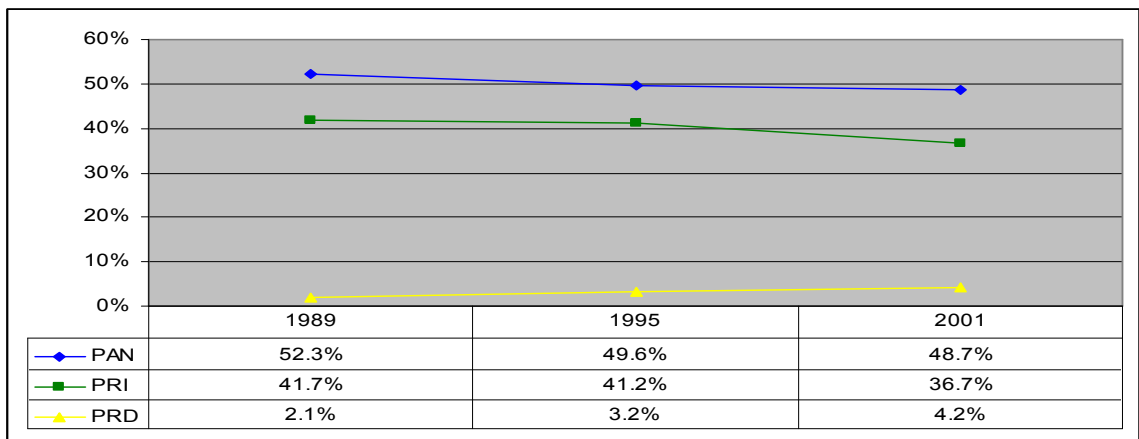
Source: Elections Results available from the Instituto Estatal Electoral de Baja California,
www.ieebc.org.mx/estadistica.

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[35] See Espinoza Valle, *La Transición Difícil* and *Alternancia Política y Gestión Pública* for extensive data
on state congressional elections and seats and an analysis of the major issues dealt with in each period.

Figure 7.14: Elections for Mayor of Tijuana, 1989-2004

	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004
PRI	32.0%	45.4%	39.4%	38.6%	37.6%	47.5%
PAN	45.3%	47.8%	51.8%	45.5%	46.8%	46.4%
PRD	2.4%	3.9%	3.5%	9.8%	6.0%	3.3%
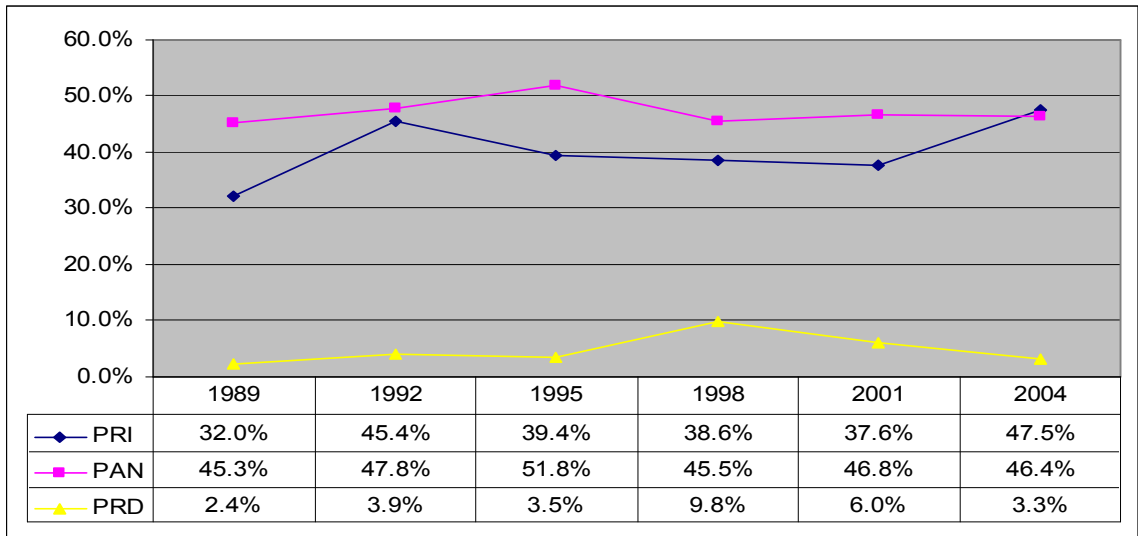
Source: Instituto Estatal Electoral de Baja California, electoral data available on website, www.ieebc.org.mx, consulted March 2005.

The Mayor and the Municipal Administration

The PAN had long practiced internal democracy and regularly held conventions to determine its candidates for election. The party's success after 1989 only served to strengthen this process. When Carlos Montejo ran for mayor in 1989, he was unopposed at the party's municipal convention, which barely attracted 200 PAN members.[36] However, once the party was in power, and candidates had a reasonable expectation of winning the general election, subsequent internal elections drew considerably more interest within the party. In both 1992 and 1998 the internal elections proved particularly competitive.[37]

However, the democratic potential of the PAN's internal selection process was

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[36] Tania Hernández Vicencio, *De la Oposición al Poder: El PAN en Baja California, 1986-2000,* Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2001, p. 103.
[37] David A. Shirk, "El PAN, un partido en construcción: lecciones desde Tijuana," in Tania Hernández Vicencio and José Negrete Mata, eds., *La Experiencia del PAN: Diez anos de gobierno en Baja California,* Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2001.

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severely limited by the small number of citizens who could actually be engaged in the selection process. The PAN has maintained a small membership both in Baja California as well as nationally. Unlike the PRI, which has always conceived of itself as a mass party, the PAN has preferred a limited base of members and sympathizers. During the period of PRI dominance, this size difference prevented PRI's infiltration and cooptation of PAN, and it helped maintain a relatively clear set of principles that differentiated the PAN from other parties.[38] Although PAN membership grew in Tijuana from under 500 in 1990 to 1,581 in 1999 and finally to around 2,400 in 2004, this number was still less than 3 percent of those voters who voted for the PAN in the 2004 municipal elections (and a little over 1 percent of all voters).[39] The PAN has become increasingly divided into party factions, which formed coalitions around particular candidates.[40] According to Senator and former mayor Hector Osuna Jaime, the PAN's relatively small size means that a successful municipal candidate only needs to convince "around twenty people" in order to win an internal election, as long as those twenty are the key leaders of the different factions.[41] Internal democratic processes within the PAN were an important innovation that contributed to a more accountable mayoral administration, but this innovation evolved little as the party itself grew and began to win elections.

When Carlos Montejo became mayor in 1989, he created a cabinet that included members of the PRI and the PAN, as well as a number of non-partisan professionals.

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[38] See Yemile Mizrahi, *From Martyrdom to Power: The Partido Acción Nacional in Mexico,* South Bend, Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 2003.

[39] Data on party membership from: for 1990, Shirk, "El PAN, un partido en construcción"; for 1999, Hernández Vicencio, *De la Oposición al Poder,* p. 113; for 2004, the article "Estiman depurar a 960 panistas," *Frontera,* February 1, 2005, p. 1. Ironically, the PAN was planning to *reduce* its membership up to 40% as a response to losing the municipal election in 2004.

[40] See Hernández Vicencio, *De la Oposición al Poder.*

[41] Interview, Hector Osuna Jaime, February 25, 2005.

This plural composition of the cabinet was repeated at the state level as well.[42] This pluralism reflected both the PAN's need to incorporate PRI members with administrative experience and the willingness of many sectors of the left to embrace an opposition government run by the PAN.[43] Although the second PAN administration, of Hector Osuna Jaime (1992-95), was more partisan, it largely drew on young PAN members and sympathizers who were chosen for their work ethic and commitment.[44] The third administration, of Guadalupe Osuna Millán (1995-98), was especially plural. Osuna Millán himself had been a state employee, who only joined the PAN in 1994 when he ran for election as a federal congressman; as a result, he turned to both PAN members and leading professionals outside the party to create his team.[45] The plural composition of municipal administrations had a parallel in the state administrations under Governors Ernesto Ruffo (1989-1995) and Hector Terán (1995-98). However, under the final two PAN administrations of Francisco de la Vega (1998-2001) and Jesús González Reyes (2001-2004), PAN loyalty dominated over professional qualifications as party members demanded greater presence in the municipal administration. After 1998, both the state and municipal governments gradually excluded from the upper ranks of government those who were not members of the party.[46]

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[42] Interview, Antonio Cano, February 23, 2005.
[43] As former CUCUTAC leader Catalino Zavala noted, "The anti-Priism of the PAN combined well with the left's struggle." Interview, Catalino Zavala, April 23, 2005.
[44] Interviews, Hector Osuna Jaime, February 25, 2005 and Zeferino Sánchez, February 24, 2005.
[45] Among the most noted non-PANistas were Martín de la Rosa, a scholar and former Jesuit priest, who was hired in a competitive selection process as director of the Municipal Planning Council (Copladem), and Leonardo Saravia, a former left-wing organizer, hired to run the Municipal Institute of Culture, both high-profile positions within the administration. Interviews with Guadalupe Osuna Millán, April 21, 2005, and Martín de la Rosa, May 3, 2005.
[46] Hernández Vicencio, *De la Oposición al Poder,* pp. 134-44.

City Council

After 1989, the City Council gained a much higher profile than it had had previously. The first PAN-dominated council passed a law that regulated the council's operations, which for the first time brought a degree of transparency to its operations. Since 1993 (when data became available) the council has met regularly for 15 to 31 times a year and, from 1996 to 2004, passed an average of 132 resolutions per year (see Table 7.3). The commissions of the council generally have three to five members and several of them are quite active. This activity is particularly true of the Committee on Governance, which handled 70% of all resolutions during the last PAN government (2001-2004), and the Budget Committee (Hacienda), which handled all issues regarding finances.[47] Meetings were generally not open, although rules required them to be, nor were they announced ahead of time. Nonetheless, the city council started filming most of its sessions and putting these on the city's website so that citizens could watch them after the fact.[48] In a 2002 reform, the council also approved a process for "citizen initiatives," which allowed citizens to present resolutions directly to the city council for their consideration,[49]

Table 7.3: City Council Meetings and Resolutions, 1993-2004

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Council meetings	30	27	15	26	21	23	22	17	15	31	25	25
Resolutions				103	176	147	84	95	63	197	165	165
% not unanimous				12%	12%	7%	14%	3%	3%	6%	9%	9%

Note: No data on number of council resolutions for 1992-1995. The percentage reflects the percentage of resolutions that were passed by majority vote rather than by consensus.
Source: Own compilation, based on data in the annual Mayor's reports (*Informe Municipal,* 1993-2004).

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[47] Interviews with former city council members Arnulfo Guerrero (PAN, 2001-2004), February 24, 2005; Juanita Pérez (PRI, 1999-2001), February 25, 2005; and José Roberto Dávalos (PRD, 2001-2004), April 1, as well as Arnulfo Guerrero, "El Cabildo," unpublished manuscript.
[48] Interview, Arnulfo Guerrero (PAN, 2001-2004); Guerrero, "El Cabildo"; and *Reglamento de Cabildo.*
[49] *Reglamento de Participación Ciudadana;* Interview, Arnulfo Guerero.

A split within the PAN's council members during the first PAN administration (1989-1992) heightened the visibility of the council.[50] Although the mayor eventually succeeded in governing by reaching a deal with members of a third party, the dispute gave new life—and considerable publicity—to what had been a previously irrelevant body. A similar split among PAN council members during the fourth administration allowed opposition parties to form alliances with dissident PAN members. "We stopped a lot of things of the PAN government," noted PRI council member Juanita Pérez. However, the ability to block the mayor's proposals did not necessarily translate into the ability for the opposition to create successful resolutions without the mayor's support.[51]

Despite these splits, a review of council resolutions from 1996 on (Table 7.3, above) suggests that most resolutions were passed by consensus, with slightly less unanimity in 1996-1997 and 1999. In the case of two of the major political initiatives of PAN, the city council hardly played a role at all. In raising property taxes in 1990, Montejo took his case directly to the state congress. In launching the PAU in 1994, Osuna Jaime got the council to approve the initiative with little debate; only one PRI representative was a member of the council at the time. To generate legitimacy for the PAU initiative and to compensate for the lack of space for real debate in the council the mayor scheduled a referendum on the proposal.[52]

The city council structure inherited from the PRI in 1989 allowed for only three council members of minority parties with eleven members of the majority party including

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[50] A faction of six PAN council members (out of thirteen) disagreed on most major policy issues with the mayor. This faction, drawn from more traditionally members of the party, felt that the mayor was not following the party's principles sufficiently. Guillén and Negrete trace this development in detail in "Tijuana." See also Shirk, "El PAN, un partido en construcción."

[51] Interview, Juanita Pérez, former city council member (PRI 1999-2002).

[52] The PAU was approved in a referendum in late 1994; however, only 7% of registered voters participated. On both the PAU and the process for raising the property tax, see Tonatiuh Guillén and José Negrete Mata, "Tijuana."

the mayor. Since the PAN had won the election with only 45.3% of the vote, this meant an overrepresentation of the PAN by 33.2% and an underrepresentation of the PRI by 34.9%. However, in 1994 the state government passed a major electoral reform which expanded the number of city council seats to 17, assigning ten to the largest party (including the only *síndico*) and seven to minority parties. This change helped minimize the degree of under/overrepresentation of different parties within the council, although it continued to ensure a majority for the mayor regardless of the extent of the winning party's support (Table 7.4). Candidates for city council were still elected on party lists as well, so that citizens did not vote directly for them. A state reform to allow almost half of city council members to be elected directly in district elections was negotiated between the state and municipal governments in 2000-2001, but eventually discarded because of opposition from the mayors.[53] Starting in 1995, the PAN began to elect its list of city council members through internal elections (as noted above), which ensured a greater degree of inclusion of different party factions.[54] However, since the party members who could participate in these decisions represented little more than 1% of those who voted in the general elections, this arrangement only ensured the inclusion of different party factions rather than creating a mechanism for citizens to choose council members, let alone deliberate regularly with them.

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[53] The reform was scrapped in part because the mayors saw little reason to give up on party control over the selection process for council members. Guillén, Una reforma municipal en dos tiempos."
[54] Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y gestión local en México," p. 80.

Table 7.4: Tijuana City Council, 1989-2004, Showing Over/Underrepresentation of Parties

Term	PAN members*	Minority members	PAN-PRI vote	Overrepresentation (majority-PAN)	Underrepresentation (first minority-PRI)
1989-92	11	1 PRI 2 PARM	45.3%-32.0%	+33.2%	-34.9%
1992-95	10	1 PRI 1 PRD	47.8%-45.4%	+35.5%	-37.1%
1995-98	10	6 PRI 1 PRD	51.8%-39.4%	+7.0%	-4.1%
1998-2001	10	5 PRI 1 PRD	45.5%-38.6%	+17.0	-6.35%
2001-04	10	5 PRI 1 PRD 1 PT	46.8%-37.6%	+12.0%	-8.2%

Source: Own calculations with data based on Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y gestión local en México," p. 78, for 1989-1998; for 1998-2001, email communication with Tonatiuh Guillén, Professor at El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, December 19, 2005; and webpage of the municipality (www.tijuana.gob.mx) for 2001-4.
* Including the Sindicate, but excluding the mayor, who has a vote in city council meetings and was a member of the PAN in each administration.

Overall, after 1989 the city council became far more inclusive and achieved a much higher profile and scope of action. However, on balance, the council remained trapped in the structural constraint of the party list which reduced significantly the degree to which citizens had any real connection to their elected representatives. Citizens continued voting for the mayoral candidate they preferred, and this vote determined the number of council members each party would be assigned. While city council compositions more closely resembled voters' partisan preferences, it still underrepresented the second largest party significantly, and city council members themselves owed their election to their political parties rather than to the voters.

Transparency

The advent of the PAN government led to a new openness on the part of the city administration. The mayor's annual report (*Informe Municipal*) became a genuine

reporting of key municipal data. After 1992, these reports actually became quite detailed

with extensive budgetary data, investment figures, and lists of activities. During the third

administration, under Osuna Millán (1996-98), the mayor's final report even had a

scorecard that compared the goals set out in the Municipal Development Plan against the

administration's actual accomplishments, including—in great detail—both successes and

failures. This administration also published a series of bulletins, *Tijuana Hoy,* which

dealt with a range of municipal services and current events, and distributed them widely

throughout the city.[55]

The city council continued to meet behind closed doors, with no prior

announcement of meetings, which sharply limited citizens' ability to monitor their local

legislature and contribute to public deliberation. However, the council eventually began

videotaping its sessions and now posts these on the municipal website so that citizens

could follow council proceedings. This innovation was an imperfect compromise, since

not all citizens had ready access to the internet, especially the poorest, but it was a step in

the direction of greater transparency. However, the structure of the council contained a

flaw that made it particularly hard to pursue malfeasance by public officials. The *síndico*,

a member of the council who is empowered to investigate acts of corruption by municipal

officials, is, by state law, a member of the majority party.[56]

One of the most important innovations that the PAN-affiliated governments

carried out was the creation in 1991 of a state ombudsman, known as the Ombudsman for

Human Rights and Citizen Protection (*Procurador de Derechos Humanos y Protección*

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[55] *Informe Municipal, 1998; Tijuana Hoy,* issues 1 through 7.
[56] The Síndico is a member of the city council empowered to monitor government expenditures and pursue legal actions. Former City Council Member Juanita Pérez (PRI, 1999-2001) emphasized this point in an interview, February 25, 2005,

Ciudadana, PDH). Although this reform was on the state level, it had a significant impact in the municipal arena since the ombudsman was empowered to denounce acts of corruption by both state and municipal officials.[57] Moreover, the PDH had its main office in Tijuana. Baja California was only the second state in the country, after Aguascalientes, to create an autonomous human rights office, and the reform preceded the creation of a federal ombudsman a year later.[58] The first three ombudsmen selected (who covered the period 1991-2001) were all noted human rights advocates who were members of the PRD, the state's third party, and they established a reputation for weeding out corruption and malfeasance.[59] The fourth ombudsman selected (2001-2004) was a PAN member, however, and the office appears to have lost public credibility and moral authority as a result of the perceived association with the governing party.[60]

Despite impressive gains in transparency under the first PAN administrations, several troubling signs began to emerge in the new millennium. While Baja California had led the country in creating a human rights office, the state trailed the rest of the country in passing a law that would give citizens access to government documents on demand. Although a federal transparency law had taken effect in 2002 and a majority of

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[57] The law, approved in 1991, declares that the ombudsman is empowered "to look out for the legality of actions by the public administration, promote justice, and ensure the respect for human rights…" He/she would not be able to prosecute corruption, but any denouncements by the ombudsman had to be answered in writing by the accused authority and could be channeled to the attorney general's office. *Ley sobre la Procuraduría de Derechos Humanos y Protección Ciudadana de Baja California,* approved March 10, 1991, available on the website of the Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas of UNAM, http://www.juridicas.unam.mx/infjur/leg/, consulted March 19, 2005.

[58] Interview, José Luis Pérez Canchola, March 4, 2005.

[59] The most notable among the three was, without doubt, the first, José Luis Pérez Canchola, who would go on to be vice president of the National Academy of Human Rights.

[60] Under existing law, the governor sends a trio of candidates to the state legislature, which designates the ombudsman. According to Catalino Zavala, who was a state legislator (PRD) at the time of the decision, the governor had sought to impose a close associate who had been rector of the state university system as the ombudsman in 2001. The PRI, PRD, and dissident PAN legislators were afraid that this candidate would use the office to protect the governor, so they chose a different candidate, who was a member of the PAN but from a party faction opposed to the governor. Interview, Catalino Zavala, February 24, 2005.

states had done the same by 2004, Baja California had no such provisions. The state congress passed a transparency bill in 2004, but the governor refused to sign it.[61] Political leaders interviewed noted that the governor was opposed to the law because it would limit his margin of discretion over the budget. They also observed that the press in the state was unwilling to take a more vocal stance on this issue because the media companies depended on the PAN-affiliated state and municipal governments for advertising revenues.

The municipal government made some steps towards reporting information on its website, including major contracts, salaries of top officials, and annual budgets. Nonetheless, the salaries did not include bonuses (which are often the major form of compensation of top level employees), and the annual budgets lacked detail (though some detail appeared in the annual mayor's report). Indeed, there were rampant rumors of corruption in the municipal government, largely due to a lack of controls and reporting on construction contracts. It is hard to know to what extent these rumors were true, but as one analyst noted, "even if the stories are only true in part, it's bad."[62] One former PRD council member noted that much of the alleged corruption in the municipal administration was tied to the granting of permits for the construction of condominium complexes for lower and middle income families. He noted that few controls exist to ensure the approval of developments and the licensing processes involved are carried out transparently, a concern echoed by an independent civic organization.[63] In a symbolic

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[61] "Revisarán la Ley de Acceso," *Frontera,* October 13, 2004, p. 1; and interviews with political leaders Catalina Zavala, February 24, 2005; Gastón Luken, February 25, 2005; and Askan Lutheroth, February 23, 2005.
[62] Interview, Gaston Luken, former president of the State Electoral Institute and member of Tijuana Trabaja.
[63] Interviews with José Roberto Davalos, city council member (PRD, 2001-2004), and Hector Lutheroth, president of Consejo Ciudadano para la Transparencia.

act, one that underscored the degree to which the public came to perceive the PAN

governments in Tijuana as corrupt, the new PRI-dominated city council in December

2004 made its first action the approval of a municipal transparency law.[64]

Opportunities for Participation

After 1989, PAN state and municipal officials held high hopes for reconstructing

the channels of communication with citizens so as to treat them as individual citizens

rather than as clients of corporate organizations. Government officials actively sought to

break down the traditional channels of mediation, which had privileged PRI-affiliated

unions and community associations. The result of this effort was mixed, however. As

former Governor Ernesto Ruffo Appel observes:

> When we arrived in the state government in 1989, we expected that a
> repressed society would take control of its destiny, that it would take the
> initiative, propose actions, use its new government. We felt the obligation
> to make the government function, attending to the needs; the responsibility
> of living up to our promise. But we also felt despair at not seeing an
> active citizenry who would fight for their rights. Citizen participation was
> more a slogan than a reality.[65]

The government had a partial success with the taxi unions, which had always

monopolized the right to ask for permits on behalf of their members. The PAN state

government changed the regulations to require drivers to apply individually for their

permits instead of through their union representative. Similarly, the governor largely

refused to deal with organizations—especially those affiliated with the PRI—

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[64] *Reglamento Municipal de Transparencia,* approved December 2004, available on the city's website, www.tijuana.gob.mx.
[65] Ernesto Ruffo Appel, "EL PAN en Baja California: su relación con la sociedad," in Vicencio and Negrete, eds., *La Experiencia del PAN.*

representing residents who wanted land titles.[66] The state government accelerated the

granting of land titles at modest prices to families who needed it and jailed leaders who

promoted land invasions.[67] These actions largely succeeded in undercutting the strength

of both the PRI-affiliated community organizations and independent groups like

CUCUTAC.

The city government followed in the footsteps of the state government in these

efforts, refusing to deal, whenever possible, with the corporate organizations. In

addition, the city sought to reconstruct its relationship with citizens by creating new

channels for communication, dialogue, and influence that were more democratic and

eliminated the influence of intermediaries. These efforts included elected committees in

each neighborhood of the city. In addition, the city created a participatory planning

process that included elected citizen committees in thirteen sectors of the city and several

issue-oriented citizen committees, which would help city officials set priorities for public

action. Finally, the city government created a joint business-government roundtable to

address major public/private investment opportunities. Let us consider each in turn.

Neighborhood Committees

The first PAN administration, under Montejo (1989-1992), created a system for

recognizing electing neighborhood committees. Martín de la Rosa, who served as deputy

director of the municipality's social participation department at the time, notes that the

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[66] The notable exception, especially in the early years, was CUCUTAC, since its leader, Catalino Zavala, had become a PRD state legislator and had formed a tacit coalition with the PAN to give the governor a majority in Congress. 3248410…

[67] On the PAN-government's attempts to end corporatist intermediation, see Victor Alejandro Espinoza Valle, *Alternanacia Política y Gestión Pública: El Partido Acción Nacional en el Gobierno de Baja California,* Mexico City and Tijuana: Plaza y Valdés and El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2000, especially chapters 6 and 7; and Victor Alejandro Espinoza, *La Transición Difícil: Baja California 1995-2001,* Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2003.

city government decided to recognize these committees "with general criteria but no legal framework." Whenever people from a neighborhood brought a demand to the city, they would go to the neighborhood, hold an election for a neighborhood committee in the presence of city authorities, and then began working with them around the demand. The only requirements were that the members of the committee be residents in the neighborhood and that they be elected in a public assembly that had been announced ahead of time throughout the neighborhood. According to de la Rosa, a former Jesuit priest who had created a self-help movement in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in the 1970s and a housing cooperative in Tijuana in the 1980s, this method was based on the concept of *autogestión,* self-determination. The approach served to undercut the power of intermediaries from political parties who had served as brokers for neighborhood demands and to establish a direct relationship to citizens who lived in the neighborhood.[68] During the first administration, 157 neighborhood committees were created and the city held the first congress of social organizations to bring these groups together.[69]

The recognition of neighborhood committees—and the requirement that neighborhood demands be channeled through a publicly elected committee—became a hallmark of the PAN governments. The efforts intensified under the succeeding administrations and by 2004 the city had registered an impressive total of more than 350 committees.[70] It was not until the fifth PAN administration that the city council would finally pass a law establishing the legal framework for neighborhood committees, but the

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[68] Interview, Martín de la Rosa Medellín.
[69] *Informe Municipal*, 1992, and Interview, Martin de la Rosa.
[70] This estimate is based on my review of the committees in the database of Comités de Vecinos as of November 2004.

procedure became well-established long before them.[71] Interviews with twelve leaders of

neighborhood committees in two districts of the city (Table 7.4) and with municipal

officials indicated that the practice of recognizing neighborhood committees had, in fact,

become standard practice.[72] Many of the committees had formed when neighborhood

leaders went to the city asking for resolution of specific demands and the city had

requested that a neighborhood election be held before proceeding. In other cases, already

existing community groups had applied to be recognized as neighborhood committees to

comply with the government's requirements.[73] In contrast to Chilpancingo, where the

PRI designated its leaders in the community, I found no cases where the municipal

government actually created its own committees or designated the leaders. .

Table 7.4: Neighborhood Committee Leaders and Copladem Members Interviewed

Subelegation	Neighborhood Committees	Socioeconomic Level (Low/Low-Middle/ Middle)	Copladem Citizen Counselors	Sudelegates
La Gloria	6	3/2/1	2	1
Florido-Mariano Matamoros	6	3/2/1	3	1

Note: Interviews conducted February 12 through March 20, 2005. In addition, interviews on citizen participation were conducted with three former Copladem counselors (two from the 1999-2002 period, one from the 1996-98 period); the municipal Coordinator of Citizen Participation (2001-2004); the Technical Secretary of Copladem (1999-2004) and a former Director of Copladem (1996-98); and with three city council members. Among the current Copladem citizen councilors, three of the interviewees were close to the PAN, two to the PRD/Convergencia, and one to the PRI.

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[71] Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, *Reglamento de Participación Ciudadana.*

[72] Tijuana has traditionally been divided into six administrative divisions, known as delegations, each with a representative, known as the *delegado*, who represents the municipal government. Since several of these divisions have grown considerably, they have been further divided into districts, known as *subdelegaciones,* each with a *subdelegado* who reports to the delegation. As of 2004, there were 14 districts in the city. We conducted interviews in two districts, El Florido and La Gloria, as well as with two former *Subdelegados* of these districts, the municipal Coordinator of Citizen Participation, and the Technical Secretary of the Municipal Planning Council (Copladem, see below), who had served in the last PAN administration (2001-2004). It should be noted that these interviews were conducted shortly after the last PAN administration had left power and the PRI administration had begun. Technically the neighborhood committees were still functioning, but their future remained uncertain. The interviews focused only on the period of the PAN governments.

[73] Four committees had existed prior to 1989 and decided to become official neighborhood committees to facilitate their dealings with the municipality. Eight others were formed when citizens approached the municipality asking for services (usually the *subdelegado*, but occasionally other government agencies) and were asked to first form a committee. Based on the interviews.

Many of the committees were established during the second PAN administration of Hector Osuna Jaime (1992-1995), who instituted an ambitious community investments program called "Manos a la Obra" ("Hands to Work"). Manos a la Obra provided funds to organized citizen groups to make improvements to their neighborhoods in return for a community contribution, usually in labor. This project was not a novel idea; in fact, it was similar to the federal Solidarity Program discussed in Chapter 5. Nonetheless, the program substantially redefined the municipality's relationship to citizens by creating a sense of co-responsibility for public investments.[74] The program also created a powerful incentive for citizens to form neighborhood committees so that they could apply for program funds. The program only lasted two years (1994-95), but it set an important precedent of government-citizen collaboration. Indeed, the government would create a separate program for community infrastructure after 1995 which it then channeled through a participatory planning structure (see next section). Many of the committees formed to apply for Manos a la Obra funds disappeared once funding ended; however, many others survived and became ongoing community institutions.

By 2004, neighborhood committees appeared to be primarily involved in obtaining land titles and basic services for their neighborhoods (pavement, electricity, water, sewage) and neighborhood improvements (schools, parks, community centers). A recent development has been the emergence of neighborhood committees in housing developments, particularly oriented towards dealing with problems with development

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[74] Mayor Osuna Jaime developed the program to regain citizens confidence following the 1994 federal elections, in which the PAN lost all three federal congressional districts in the city. According to Mayor Osuna Jaime, he realized that he had to do something to win people's confidence again. The goal, he believed, was to ensure "that people are satisfied with us," since the elections seemed to suggest that they were not. Interview, former mayor Hector Osuna Jaime (1992-95), February 25, 2005.

companies that did not complete the housing as promised.[75] Some committees had long

histories and solid organizational structures (especially those that began by getting land

titles or basic services in the 1970s and 1980s); others were created recently to deal with

a specific set of demands. Almost all had significant leadership turnover (all but one of

the leaders had started their term after 2001). A few committees seemed to be internally

democratic and based on broad-based dialogue within the community about priorities;

many were based around a single leader who occasionally called a meeting to get support

his or her initiatives.[76] There appeared to be little other form of organization in the

neighborhoods besides the committees, although some reported having had party

organizations involved in the neighborhood in the past.[77] In neighborhood committee

elections, a fifth to a third of the families in each neighborhood turned out to vote, which

suggests that the committees enjoyed a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of community

residents, but did not generate massive enthusiasm.[78]

     Unlike Chilpancingo, there appeared to be little partisan involvement in the

neighborhood committees in Tijuana. Several committees reported having had party

involvement in the past—with the PRI, PAN, or PRD—but only four of twelve appeared

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[75] Interviews with neighborhood committee leaders. We interviewed two leaders of committees in housing developments, who had demands around incomplete housing (and the need for a school in one case); María de los Angeles Castillo, Coordinator of Neighborhood Committees for the municipality (2001-2004), also observed the emergence of new committees in housing developments. Interview, Castillo, February 24, 2005.

[76] I have limited information on the internal workings of the committees, since the data are based on interviews with committee leaders. However, in interviews, most of the leaders gave important clues as to whether they saw themselves as part of a community effort or were the ones who got things done in the neighborhood.

[77] The exceptions were the existence of a PAN committee in Florido; the presence of a PRI leader helping the neighborhood get land titles in another neighborhood (though the residents had later expelled him and started their own independent committee); and the resurgence of PRI committees in two neighborhoods after the victory of the PRI in the August 2004 municipal elections.

[78] One larger community reported only 5% turnout; another smaller neighborhood reported that almost every family participated. It should be noted that these numbers are approximations based on the memory of the leader of the organizations; however, they appear to represent a significant, though not overwhelming, interest in the committees.

to have ongoing links to party leaders and these links were mostly tenuous.[79] Similarly,

no political or municipal officials interviewed saw the committees as an important source

of political mobilization.

The non-partisanship of the neighborhood committees would seem to be a

positive sign of the construction of true citizen institutions at the margin of partisan

politics. However, the absence of partisan involvement also contributed to municipal

leaders' general indifference towards the committees. There were no organic channels

for committees to get a hearing with public officials. Those who were most successful

observed that they often achieved things through "sympathy, relationships, or friendship"

with particular officials or through stubborn determination. As one committee president

noted, "I can say that they paid attention to us, but because of exhaustion, because

sometimes we lasted three or four hours waiting."[80] Other leaders reported that they felt

the municipality always wanted something in return from the neighborhood committees,

usually small favors like attending public events sponsored by the government. As one

neighborhood committee leader noted, "The Delegation [city administrative office] gives

support, but it also asks for our support…We respect the government's decisions since

we always have to go ask them for things."[81] In one unusual case a municipal official

asked a committee to help him conduct an electoral poll prior to an election in exchange

for help on a project; however, most government requests to neighborhood groups

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[79] Two of twelve leaders expressed that they were personally close to the PAN and had some involvement in party politics, as did one former leader who is a PAN member (but no longer president of the committee); one past leader had gone on to become a municipal official (*Subdelegada*); another committee had been close to the PRI, then switched to the PAN, then felt abandoned by both. Yet another was led by a leader of CUCUTAC who had once served briefly as a PRD city council member (though CUCUTAC was now moving from PRD to Convergencia, a small party, due to disputes within the PRD). The rest seemed to lack close ties to any party.

[80] Interview with committee president, La Gloria, February 19, 2005.

[81] Interview with a committee member, El Florido, February 14, 2005.

seemed to be less politically charged.

Overall, the municipality succeeded, it appears, in undercutting the influence of intermediaries and corporate organizations in representing community residents and succeeded in creating a more democratic form of neighborhood organization. However, it failed, over time, to create the mechanisms to allow these organizations to relate to the municipality through clear, consistent, institutional channels. In the absence of these channels, the lack of partisan influence in the committees may have been a mixed blessing. On one hand, the committees were largely saved from insertion into partisan politics and were not directly part of clientelistic networks as other organizations in Tijuana in the past. However, the lack of interest that the political parties showed in these committees also translated into a lack of interest by municipal authorities in their demands. The committees were institutional, democratic, and mostly transparent, but they were also largely abandoned by municipal authorities and the parties. Despite the glowing assertion of one municipal official that "The neighborhood committee is strength for the city government, for everything,"[82] the committees seemed to have a fairly low profile within the political calculations of most municipal officials and city council members.

The committees suffered from one more serious deficiency that made it even harder to overcome their lack of political influence. No mechanisms existed, inside or outside the government, to link the various committees among themselves. The large citywide organizations like CUCUTAC had once played this role by bringing together different neighborhoods to discuss common challenges and scale up their demands. By the early 1990s, no such overarching organizations existed and the municipal government

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[82] Interview, Ofelia Panda, *Subdelegada* of La Gloria (2003-2004), February 26, 2005.

provided no consistent forum that allowed contact among neighborhood committees.[83]

The committees thus remained isolated not only from the political system but also from

each other. On balance, the creation of the neighborhood committees appears to have

been a step towards a more democratic relationship between citizens and the government,

but a step that lacked the necessary complementary steps for it to be fully functional.

The Municipal Planning Council (Compladem)

Under the 1983 national planning law reform, municipalities were asked to create

a Municipal Planning Council (Copladem or Coplademun) that would bring together

organized social sectors and government officials to design the municipal development

plan every three years. Under the PRI administrations of 1983-86 and 1986-89, the

Copladem in Tijuana appears to have been a mere formality without any substantive

existence.[84] Under the first PAN administration of Montejo (1989-92), the Copladem

office actually existed, with two staff, and was responsible for holding a series of public

forums to get citizen input into the municipal development plan. However, the office did

little else during this administration.[85] The second mayor of the PAN, Hector Osuna

Jaime (1992-95), expanded role of the Copladem considerably, however, so that it would

serve as a space for dialogue among organized social sectors and the municipal

government, as well as design the municipal development plan.[86]

This newly redesigned Copladem, with a staff of thirteen, included thirty

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[83] The municipality did hold occasional fora of neighborhood committees, starting in 1992, but these were rare and *ad hoc.* There was no ongoing forum for contact among committees.

[84] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México: El Caso de Tijuana, B.C., 1989-1997," in Martha Schteingart and Emilio Duhau, eds., *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2001, pp. 86-7.

[85] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México," pp. 89-92.

[86] This was the first council resolution passed under the new administration. *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo, 1993-1995.*

members drawn from municipal, state, and federal officials, business organizations, professional associations, universities, and other organized groups. The council had twelve subcommittees based around key issues areas that brought together representatives of social organizations.[87] The Copladem became a highly visible body during Osuna Jaime's administration because it was the center of a number of disputes between social organizations and the city government. In many cases, these disputes responded to a logic of political confrontation between the PRI and the PAN. Locked out of power in the city council, where the PRI only had one council member, this party used its sympathizers within the Copladem to attack the municipal administration. However, not all of the confrontations responded to partisan differences; in many cases, there were legitimate disagreements between citizen members and the administration around priorities for the public administration.[88] The Copladem had no decision-making authority at this time, but it became an important—and highly visible—forum for public debate of municipal policy and a meeting space between the city government, civic organizations, and opposition political parties.[89]

Under the third PAN administration of Guadalupe Osuna Millán (1995-98), the Copladem's structure and functions were greatly expanded and it became a even more vital space for dialogue among citizens, the city council, and municipal officials. Redesigned under a resolution approved by the city council in 1995, the Copladem was designed to have both a set of citizen counselors, elected in the city's districts, and a

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[87] Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, *Informe del Presidente Municipal 1993.*
[88] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México," pp. 90-2; Interview, Martín de la Rosa Medellín, advisor to Mayor Hector Osuna Jaime, February 25, 2005.
[89] A delegational subcommittee member interviewed had also served in the Copladem under Osuna Jaime and noted that she was one of the few members of the body during that period from a low-income community. Interview, February 29, 2005.

series of thematic subcommittees that brought together major civil society organizations

and government officials. The two basic elements of this structure were:

1. *Delegation Subcommittees*, which included thirteen citizen counselors elected in each of the city's thirteen administrative districts (*subdelegaciones*) plus three government officials (the local *Subdelegado,* a city council member, and a staffperson of Copladem). These Subcommittees would be responsible for deciding investment expenditure in small and medium-sized projects in their district.
2. *Sectoral Subcommittees* on each of fifteen different issues (e.g. migration, health, public security, ecology), which included up to thirteen citizen members, drawn from relevant non-governmental organizations, plus three government officials (a council member, the director of the related municipal government agency, and a member of the Copladem staff). These Subcommittees were responsible for advising the city on key priorities in the related subject.[90]

In addition, the Copladem had two overarching citywide bodies that brought together

members of the different subcommittees: the *Municipal Development Council*, which

brought together the Delegation Subcommittees to decide on overarching municipal

investment priorities; and the *General Assembly*, which brought together all citizens and

public officials involved in the Copladem process.[91] Each of the bodies was composed

by a majority of citizens,[92] although government officials were present in each body and

the city council had ultimate decision-making authority over any decisions made.

The Sectoral and Delegation Subcommittees came to play a significant role in the

development of municipal affairs. Mayor Osuna Millán stated that "all projects had to be

validated by Copladem" and a published study of the period suggests that the Copladem

achieved immense influence as a space for dialogue and decision-making on public

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[90] There were also a sectoral committee and a municipal committee, composed of mostly city officials, to which the subcommittees had to respond. The city council resolution creating the new structure of the Copladem is published in full in *Informe Municipal 1996.*

[91] In theory, there was also a Governing Council (*Junta de Gobierno*) comprised of the mayor and city council, as the top decision-making organ. However, this was a formality that simply reasserted the council and mayor's final jurisdiction over all decisions.

[92] The General Assembly had 74% citizen members; the Delegation Subcommittees had 81% citizen members.

priorities.[93] According to the director the Copladem at the time, the process was designed to achieve "equilibrium among the executive, city council, and citizens," and serve as a meeting place among all three, creating "permanent dialogue [of the executive and legislative] with citizens—NGOs and community residents…[and] institutional mechanisms for dialogue."[94] The Copladem system had several important design features. First, it allowed citizens to elect representatives within the area of the city they lived in to represent them in public investment decisions and it largely empowered them to make these decisions. This process encouraged deliberation among citizen counselors from different neighborhoods and between these and government officials from the executive and legislative branch. Second, the system created opportunities for citizens to deliberate at a citywide level about major municipal priorities. It created ongoing discussion among citizen representatives and non-governmental organizations from different parts of the city and forced government officials to sit down with them regularly to discuss priorities. Third, the system recognized the importance of both elected citizen members, who were the majority on the Delegation Subcommittees, and organized civic associations, who had a majority on the Sectoral Subcommittees. And finally, the system created broad-based mechanisms for public dialogue while not bypassing the central functions of the city council. Although the Copladem carried great moral weight in decision-making, the elected city council had the final say in public decisions and council members were represented at all levels of the Copladem.

The Delegation Subcommittees received the most attention and were probably the most successful part of the Copladem system, largely because they had authority over

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[93] The quote is from the author's interview with former mayor Guadalupe Osuna Millán (1995-99), April 21, 2005; the study is Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y gestión local en México."
[94] Interview, Martín de la Rosa Medellín, former coordinator of Copladem (1995-98), May 3, 2005.

real investment decisions. The first election of Delegation Subcommittees in 1996

involved 7,314 people in the thirteen districts, electing 169 citizen counselors from 336

candidates.[95] This represented barely 2.5 percent of the number of voters who had

participated in the 1995 elections, but was still a significant number for a first-time

experience.[96] The subcommittees appeared to be quite plural in their composition, with

counselors that were close to all political parties and many who had no partisan affiliation

at all.[97] These subcommittees had responsibility for deciding on 28 to 55 million pesos

worth of public works per year (Figure 7.15). While this represented only 5-8% of the

municipal budget, it was 18-23% of the city's investment in infrastructure (Figure 7.16)

and an even more substantial amount of what was spent in low-income communities.

The Delegation Subcommittees became responsible for the funds that had been

previously channeled to neighborhood committees through Manos a la Obra, and the

municipality increased these funds available for community infrastructure. There are no

studies on the internal workings of the Subcommittees themselves, but those interviewed

who had participated in the process remembered it as highly deliberative and a real space

of encounter between government officials and citizens.[98]

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[95] Plan Municipal de Desarrollo, 1996-98.
[96] The registration for the election of counselors was held with only three days-notice, which benefited the PAN and administration officials, who knew of the plans and could recruit candidates for citizen counselors ahead of time. However, many candidates sympathetic to other parties, or without any party affiliation, won seats. Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México," p. 95.
[97] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México," pp. 95-6; and Interview, Maria de los Angeles Castillo, February 24, 2005, former member, Delegation Subcommittee in La Mesa, 1996-98.
[98] Based on interviews with one former citizen counselor of a Delegation Subcommittee, Ramon López, February 26, 2005; Oscar Escalada, President of the Network for the Defense of Migrants, February 23, 2004; and Gabriel Preciado, former deputy director of social development for the municipality during this period, April 19, 2005.

Figure 7.15: Expenditures on Social Infrastructure, Ramo 26/33 and Other Programs, Tijuana, 1992-2003
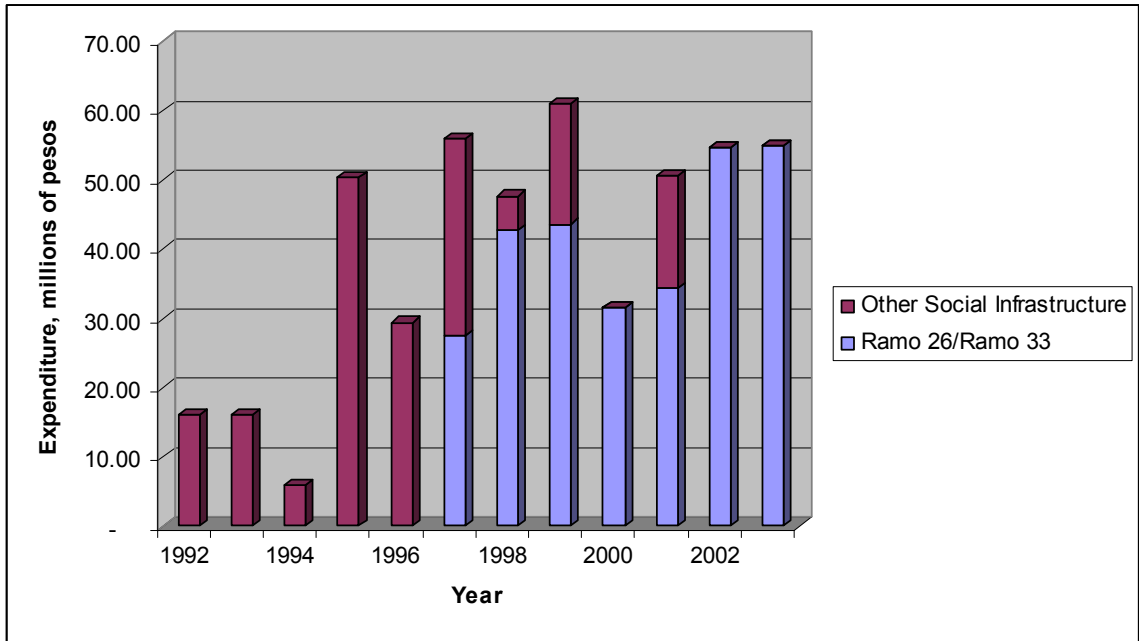
Source: For 1992-95, Martín de la Rosa Medellín, "La participación social en la obra social comunitaria (el caso Tijuana, B.C.)" in Alicia Ziccardi, ed., *Ciudadanía y políticas sociales en el ámbito local.* México: UNAM, 2004. For remaining years, *Informe Municipal*, 1996-2003. Figures listed are total municipal government expenditure (not including any additional contributions by citizens themselves).

Figure 7.16: Social Infrastructure as a Percentage of All Public Works and of the Municipal Budget, Tijuana, 1993-2002
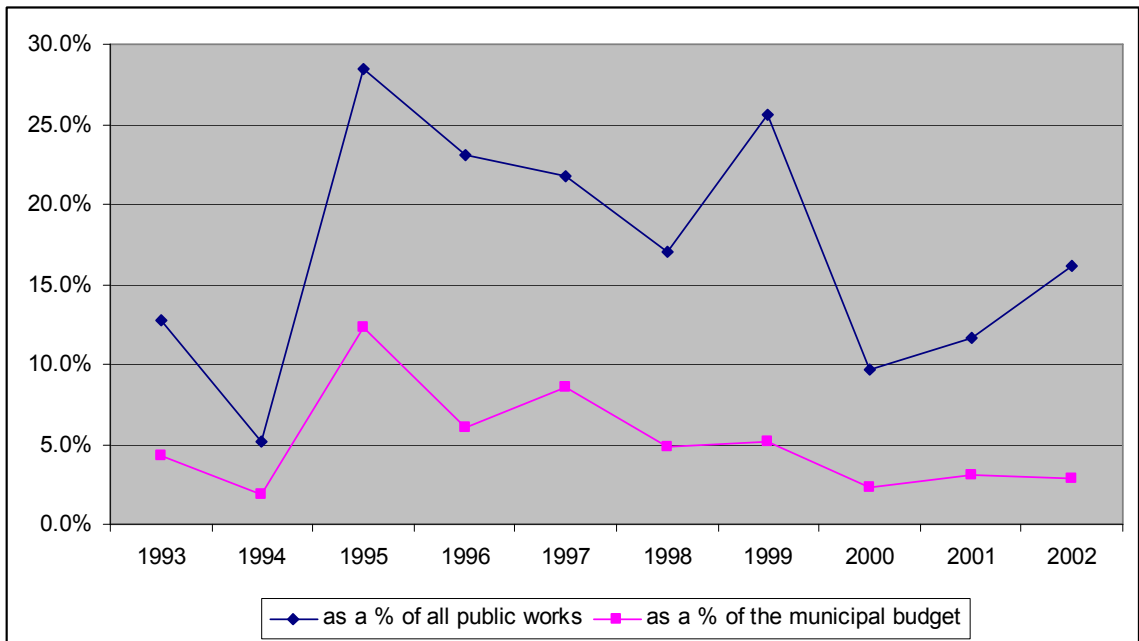
Source: Author's calculations based on public works and social infrastructure data in *Informe Municipal,* 1993-2002; total municipal budget data from INEGI, *Finanzas Municipales y Estatales, 1980-1997* and *1998-2002;* social infrastructure data for 1992-1995 from de la Rosa, "La participación social en la obra social comunitaria."

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The Sectoral Subcommittees appear to have met with a more uneven fate. Several, including the Subcommittees on Migration, Public Security, Health, Urban Development, and Ecology, were quite active, according to one study, while others rarely met or had little incidence on the municipal agenda.[99] Surprisingly, opposition council members showed little interest in the Sectoral Subcommittees.[100] Unlike the Delegation Subcommittees, which had responsibility for actual investment decisions, the Sectoral Subcommittees were primarily advisory bodies around different issues areas. This difference likely explains the lesser attention given to the sectoral bodies.

The Copladem maintained its official role after 1998, but over time it lost its capacity to serve as an arena for decision-making and deliberative interaction among citizens and government officials. The municipality reduced the percentage of the budget devoted to community investments, thus limiting the scope of the delegation subcommittees' work (Figure 7.16, above). Moreover, in 1998, the municipality lowered the number of citizens counselors on the delegation subcommittees from thirteen to five so as to control them more easily. The fourth and fifth PAN governments (1998-2001 and 2001-2004) placed far less emphasis on the Copladem structure overall and hardly highlighted it at all in their development plans.[101] Interviews with several citizen counselors who had participated in the subcommittees in the 2001-2004 period (Table 7.4, above) revealed how much the municipal government had managed to control these bodies. During this period, slates of candidates affiliated with the PAN had won all seats

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[99] I atended the Migration Subcomitee on several occasions in 1996-97 and was impressed by the serious level of discussion that it allowed between the municipal authorities and NGOs working on migration issues.

[100] Tonatiuh Guillén, "Gobernabilidad y Gestión Local en México," p. 98.

[101] Based on the Author's comparison of the content of the annual reports and municipal development plans for the period 1989-2004.

of ten of the fourteen delegation subcommittees.[102] In two other subcommittees there was one non-PAN affiliated citizen counselor; in the two smaller districts, opposition slates had won all seats.[103] In one district where the PAN won, for example, the local district official of the municipality (subdelegate) called a meeting of fifteen leaders of neighborhood committees close to him a few days before the registration of candidates to see who would be the most attractive candidates, and five were selected to run as candidates for the subcommittee as the PAN-affiliated slate.[104] This pattern of top-down decision-making by the municipality was repeated in most or all other districts in the city. Candidates were independent citizens in name, but selected by the government or by opposition political parties in practice.

Figure 7.17: Community Meeting in Florido-Mariano Matamoros

Source: Photo by Luz Aida Ruíz Martínez, photographer, Primer Taller Fotodocumental Tijuana, available at http://www.f8.com/FP/TIJUANA/English/indice.htm.

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[102] Originally there were thirteen subdelegations and one more had been created in the late 1990s.

[103] A PRI member won one seat in Florido-Mariano Matamoros and a PRD member in Los Pinos, both in PRI/PRD/PT coalitions. In La Gloria a slate of candidates affiliated with CUCUTAC won all seats and in Salvatierra a PRI-supported slate won most seats. Based on interviews with Victor Alvarez, Technical Secretary, Copladem; city council members José Roberto Davalos, (PRD, 2001-2004), Arnulfo Guerrero (PAN, 2001-2004), and Juanita Pérez (PR, 1998-2001); CUCUTAC leaders Ramona López, Francisco de Paula, and Catalino Zavala; two members of the Delegation Subcommittee in La Gloria and three members of the Delegation Subcommittee in Florido-Mariano Matamoros.

[104] Interview, Subcommittee member, El Florido, affiliated with PAN, February 26, 2005. The Subdelegate, Román González, acknowledged that he was close to the four counselors from the PAN slate, noting that they were "of my confidence" [*"de mi confianza"*]. Interview, Román González, Subdelegate of Florido-Mariano Matamoros (2001-2004), interview, February 26, 2005. Ironically, Román himself is the former leader of CUCUTAC in Florido-Mariano Matamoros, who later left CUCUTAC after a split in the organization to co-found CERCO, another left-leaning social organization, before joining the PAN.

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Moreover, it appears that in contrast to the 1996-98 period the Delegation

Subcommittees had come to have little discretionary power for decisions on investments,.

As one municipal official noted, in confidence, the subcommittees committed most of the

public works in return for votes before the election, so there was little left to give to

others once they are elected. Equally important, the municipal officials appeared to

maintain considerable control over the information needed to make decisions. In the case

of Florido-Mariano Matamoros, for example, the subdelegate called meetings

infrequently and rarely took the Subcommittee out on trips to meet with neighborhood

committees, which limited their ability to make reasoned decisions. In general, citizen

counselors ended up following the proposals of municipal officials for lack of other

information.[105] All three counselors interviewed in that district agreed that the

subdelegate gave counselors little voice in decision-making.[106] One councilor noted that

when they met with citizen counselors from three other districts, they found that the

others faced the same problems. Another counselor, who had served on a previous

subcommittee, noted that they had much less margin to make decisions in this period than

previously. "It [the delegation subcommittee] lost its purpose; the council ceased to be

necessary," he observed, since the government really made the decisions before the

meetings ever happened.

In contrast, in the two districts where opposition slates won the delegation

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[105] Florido-Mariano Matamoros is the second largest subdelegation and has the largest number of low-income communities. As a result, council members of all four parties with representation in the city council took turns participating in the Subcommittee in Florido. Two Copladem citizen counselors highlighted the role of the PRD council member, José Roberto Davalos, who took pains to teach the citizen counselors how to evaluate projects during his time on the subcommittee.
[106] Based on three interviews with Delegation Subcommittee members in Florido, one affiliated with the PRI and two with the PAN, March 16, 17, and 26, 2005.

subcommittees had consider decision-making authority. For example, in La Gloria

citizen counselors, who all belonged to CUCUTAC, reported that they often met ahead of

time to decide on a common position before the meeting with the government officials.[107]

However, in the case of La Gloria, the municipal government cut the investment funds

available for the subcommittee's decision-making by two-thirds, from over 7 million

pesos in 2002 to under 2.4 million pesos in 2003.[108]   It is unclear the reasons for this

shift, but residents in La Gloria involved with the delegation subcommittee clearly saw it

as a retaliation for electing an independent slate of candidates.[109]   It seems likely that

subcommittees that tried to exercise autonomy from the municipal government saw their

scope of authority reduced dramatically.

Not only did the Subcommittees end up lacking decision-making power owing to

a paucity of funds with which to work—or see their funds reduced even more if the

Subcommittee were not aligned with the municipality—but they also appeared to lack

presence in the community. In the elections in La Gloria and Florido approximately

1,000 people voted in each area. Assuming this number was repeated in other areas, only

14,000 or so citizens participated in the election, double the number in 1996 but still only

a fraction of potential voters six years after the first election (around 6% of those who

voted in 2001). In interviews with the leaders of neighborhood committees, not one

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[107] Based on interviews with two citizen counselors, February 27 and 29, 2005; and the former Subdelegate
Ofelia Panda, February 26, 2005; Also interview with Ramona López, the CUCUTAC leader who put
together the slate and served as an advisor to the citizen counselors, February 12 and 26, 2005.
[108] Based on data reported in the mayor's annual reports for 2002 and 2003 (*Informe Municipal* 2002,
2003).
[109] Based on interviews with two citizen counselors (see footnote 107), the community leader who had
organized the slate, Ramona López, and an outside CUCUTAC advisor, Francisco de Paula, February 26,
2005. However, it should be noted that La Gloria is a relatively small area of the city, so there may be
other explanations. However, the official proposal of Copladem for the distribution of Ramo 33 funds,
which balances population size with marginality, does little to explain the variation year to year of funds
for La Gloria (Copladem, *Propuesta de Distribución de Recursos, Fondo III, Ramo XXXIII,* 2003.).

indicated a close working relationship with their Delegation Subcommittee. "I don't know the counselors; I've never heard anyone speak about Copladem," noted one neighborhood committee president. "They never sought us out, and we never sought them out," stated another. Of the twelve leaders interviewed, eight had no direct knowledge of their Delegation Subcommittee; three knew them but had no ongoing communication with them; and only one was actually in touch with the members. Of those who knew their Subcommittee, one leader stated that he had not been allowed to attend the meetings; another stated that "The counselors have the function of fighting over public works projects…The political parties get together their slates of candidates with their most scandalous people, get their friends and acquaintances involved, register the slate, and whoever gets the most votes wins." Whatever channels might have existed between the neighborhood committees and the Copladem subcommittees in the past appeared to have fallen apart or into disuse by the last administration.

One of the most important innovations of the Copladem had been the creation of the Municipal Development Council, which allowed citizens to meet each other from different districts throughout the city and to dialogue on citywide priorities with municipal, state, and federal officials and city council members. This council was responsible for deciding, among other things, the use of funds for major infrastructure projects that might affect several communities at the same time. Although the Municipal Development Council continued to meet until 2004, counselors reported that it had few real functions and often barely could muster a quorum. Municipal officials appeared to have made decisions ahead of time and since most citizen counselors were PAN-

affiliated, there was little debate around any matters brought up for discussion.[110] Everything became confused; who were the members, what were the decisions…" noted one counselor with a previous more positive experience on the council in earlier years, "Almost everyone was with the PAN, so all that remained was to vote 'yes'…just to legalize and legitimize the decisions."[111] Without the Municipal Development Council as an inclusive space for real dialogue and debate, the delegation subcommittees remained disconnected and easily manipulated.

The Sectoral Subcommittees appear to have met a similar fate to the Delegation Subcommittees. A few met regularly, and municipal statistics suggest that attendance had increased over time (Table 7.5). However, others virtually disappeared or had little impact on municipal decisions. One PAN city council member, who chaired the Ecology Subcommittee, stated that he had simply stopped calling meetings of the Subcommittee. He complained that the members, representatives of environmental NGOs, only showed up to complain and attack the government. "They have no sense of responsibility at all... [just] attacking for the sake of attacking…"[112] A PRI city council member stopped holding her Subcommittee meetings because she said that the municipal officials in charge of the area would not show up.[113] A PRD city council member, however, observed that his two sectoral subcommittees met frequently and appeared to have

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[110] According to one PAN-affiliated counselor from Florido and two CUCUTAC-affiliated counselors from La Gloria (cited previously).

[111] Most decisions passed without debate, but on one occasion, the council members were asked to vote to divert a substantial amount of the Copladem funds for the year to major road projects. This was technically outside the purview of the program, which was supposed to be focused on small and medium-sized community projects, but it was an election year (2004) and major public works projects had greater visibility. The opposition-supported counselors and city council members voted against the proposal in bloc but were outnumbered overwhelmingly. Interviews with three members of the Municipal Council (two from La Gloria, one from Florido, cited previously),.

[112] Interview, former city council member Arnulfo Guerrero (PAN, 2001-2004), February 24, 2005.

[113] Interview, former city council member Juanita Pérez (PRI, 1999-2001), February 25, 2005.

produced some results.[114] Interviews with leaders of NGOs who were citizen counselors

on the migration subcommittee noted that this subcommittee had been quite active and

useful in the past but had lost steam in the last two administrations.[115]

<p align="center">Table 7.5: Meetings and Attendance at Copladem Subcommittees</p>

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Sectoral Subcommittees								
Number	15	n.d.	14	20	20	21	21	21
Sessions	84	90	84	103	87	299	146	143
Attendance	1608	1340	1496	2127	1853	7526	3557	2940
Delegational Subcommittees								
Number	13	13	13	14	14	14	14	14
Sessions	94	83	64	n.d.	69	n.d.	54	69
Attendance	1199		574	n.d.	525	n.d.	563	552

Source: Based on data in *Informe Municipal,* all years 1996-2003.

Overall, the Copladem structure provided an innovative approach to engaging

citizens in decision-making about public affairs and creating dialogue between citizens

and government officials. It included several design elements that were critical to

generating broad based citizen engagement and public deliberation: district-based

elections for citizen counselors who would meet regularly with government officials to

make community investment decisions; thematic bodies that brought together non-

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[114] The successes included a US$125,000 donation of prosthetics for low-income city residents as a resolution of the subcommittee on disability. Interview, José Roberto Davalos (PRD, 2001-2004), interview, April 1, 2005. The data on sectoral subcommittee meetings support his assertion that these were active groups (*Informe Municipal,* 2002, 2003). A PAN official confided that this council member was the most professional on the city council, despite being the only member of his party, a view echoed by the two citizen counselors in Florido of the PAN and PRI. This professionalism may also have had something to do with the success of his subcommittees.

[115] In 2004, the state secretariat of social development, now headed by a former Tijuana city council member, had taken the leadership in bringing together federal, state, and municipal officials with migration NGOs to resolve problems, effectively displacing the Copladem subcommittee on migration as the arena for dialogue between NGOs and government officials. Interview, Oscar Escalada Hernández, President, Network in Defense of Migrants of Baja California, February 23, 2005; and Cristina Franco Abundis, director of the Human Rights Program at the Ibero-American University, February 23, 2005,. This conclusion was echoed by Gabriel Preciado, deputy coordinator of the Tijuana office of the social development ministry, who had helped start the Copladem process in the mid-1990s, interview, April 19, 2005. The municipal data on sectoral subcommittee meetings confirm that the migration subcommittee met only once in 2003 (*Informe Municipal,* 2003).

governmental organizations and the government around a range of issues of substance for municipal governance; a broad overarching municipal council where citywide issues could be discussed publicly among citizens of different districts and organizations and a range of public officials; and the direct involvement of the city council in all of these processes. However, after a brief period of effervescence, the municipality lost interest in the Copladem system. Although municipal officials never eliminated it, they simply gave it less importance and learned to control the elections for citizen counselors and the information that counselors received once elected so as to minimize their influence. What had begun as a promising innovation in citizen participation and deliberation ended up devoid of real meaning or purpose.

The Economic Development Council of Tijuana (CDT)

The final innovation of the PAN governments to build new participatory channels was the creation of the Economic Development Council of Tijuana (*Consejo de Desarrollo Económico de Tijuana*, CDT), a business/government roundtable designed to spur dialogue and encourage planning between government and the private sector. Set up during the second PAN administration of Osuna Jaime, the CDT receives equal funding from the state government, municipality, and the largest business organization, the Business Coordinating Council (Consejo Coordinador Empresarial, CCE). The CDT's most visible function has been the development of two long-term strategic plans, one in 1994 and the other in 2003.[116] Based on a model borrowed from Seville, Spain, the plans (each known as "Strategic Plan Tijuana") lay out major priorities for economic

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[116] *Plan Estratégico Tijuana*, 2002-2025, Tijuana: Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, 2003; and *Plan Estratégico Tijuana*, Tijuana: Ayuntamiento de Tijuana, 1995.

development over a twenty-five year period and prescribe responsibilities to the different levels of government and to the private sector.[117] These plans were designed to create a more long-term strategic vision than that contained in the three-year municipal development plans, and to generate dialogue between government and the private sector about shared responsibilities for development.

Business leaders interviewed suggested that the CDT performed relatively well as a space for dialogue between the private sector and municipal and state governments. Overall, they acknowledged that the business community in Tijuana is highly fragmented and has little capacity to influence public policy. This is partially a result of the mixture of locally-owned and foreign businesses, but also reflects the fragmented nature of Tijuana society in general.[118] Several business-supported associations have emerged in recent years to address public policy issues in the city, including Tijuana Trabaja ("Tijuana Works"), Tijuana Renacimiento ("Tijuana Rebirth"), and Imagen Tijuana ("Tijuana Image"); however, those interviewed agreed that these were primarily groups of friends who had good ideas but had not yet been able to have an influence in policy debates. The multiplication of disconnected private sector-supported groups mirrored the multiplication of largely disconnected NGOs, which have a limited ability to influence policy or develop common proposals for joint action. In this context, the CDT performed an important but limited function in getting business leaders together with public officials.

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[117] Interview, Hector Osuna Jaime. See also the analysis by Cesar M. Fuentes and Noé Arón Fuentes, "Desarrollo Económico en la Frontera Norte de México: de las políticas nacionales de fomento económico a las estrategias de desarrollo económico local," Aracauria (Universidad de Sevilla), Vol. 5, No. 11, 2004; and the website of the CDT: http://www.cdt-tijuana.com/noticias/news.asp.
[118] Interviews, Antonio Cano, February 23, 2005; Zeferino Sánchez, February 24; Gastón Luken, February 25, 2005; and Askan Luteroth, February 23, 2005.

However, not all those interviewed were equally enthusiastic about the CDT and its long-range development plan. One opposition city council member and a former government official both noted that in the absence of a strong Copladem with a real participatory planning process, the CDT-supported long-range plan had come supplant the municipal development plan as the municipality's real blueprint for policy priorities.[119] This in turn might mean that the business community was beginning to supplant citizens as the true interlocutor for developing municipal priorities.

7.6 Conclusions

The municipality of Tijuana grew significantly in authority and autonomy over the period of PAN governance. Favorable circumstances certainly contributed to this change: the federal government increased transfers to municipalities during this period, and the city had a significant tax base that it could exploit once municipalities were allowed to innovate in tax collection. The city's size and importance within its state also gave it a margin of negotiation, which few municipalities have with their state government, in order to ensure greater autonomy. However, the city government also took matters into its own hands by strengthening its functions, powers, and resources. It sought out new forms of local revenue, leveraged private investment, sued the federal government, and created a national mayors' association as part of its efforts to expand its authority and autonomy.

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[119] Interviews, Juanita Pérez, former City Council member (PRI, 1998-2001), February 25, 2005; and Martín de la Rosa, former Coordinator of Copladem, 1996-98, May 3, 2005.

Within this context of extensive decentralization, the PAN-affiliated governments of Tijuana—in the first years after winning the municipal elections in 1989—also created some innovative institutions to improve democratic governance. Fearing the PRI would recover the city, they sought to break the control of PRI's corporatist organizations and their political intermediaries. As a party supported mostly by unaffiliated citizens, they hoped that they could create a new relationship with their constituents as individual citizens who would have institutional channels to make demands, participate in public affairs, and monitor their government. Towards this end, they improved the representative structure of the city council; pursued policies that encouraged greater government transparency; and created a series of institutions for citizen participation that included non-partisan neighborhood committees, a participatory planning structure, and a business/government roundtable. As a result of citizen demands, the PAN governments vastly increased the resources devoted to community infrastructure investments and pursued joint public/private ventures for urban development.

In many ways, these initiatives stand as models of what decentralization might and should accomplish: the unleashing of creative democratic energy at the grassroots. Citizens had access to more information than before on their government and clearer institutional channels for participating in public deliberations. The Copladem system implemented under the second and third PAN administrations successfully bypassed political intermediaries to give citizens a voice in public affairs, created linkages among citizens in different neighborhoods, and generated ongoing processes for public deliberation. Similarly, the Tijuana Development Council successfully brought together business leaders and municipal officials to think through long-term opportunities and

challenges for the region.

Tijuana seemed ideally suited to this kind of transparent and participatory governance. It was perhaps the city in Mexico where the PRI's corporatist structure had sunk the shallowest roots. Most citizens did not belong to organizations tied to any party and were thus relatively independent voters. The city enjoyed an extensive, though fragmented civil society, based on small neighborhood organizations, church groups, and non-governmental organizations dedicated to social assistance. In this environment, PAN mayors initially realized that they had to build a support base for their party by mobilizing individual citizens through institutional channels rather than constituting clientelistic or corporatist organizations. The improvements in the council, initial steps at transparency, and the participatory innovations all served to build this relationship.

However, this dense web of citizen-government interaction gradually weakened as the PAN repeatedly won elections and its leaders lost their fear of being thrown out of office. The PAN's historical practices contributed to this: as a party built to resist cooption by the PRI, it had maintained a small, loyal membership. As a result, the party was ideally suited to serve as an incorruptible opposition movement, but less so to govern a major city. PAN leaders knew they needed to bring new voices into the policy process, but they also distrusted mass democracy and its potential for corruption.

Political institutions reinforced these limitations. Supermajorities in the city council and party list elections meant that aspiring PAN politicians needed to spend more time negotiating backroom deals with potential supporters within the small party base than attending to citizen concerns. The leaders lost interest in transparency and stalled efforts at providing citizens access to information on demand. They undermined the very

channels they had created for citizens to deliberate on policy with government officials and to be partners in public efforts. While the kind of autonomous, diversified civil society that existed in the city was ideal to respond to the participatory initiatives of the first PAN governments, the absence of links among organizations and between these and the political parties meant that there was no one to defend the advances once the government lost interest. The lack of media that could maintain sufficient distance from the party in power further compounded this problem.

In the end, PAN officials destroyed most of the influence of the PRI's corporatist organizations, but they created no lasting alterative to link citizens to the government outside of the party system. Indeed, they created a form of "weak control" where they generated their own "intermediaries"—the Copladem councilors and a few successful neighborhood committee leaders—who were willing to do small favors for the government in return for obtaining occasional benefits. These intermediaries, however, had neither an organic relationship to the party nor did government officials take them very seriously. It was a very weak form of clientelism that operated at the margins of the real decision-making processes of the municipal government.

Under the PRI, citizens had strong ties to the government through the party, though under non-institutional and highly unfair rules that privileged party leaders and community brokers. Under the PAN, citizens had clearer institutional channels for making demands on the government, but government officials paid less and less attention to these demands. The rules of the game were more democratic, but citizens were also more disconnected and isolated from their government than ever before. A highly mobilized and participatory society became increasingly disillusioned with a government

that gave only lip-service to their concerns and did little to ensure their rights. Citizens,

finding the PAN governments increasingly unresponsive, would ultimately choose two

different options. Most citizens stopped voting. Abstention rates in Tijuana soon became

among the highest in the country.[120] And among those who continued to be politically

involved, they finally tired of the PAN and opted to return to the PRI and its old style of

corporatist government with a leader who promised to listen and take them into account,

even if he might bring back the old style of patronage politics they had left behind.

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[120] The abstention rate in the 2004 elections was 63.7%. José Negrete Mata argues that abstention rates
rose dramatically not only because the city is highly mobile (so some registered voters were not around to
vote), but also because citizens became disillusioned with their options and disconnected from politics
given the PAN's technocratic governance style and the perceived corruption of the PRI. Negrete Mata, "En
busca del votante (tijuanense) perdido : cultura política, participación y abstencionismo," Ph.D.
dissertation, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2002.

Chapter 8
Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

8.1 Winning Respect

In August 2004, Belem Guerrero won the Olympic silver medal in women's

cycling, the second medal for Mexico in the 2004 Olympics. The inhabitants of Ciudad

Nezahualcóyotl, known usually by the city's nickname "Neza," were ecstatic. "That's

where she lives," one man pointed in the direction of the neighborhood where Belem had

grown up. "She always cycles by this way in the morning," said another man as he

pointed to one of the main boulevards.

Belem's victory was highly symbolic for Ciudad Nezahualcóytol. A large city on

the outskirts of Mexico's capital, Neza has always struggled to have an identity of its

own. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Neza was known as an extremely poor bedroom

community on the fringes of Mexico City. It was a large shantytown where people from

the countryside came to live when they could not afford an apartment in the capital and

where the capital's poor went to live when rent became too expensive. Most residents in

Neza did not have land titles, and in many neighborhoods there was no electricity, water,

or sewage. Frequent flooding meant that the city's dirt roads turned constantly into

muddy pools. A book written about Neza in 1977 called it "a neighborhood on its way to

absorption by Mexico City,"[1] despite the fact that the city already had almost a million

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[1] The book notes that Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl is principally a neighborhood on the outskirts of Mexico City
defined by its social and cultural marginalization (Roberto Ferras, *Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: un barrio en
vías de absorción por la Ciudad de México,* Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, Colegio de
México, 1977). Other works of the 1970s and 1980s similarly aproached Neza as a marginalized
community of the Mexico City metropolitan area (see, for example, Marta Schteingart, *Los productores del*

inhabitants. Another book, written by a Jesuit priest active in the city in the early 1970s, noted that "Netzahualcóytol [sic] has no inner life; strictly speaking it is not a city because it lacks relative autonomy; it is an appendix of a megalopolis."[2]

By the 1990s, however, things had changed. Citizens had begun to organize in the 1970s to demand land titles and basic services and within two decades they achieved significant successes. Another book written about the city in 1992 chronicled these changes under the title "Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: From Marginalized Neighborhoods to a Great City."[3] By 2000, almost all properties had land titles; 99.4% of homes had electricity, 98.2% water, and 98.9% sewage; and 88.5% of the streets were paved.[4] The average income was well above the national average (though still less than that of Mexico City and some neighboring towns). This fact meant that Neza's inhabitants had gone in a generation from desperately poor to respectably working class. The city had an increasingly strong municipal government and an identity separate from the federal capital next door. As one university professor who grew up in Neza told me, "our fight in the 1970s was for services; we were proud of being marginal; today our fight is for respect."[5] As part of the struggle for respect, the city government had pitched in to buy Belem her racing bike for the Olympics after the country's notoriously elitist Olympic

espacio habitable: Estado, empresa y sociedad en la ciudad de México, Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1989).

[2] Martín de la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl: un fenómeno,* Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1974, p. 4. Note that even the name of the city was spelled two different ways by different authors in the 1960 and 70s.

[3] Margarita García Luna, *Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: de colonias marginadas a gran ciudad,"* Toluca, Mexico: Pliego, 1992.

[4] According to the city's Municipal Development Plan, two neighborhoods of the city, Canales de Sal and a part of Colonia El Sol, did not have regularized land titles in 1997, but both have since achieved land titles (Ayuntamiento de Nezahualcóyotl, *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo 1997-2000,* Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: Ayuntamiento, 1997). For the data on electricity, water, and sewage, see the 2000 Census (*Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2001); for the data on pavement, see María del Socorro Arzaluz Solano, "Participación ciudadana en la gestión urbana de Ecatepec, Tlalnepantla y Nezahualcóyotl (1997-2000)," Ph.D. dissertation, Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, El Colegio de México, December 2001, p. 290.

[5] Ramón Rivera, March 4, 2005.

Committee had refused to support her. Her victory was more than an individual

achievement; it was a shared effort by the city to win both respectability and the

recognition of its existence.

Figure 8.1: Map of Mexico State showing Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

Note: Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl is in blue on the right side of Mexico City (in yellow).

Eight years before Belem's great race, the inhabitants had taken another step

toward winning respect by throwing out the long-ruling PRI. Like most poor and

working-class cities, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl had been dominated by the PRI through a

web of clientelistic networks that organized people – in a top-down manner -- by blocks,

neighborhoods, and occupations. The grip of the ruling party began to slip slightly in the 1980s, as a series of strong social movements independent from the PRI began to play an increasingly successful role in the struggle for land and services. In 1996, several of these movements joined together to run a common slate of candidates for mayor and city council under the banner of the left-of-center PRD. "We were convinced we wouldn't win," according to Hector Bautista, leader of the largest organization in the coalition.[6] Yet, to their surprise, they did win, and it gave the Mexican left their first victory in a city of over a million inhabitants.[7] The PRD, with the same coalition of social movements, would go on to consolidate its electoral strength with repeat victories in municipal elections in 1999 and 2002.

Since then Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl has been the scene of an unusual process of turning a loose coalition of social movements into a governing party. The results of this process have profoundly transformed relations between the inhabitants of the city and their municipal government, but not always in easy or predictable ways. In some cases, the PRD governments have shown a penchant for promoting good governance, transparency, and citizen participation, old demands of the social movements that created the coalition. However, in other cases, they have reinvented or fallen back on old strategies for clientelistic control reminiscent of previous PRI governments. Overall, the stronger self-governance has somewhat strengthened downward accountability to citizens by removing layers of bureaucracy and political negotiation that kept municipal leaders focused primarily upwards on state and federal political leaders. At the same time,

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[6] Interview with Hector Bautista, Mexico City, March 4, 2005.
[7] The PRD would win Mexico City in 1997 and Acapulco in 1999, both which remain PRD bastions; similarly, they won several governorships after 1998, but Neza was the first major urban victory for the Mexican left. The PRD had won Morelia, the capital of the state of Michoacán, in 1989 and Juchitán, Oaxaca in the 1980s, but the PRI recovered these smaller cities after the initial PRD victory.

competitive elections have provided citizens with some degree of control over their elected authorities. However, the leaders of groups within the PRD have become the new centers of political power, at the top of a dense web of political factions. The form of democratic governance that has emerged is partially accountable and occasionally responsive, but leaves little place for citizen deliberation.

8.2 From Bedroom Community to Major City

The area where Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl now stands was once Texcoco Lake in the State of Mexico, the country's largest state, which surrounds Mexico City on both sides.[8] In the mid-1850s the government began to dry the lake to prevent flooding, and by 1900 it had become arable land suitable for settlement. The first post-Revolutionary government of Venustiano Carranza declared the lands in the bed of the former lake national property in 1917 and in 1919 began to sell parcels to settlers.

In the 1940s, the federal government promoted the creation of committees for "moral, civic, and material improvement" to help mediate between residents and the government in the installation of basic services. By 1949, the city had approximately perhaps 2,000 inhabitants, which increased dramatically to 40,000 by 1954. In 1953, the state government created the Committee of Urban Neighborhoods of the District of Texcoco to serve as an umbrella organization for the thirteen neighborhoods in the area

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[8] Mexico City was once part of the State of Mexico, but it became a federal district shortly after independence in 1824. The State of Mexico remains the largest state in the country, however, with 13,096,686 inhabitants, almost double the second largest state, Veracruz with 6,908,975 inhabitants, and considerably more than the federal district with 8,605,239 (*XII Censo General de Población 2000,* Aguascalientes: INEGI, 2001).

(which grew to 33 by 1959 and 39 by 1960). By 1960 the neighborhood association had

requested that the area, which now had a population of 73,915, become a separate

municipality, a demand that was granted in April 1963.[9]

Figure 8.2: Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in the 1970s

Source: Official website of the city, www.neza.gob.mx

The 1960s and 1970s saw an enormous expansion of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

along with the expansion of the entire Mexico City metropolitan area. Neza became a

bedroom community for those who could not afford housing in the capital itself—recent

migrants from other states and children of low-income families in the capital. The

population grew almost nine times in the 1960s and then more than doubled again in the

1970s (see Figure 8.3). In the early 1970s, according to one account, the city had only a

handful of phone lines, two post offices, one book store, two banks, one firehouse, one

Red Cross hospital, and three gas stations. There were no libraries, parks, hotels,

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[9] The history of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl from the 1850s to 1963 is based on la summary provided for the
city in the *Enciclopedia de los Municipios de México.*This volume is published by the Instituto Nacional
para el Federalismo y el Desarrollo Municipal (INAFED) and available at www.e-local.gob.mx. Consulted
August 2004.

theaters, newspapers, or cemetery.[10] The city became a symbol in Mexico of the worst

effects of urbanization.

Figure 8.3 Population of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl 1960-2000

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Population	73,915	649,620	1,393,116	1,267,839	1,225,972
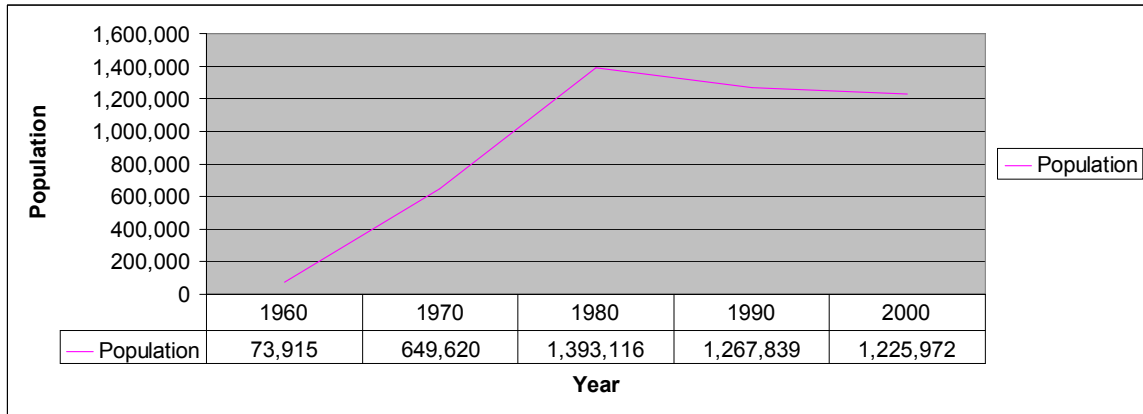
Sources: *XXII Censo General de Población 2000* and Margarita García Luna and Pedro Gutiérrez Arzaluz, *Nezahualcóyotl: monografía municipal,* Toluca: Gobierno del Estado de México, 1999, p. 29 (with population statistics based on previous census calculations).

Figure 8.4: Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl Today

Source: Official website of the city, www.neza.gob.mx.

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[10] De la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl,* p. 4.

However, in the 1980s and 1990s the characteristics of the city changed dramatically. Educational levels increased, as second and third generation inhabitants were able to take advantage of opportunities for study in the metropolitan area, and economic fortunes rose noticeably. As Figures 8.5 and 8.6 indicate, key educational indicators improved dramatically and young people in Neza, ages 25-29, were more likely to go to college than elsewhere in the state or the country. Nezahualcóyotl had been the poor bedroom community to the capital in the 1970s, but by the 1990s its proximity to the ever-expanding capital meant that it was prime real estate and those who could not afford housing had to move to municipalities even further away from Mexico City. As a result, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl began losing population in the 1980s and 1990s, at least according to official figures.[11] There was nowhere left to build in what had become the most densely populated city in the metropolitan area and greater affluence brought lower birth rates and smaller households.

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[11] There may, in fact, be more people living in the city than official figures indicate. Voter registration rates suggest a higher population than census figures do. The voter rolls show 900,754 registered voters in 2003. This is a full 73.5% of the official population (for 2000), while the census suggests that only 65.48% of the population is 18 or older. This difference could be due to a high level of mobility on the part of registered voters (with many having left the municipality since registering); however, this possibility does not seem to be born out by the evidence: only 7.7% of the population in 2000 had lived outside the municipality in 1995, somewhat lower than the average for the state as a whole (10.5%), suggesting a fairly stable population in the city. Moreover, voting rates in Neza for the 2003 congressional elections (37.8%) are very close to the average for the rest of the state (36.5%) and to the other major cities in the state (Ecatepec 35.0%, Naucalpan 37.6%, Tlanepantla 40.7%, Toluca 41.8%, Chimahualcán 32.3%, and Chalco 33.0%), which suggests that a large pool of absent voters probably does not exist. This scenario is different scenario than that of Tijuana, where there is also an unusually high number of registered voters compared to the population figures but turnout in the 2003 elections was extremely low (28.31% of registered voters), suggesting that the possibility that some registered voters who have moved away, a conclusion that is strengthened by the relatively high number of inhabitants in Tijuana in the 2000 census (16.9%) who reported having lived in another state five years earlier. The population and migrant population are calculated based on the 2000 Census (*XXII Censo de Población*) and statistics on registered voters and voting participation. See "La participación ciudadana en la elecciones de 2003," the Federal Electoral Institute (Instituto Federal Electoral, available at www.ife.org.mx). Census statistics on migrant condition (percentage of inhabitants who lived outside the municipality five years earlier) are reported for all inhabitants five years and older.

Figure 8.5: Educational Indicators in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1980-2000
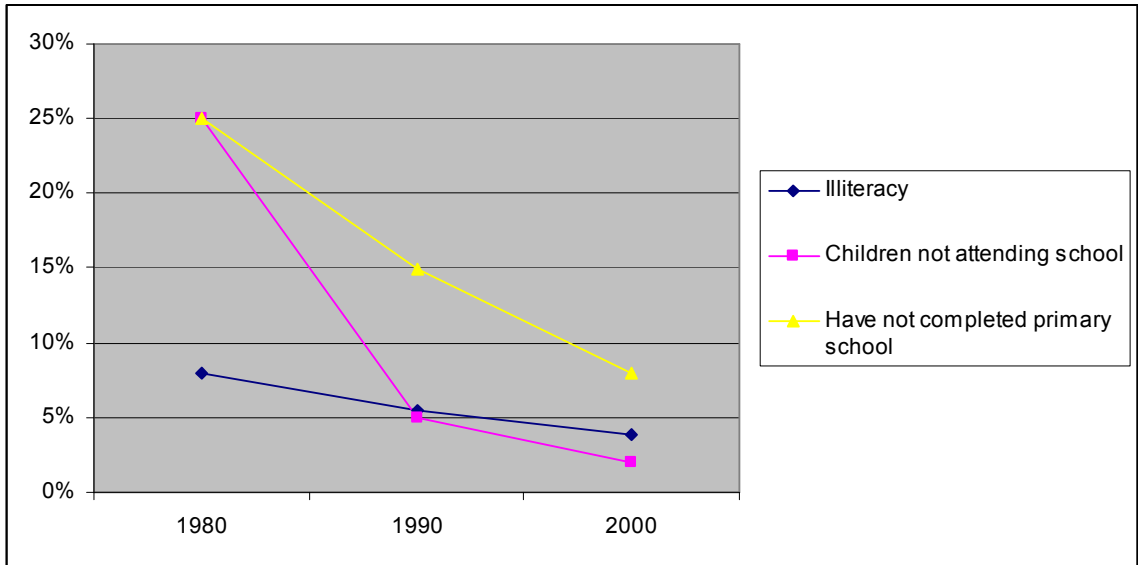
Note: "Illiteracy" and "Have not completed primary school" are a percent of all inhabitants over 15 years old; Children not attending school" is a percentage of all children 6-14 years old.
Sources: *XXII Censo General de Población 2000* and Emilio Duhau and Marta Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista de Nezahualcóyotl," in Schteingart and Duhau, eds., *Transición política y democracia municipal en México y Colombia,* Mexico: Miguel Angel Porrúa, 2001, pp. 180-81.

Figure 8.6: Higher Education Compared: Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, Mexico State, and National, 2000
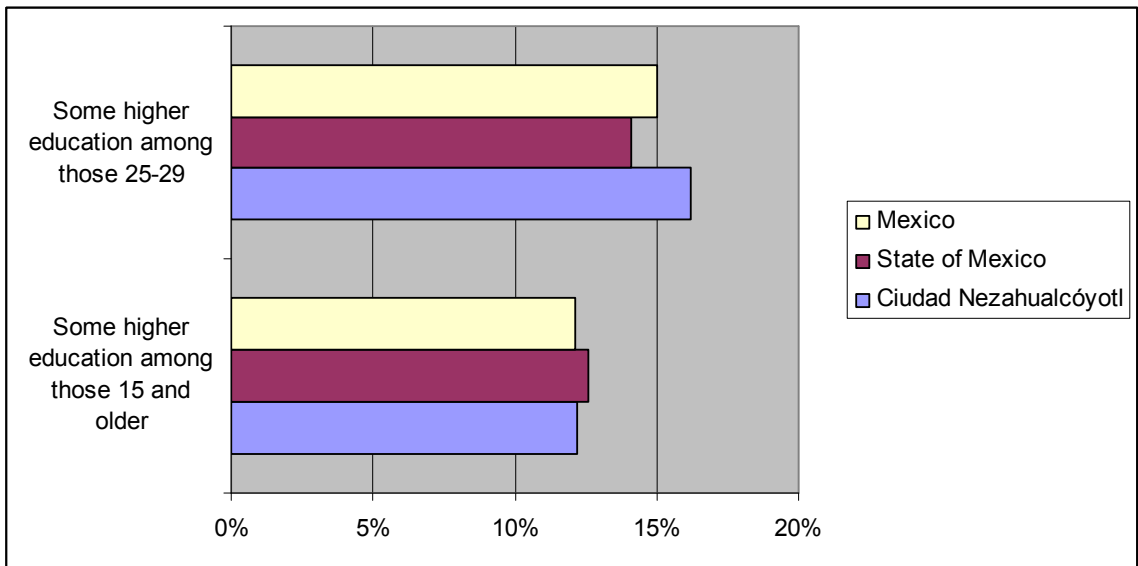
Source: INEGI, *XXII Censo General de Población 2000.*

Despite significant improvements, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, nonetheless, continued to be predominantly a poor and working class town that depends heavily on Mexico City and other cities in the region for employment. Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl had

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half the national average of people making minimum wage or less, but over half of the

working population reports making less than three minimum wages, the rough equivalent

of US$4,140 per year in 2000, still a very low wage for the metropolitan area of Mexico

City, where living standards are unusually high (Figure 8.7). Few inhabitants make over

ten minimum wages (roughly US$13,800), even a smaller proportion than the state and

country as a whole, suggesting that there is a limited middle class in the city.

Nonetheless, the income structure in Neza did show significant gains in the 1990s, which

suggests a long-term upward trend.[12]

Figure 8.7 Distribution of Income, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, State of Mexico, and National, 2000
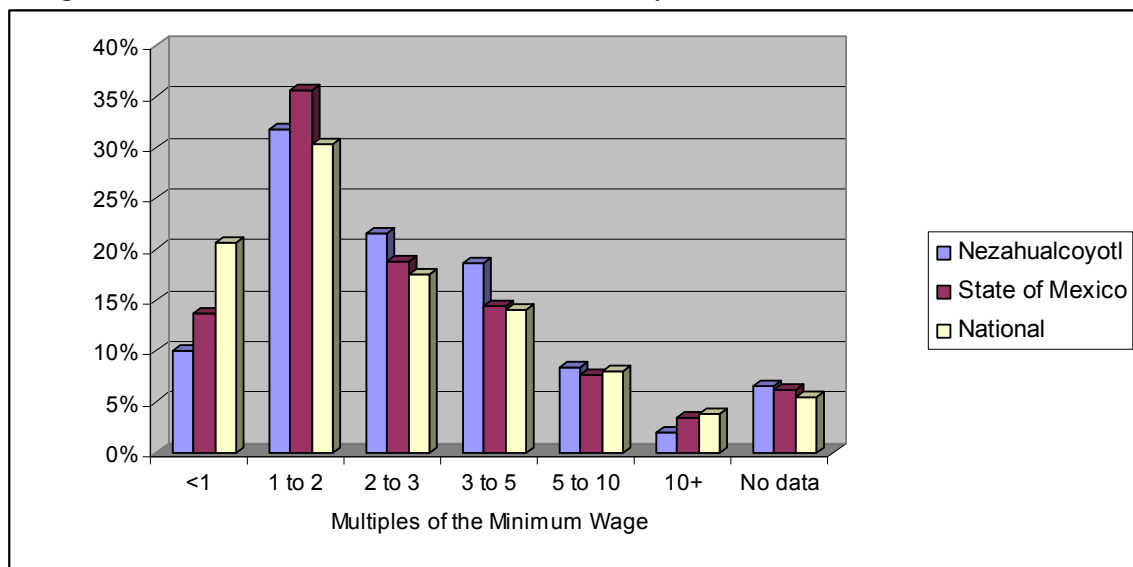
Source: 2000 Census *(XII Censo General de Población 2000)*. Note: Income in Mexico is generally
calculated in terms of multiples of the minimum wage, which was set at 1,137 pesos per month for the State
of Mexico in 2000, approximately US$1,380 per year at the exchange rate of the time.

Equally significant is the fact that, according to the federal government's

economic data only 18% of the economically active population of Ciudad

Nezahualcóyotl actually works in the city. While these statistics almost certainly

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[12] Based on author's comparison of data in the 1990 and 2000 census.

underestimate the number of people who work in the city, since they tend to undercount informal employment (which is prevalent in Neza), they still indicate that Neza has far less of an employment base for its residents than other major municipalities in the state or the state average as a whole (Figure 8.8).[13] Despite the overall successes of the population of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in raising living standards, gaining access to education, and improving infrastructure and basic services, the city still lags behind the rest of the region in developing its own businesses. As we will discuss later in this chapter, the lack of a strong base of local businesses imposes significant limitations on Neza's developing a strong municipal tax base and, therefore, reduces the ability of the city to progress in addressing the remaining needs of the population.

Figure 8.8: Percentage of Working Residents Employed within Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl compared to the State of Mexico as a Whole and Other Major Cities in the State, 1999

	Toluca	Tlanepantla	Naucalpan	Ecatepec	Ciudad Nezahualcó	State of Mexico
■ Percentage of residents employed within state/city	45.40%	54.70%	50.00%	24.60%	18.10%	27.40%
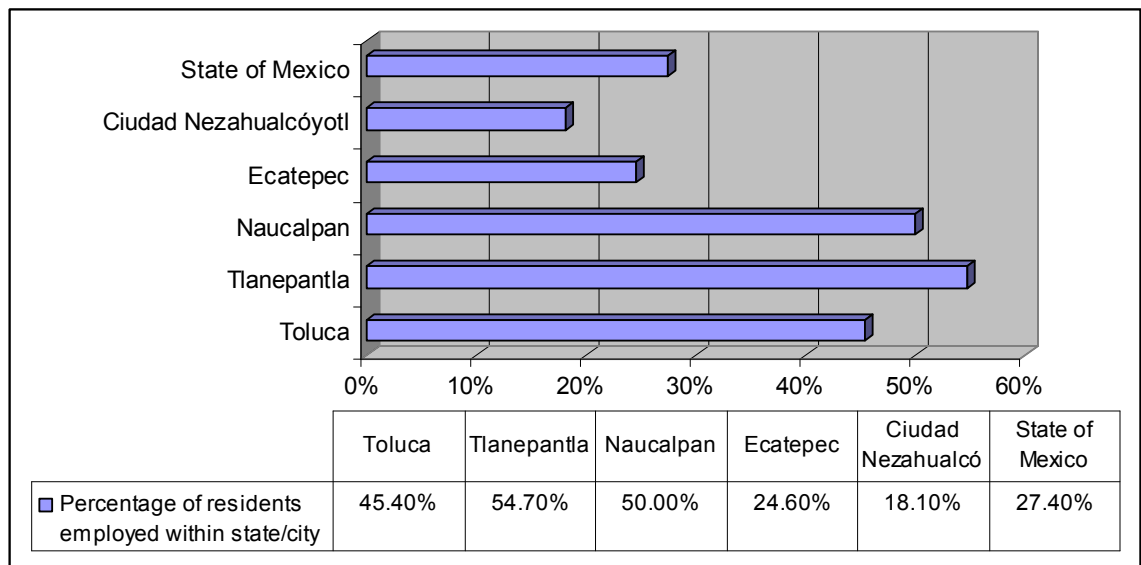
Note: Unemployment oscillates between 2-4% in the State of Mexico, depending on year and means of measurement. The EAP includes employed and unemployed persons.
Source: All data from INEGI: Economically Active Population based on the 2000 Census *(XII Censo General de Población 2000);* Number of employment positions within each city from the Economic Census of 1999 (published by INEGI as *Imágenes económicos del Estado de México,* 2001).

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[13] Based on the Economic Census of 1999, the last one for which data is available. The Municipal Development Plan of the city for 1997-2000 indicates that 43% of the population works in the municipality, 41% in Mexico City, and 13% in the State of Mexico (Ayuntamiento, *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo 1997-2000*). However, I have not been able to ascertain the basis for this calculation, and it clearly conflicts with the official federal government statistics.

8.3 Political Control, Political Change

PRI Hegemony and Struggles for Land (1963-88)

The PRI dominated politics in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl from the city's birth in 1963 until the victory of the PRD in 1996, and almost completely in the period from 1963 to 1988. Every mayor was a member of the PRI and, until 1982, every member of the city council. Even after changes in state electoral rules began to assign seats to opposition parties in 1982, the PRI dominated the city council and handily won every municipal election, never controlling less than 70% of the seats (see Table 8.1). The PRI maintained this dominance through an unusually strong relationship between the city and state governments, a solid party base of social organizations, and close ties to the most important economic actors in the city after independence, the *fraccionadores.*

The *fraccionadores* were the real estate developers who had bought property in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl at bargain rates to resell it to individuals and families that needed land. In some cases, these were undoubtedly legitimate purchases; in many cases, however, they were behind-the-scenes deals through which wealthy individuals, politicians, and real estate companies won the right to resell land that they had purchased through bribes or favors to state government officials. In many cases, the *fraccionadores* obtained titles to land that poor families already occupied and then resold it to them at higher rates than many could afford. With the city's population explosion in the 1960s,

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the *fraccionadores* were a potent economic force.[14] Several reports confirm that the first

administrations of Neza were particularly close to the *fraccionadores* and that they

played an important role in the constituting of the city itself.[15] The *fraccionadores*

constituted one of the most potent bases of support for municipal leaders throughout the

1960s, but their star waned in the 1970s as the state government stepped in to buy out the

fraccionadores and sell land directly to residents (as is discussed below).

The PRI maintained a tight control of state politics in the State of Mexico until the

1980s, winning every municipal and state election.[16] Given the weak finances of

municipalities and their dependence on agreements with the state and federal

governments to obtain funds for investment in infrastructure,. the state government

maintained tight control of municipal governments everywhere in the state throughout the

1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. In the case of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, this need was

significantly accentuated by the two priority needs of the city: land titles and basic

infrastructure (electricity, water, and sewage). The state government is exclusively

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[14] *Fraccionadores* is a term used in Mexico for an individual or company who sells land in parcels.
Fraccionadores are often legitimate companies, but evidence from several sources indicates that in Ciudad
Nezahualcóyotl few of the *fraccionadores* had followed legal processes to obtain land titles—and there was
little or no transparency in the land titling system in the State of Mexico in this period. See de la Rosa,
Netzahualcóyotl.

[15] Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," p. 166; de la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl,* pp. 11-12;
Ferras, *Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl,* p. 15. The Asociación General de Colonos (General Association of
Settlers), a community organization created with government support in 1957 to represent the area that
became Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, included a state government representative, four representatives of the
fraccionadores, and four representatives of the population at large, although two of the four at-large
representatives were active PRI members close to the state government. This group was the official body
that channeled demands for autonomy. It was disbanded when the first city government was elected.
However, the *fraccionadores* managed to ensure the election of mayors close to their interests throughout
the 1960s (María Eugencia de Alba Muñiz, "Control política de los migrantes urbanos: un caso de estudio,
ciudad Nezahualcóyotl," M.A. thesis, Center for International Studies, El Colegio de México, September
1976, pp. 78-89).

[16] A single, relatively cohesive political group, known as the Grupo Atlocomulco, dominated the state PRI
almost continuously from 1945 on. This group continues to dominate state politics, though disputes within
this group and within the PRI itself have become more noticeable since the 1990s. The PAN had a minimal
presence in some municipalities and presented its first candidate in gubernatorial elections in 1975
(winning 12.5%, the party's best showing until 1993, when it would win 16.5%). See Duhau and
Shteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," pp. 176-77.

responsible for land titling, as well as water and sewage. Electricity is the responsibility

of the federal government, but the state government often plays a mediating role in

getting the Federal Electricity Commission to install service in new areas. The state

government thus played a very direct role in municipal affairs in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

as long as the primary needs of the city were focused on land and services. For much of

the 1970s, a state-created trust for regularizing land titles (discussed below) even became

an alternate political power in the city, far more influential than the city government

itself, and its president would use it as a trampoline to become governor of the state.[17]

Since the city lived to a large extent under state tutelage, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

was also used by the state PRI to distribute patronage to politicians from outside the city.

Elected representatives and city officials, including mayors and many local and federal

congressmen, were often not even residents of the city. For example, between 1963 and

1990, only five of the nine mayors were residents of the city.[18]   In the one federal

election, 1988, only two of the ten candidates for congress from districts in Neza were

residents of the city.[19] During the time when the PRI enjoyed almost complete hegemony

in most states, it was not unheard of for outsiders to run for office in Mexican

municipalities; however, the frequency with which this happened in Neza is quite unusual

and speaks to the relative weakness of the local politicians to negotiate their interests vis-

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[17] In interviews, two social leaders active in the 1970s commented that the state government was far more important in meeting citizens' demands than the city government. Inteviews with Odón Madariaga, May 21, 2005, and Martín de la Rosa Medellín, May 3, 2005.

[18] Moises Raúl López Laines, *Nezahualcóyotl: Perfil Político, Anaylisis y Alternativas,* Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: Imprenta San Diego, 1989, pp. 85-86. López Laines is a noted PRIista politician and former congressman from the city who carried extensive research on the PRI's internal practices and citizens' views of the party in 1988-89.

[19] Emilio Alvarado Guevara, *Yolhueyliztli: Historia de Nezahualcóyotl,* Mexico, D.F.: Editorial ARIES, 1996, p. 181. Alvarado Guevara is another PRI politician (and former alternate congressman) who published a book a detailed history of the PRI governments in Neza. Note: There were ten federal electoral districts in Neza at the time; however, there are currently only five electoral districts, as the number of members of congress elected directly has been reduced significantly through federal constitutional changes.

à-vis the state government and party structure. The recent creation of the city meant that there were few local political leaders who had much stature in the state or national party despite the city's size. The sense that the city was largely an appendage of the state government certainly contributed to its political weakness as well.

The local PRI in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl depended on a well-structured network of occupationally and territorially based organizations that allowed the party to mediate and, to some extent, control demands between citizens and government authorities. Of the three traditional sectors of the party in Mexico (labor, peasant, and popular sectors), the labor and peasant sectors were relatively weak. The National Peasant Confederation (CNC) would gain some influence in the 1970s by supporting a revolt against the *fraccionadores,* but the absence of industry meant that the labor sector was largely irrelevant. The popular sector, known as the National Council of Popular Organizations (CNOP), brought together associations of owners and workers in the city's many markets, the teachers' union, the chamber of commerce, and the General Association of Residents (Asociación General de Colonos), an umbrella organization for neighborhood groups. Together these groups were the backbone of the party. At the same time, the PRI had committees in each section of the city (there are generally several "sections" in each federal electoral district), which gave the party a geographical base at election time and ensured a party presence in each neighborhood of the city.[20] The party provided numerous services to local residents through the CNOP affiliated organizations and the section committees, including legal and financial advice, employment listings, and support for a range of social demands for licenses, land titles, services, and other needs

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[20] This description of the PRI is taken from Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," pp. 183-86, and confirmed in conversations with leading members of the PRI in the city.

that only the government could resolve. The CNOP organizations thus formed the crucial link between citizens and public authorities under the PRI governments. According to Duhau and Schteingart, "These organizations linked the daily life of the population in its social, economic, and urban aspects, but they also constituted the channels of support to leaders who occupied the mayor's office, city council seats, and other important positions in the municipality, for many decades."[21]

The PRI, however, was hardly a democratic organization in its internal operation. Though it provided services through its constituent organizations as an intermediary between citizens and public authorities, this was done in return for loyalty, votes, and the support of particular leaders who could claim the ability to resolve problems. The PRI, and the governments it created, operated in Neza as elsewhere in Mexico by providing a paternalistic form of intermediation to its loyal members but refusing to deal with those who chose to go outside the system. When groups tried to break off from the party, the authorities would either try to co-opt them back into the party structure or threaten to write them off.[22] In Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, the local PRI hierarchy usually proposed the candidacies for election, though negotiation among key leaders, to the state PRI, which made the final decision. On only one occasion, in 1978, did the local PRI try to elect candidates by allowing members to vote in a primary election. However, the results created so much bitterness among the losing groups that party leaders stepped in to name

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[21] "El primer gobierno perredista," p. 186. I was a witness to the CNOP's continued ability to operate as mediator during two afternoons I spent at the CNOP office in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl. During this time, members of various CNOP organizations arrived to get help with such things as contested bills for services and petitions for neighborhood improvements. In one dramatic case, a woman asked for help because the administrator of the city's public hospital, whose services are supposed to be free, had refused to release her sister from the hospital without payment of a substantial sum of money. The CNOP leaders led a march on the hospital to get her sister released.

[22] Alba Muñiz, "Control político de los migrantes," covers this process in some detail with specific cases. See especially pp. 2-3.

the candidates in the end.[23] A few figures dominated the PRI's candidacies for office,

and the leadership of the party organizations for years on end.[24] One internal study of the

PRI noted that candidacies repeatedly went to the same politicians and that a quarter of

all party positions in 1988 were held by only eight people. The PRI in Neza created a

vertically integrated system of interest intermediation dominated by individual leaders,

caciques, who could resolve problems for ordinary citizens in return for loyalty to those

leaders.

The lack of horizontal links in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl during its first 25 years

also contributed to the PRI's success in controlling dissent and eliminating challenges to

its hegemony. Martín de la Rosa, a Jesuit priest, who tried in the early 1970s to organize

an autonomous popular movement for change, wrote that "Horizontal communication is

minimal: the city is infinitely atomized; each person or each group fights as hard as

possible against daily problems of subsistence, problems that are really common."[25] The

atomization of social struggles was compounded by the lack of public spaces, including

parks, city newspapers, community radio stations, or local television programs, that could

have facilitated deliberation among citizens. In addition, citizens' information often came

from Mexico City news sources, and they spent much of their day in jobs in the City as

well. Most of the remaining collective spaces within neighborhoods, markets, and a

handful of local businesses were successfully co-opted by the only political party of any

strength.

However, despite the PRI's seeming monopoly on social and political

organization, significant chinks in this control existed. Struggles for land and services

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[23] Alvarado Guevara recounts this episode in *Yolhueyliztli,* pp. 62-65.
[24] Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," p. 156.
[25] De la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl,* p. 4.

developed at the margins of the party, and though these social movements were often co-opted or controlled, their activities laid the groundwork for later cleavages in local politics and the emergence of new political alternatives in the city. The most striking challenge to politics as usual came in the form of a mass struggle against the *fraccionadores* in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In 1953 a group of inhabitants in what would become Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl formed the Frente Mexicano pro-Derechos Humanos (Mexican Front for Human Rights) and threatened to stop paying the *fraccionadores* for their land titles.[26] This group was suppressed, but in the mid-1960s several neighborhood leaders began reviving this idea. Though the initial attempt to constitute an alliance that could declare a payment strike failed in the period 1964-67, a larger movement emerged around 1969 under the name of the Movimiento Restaurador de Colonos (Residents' Restoration Movement), known by its initials MRC.[27] The MRC declared a wholesale payment strike, asking residents of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl to stop paying the *fraccionadores* their monthly quotas for the land titles, since most *fraccionadores* had obtained the titles illegally, and called on the state government to take control of the land and sell it to the residents at reasonable prices.

The MRC's payment strike spread like wildfire; by 1971, a reported 70,000 city residents were active in 28 MRC subcommittees.[28] The state government had immediately recognized the need to negotiate with them. The state was in the middle of

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[26] See Ramón Rivera Espinosa, "Planificación Urbana Municipal y gestión popular en Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl," M.A. thesis in urban planning, Escuela Superior de Ingeniería y Arquitectura, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, June 2002, pp. 105-6.
[27] On the MRC, see Rivera, "Planificación Urbana Municipal," pp. 107-112; Ferras, *Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl,* pp. 16-19; Alba Muñiz, "Control político de los migrantes," pp. 91-130; Alvarado Guevera, *Yolhueyliztli,* 145-58; and de la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl,* pp. 12-15. This discussion is supplemented with information obtained from an interview with MRC leader Odón Madariaga, May 21, 2005.
[28] De la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl,* pp. 12-13.

an election in 1969, and the PRI's gubernatorial candidate, Carlos Hank González, sent a

representative, Ignacio Pichardo Pagaza, to try to contain and, if possible, co-opt the

movement. By 1971, the MRC's key leaders had joined the National Peasant

Confederation (CNC) of the PRI and, although they accepted the legitimacy of the party,

they were allowed to have a separate base from which to maintain the movement. As

several leaders grew closer to the PRI, the movement split, in 1972, and leaders chose

different political strategies. The movement's original leader, Artemio Mora Lozada,

joined the city council, supported by the PRI's popular sector (CNOP), and was largely

ostracized from the MRC. In contrast, the majority of members followed Odón

Madariaga and maintained a slightly more combative participation in the party through

the CNC.[29]

In 1972 the MRC finally won its principal demand: the state government, now led

by Hank González,[30] approved a state trust, FINEZA (Fideicomiso por Nezahualcoyótl),

to buy out the *fraccionadores* at market value*,* resell the land to residents at subsidized

cost, and install services. Capitalized with 600 million pesos, FINEZA purchased 49,263

lots from the *fraccionadores* and then resold them to residents.[31] In comparison to the

municipality, which had, by one account,[32] a budget of around ten million pesos per year

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[29] However, the MRC under Odón Madariaga managed to help the governor impose a candidate for mayor of mutual convenience to both in the 1972 elections over the objections of the local PRI. The candidate had been the governor's most recent representative in the successful negotiations with the MRC. The MRC thus both won spaces for a key political ally and maintained a margin of autonomy from the local PRI. On this point, see Alvarado Guevara, *Yolhueyliztli,* pp. 150-51.

[30] The son of Carlos Hank González, Jorge Hank Rhon, would eventually become mayor of Tijuana in December 2004.

[31] Alvarado Guevara, *Yolhueyliztli,* pp. 154-55. There were 142,747 legal lots in Neza in 1986, according to statistics in the Mayor's annual report. A rough calculation, therefore, suggests that over a third of the land titles sold up to that point came through FINEZA in the 1970s. (Many other lots had already been purchased in the 1960s or were purchased after FINEZA ceased operation.) The number of lots is cited in Arzaluz, "Participación ciudadana," pp. 294-95. Did FINEZA sell the lots a lower prices than the fraccionadores would have?

[32] De la Rosa, *Netzahualcóyotl,* p. 12. Figure is for 1972, the same year FINEZA was created.

and no ability to solve the land problem, FINEZA became, for much of the 1970s, a significant figure of public authority in the municipality, rivaling the municipality. Pichardo, who had been the first negotiator sent by Hank González, became the president of FINEZA, and the trust's technical committee included three representatives of MRC (including Odón Madariaga), one of the *fraccionadores,* as well as representatives of different levels of government and other stakeholders.

The MRC was by far the largest movement that took place outside the PRI and, in the end, it successfully negotiated its members' demands in return for loyalty to the party (and eventually positions for its leaders, who became city council members, local legislators, and members of congress later in the 1970s and 1980s). The price of success on a major scale was playing the game according to the rules of the dominant party. Timing and strategy had worked in the favor of the MRC. Following the tumultuous 1960s, President Luis Echeverría and the state's Governor were trying to reconstruct relations with social organizations that were willing to negotiate with (and ultimately support) the PRI.

There were several movements in the 1970s and early 1980s, however, which refused to play by the rules of the game. As a result, they operated on the margins of the PRI, at a much smaller scale, but they also laid the groundwork for changes that would take place in the late 1980s and 1990s. The center-right PAN, for example, maintained an independent base, largely in the less destitute north of the city and was able to gain adherents among a few economically successful residents. A few political parties of the left also operated on a smaller scale, including the Communist Party (PCM) and the trotskyist Workers' Party (PMT), as well as the much smaller Revolutionary Workers'

Party (PRT) and the Socialist Workers' Party (PST).

Similarly, several social organizations engaged in independent action on a small scale. Although their margin for maneuver was always limited and they left no institutional legacy, they sowed the seeds for changes that were yet to come in the city. One group of Jesuit priests, for example, led by Martín de la Rosa started the organization Servicios Populares, A.C. (Popular Services, SEPAC) in 1969 to train leaders of popular struggles. Influenced by liberation theology and the work of the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire, who stressed that people should take development into their own hands rather than be the objects of other peoples' actions, SEPAC eventually lost the support of the more conservative clergy in Ciudad Nezahualcóytol and separated from the Catholic Church. During the 1970s, SEPAC started a monthly bulletin, *El Despertar del Pueblo* ("the awakening of the people"), a popular film series, food cooperatives, and the city's first popular school. SEPAC spawned an organization, the Unión de Colonias de Nezahualcóyotl (UNICON), dedicated to fighting for land titles and public services. Most of the leaders of current social organizations in Neza interviewed for this project cited SEPAC as a significant influence in the formation of independent social organizations in Neza.[33]

Another organization, which years before had split from the PRI, the Unión General de Obreros y Campesinos del Estado de México (General Union of Workers and Peasants of the State of Mexico, UGOCM), began a strategy, parallel to the MRC, of forcing the state to intervene against the *fraccionadores*. The UGOCM argued that the area that the city now occupied had been declared communal lands by Mexco's liberal

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[33] On SEPAC, see Rivera, "Planificación Urbana Municipal," pp. 122-25 and de la Rosa, *Netzahualcoyótl*. Martín de la Rosa, no longer a Jesuit, would go on to teach at a university in Tijuana and eventually become the chief architect of the COPLADEM described in Chapter 7.

President Benito Juárez in 1862 and that this decree had been reaffirmed by President

Plutarco Elias Calles after the Revolution. As such, the *fraccionadores* could not

rightfully have purchased the land. Through targeted lawsuits and payment strikes,

UGOCM succeeded in getting a few neighborhoods in the city declared property of the

state and resold to residents at a lower price.[34] The UGOCM, though independent from

the PRI, succeeded largely because it kept its actions small and operated with the support

of the Partido Popular Socialista (PPS), a small party that was separate from but close to

the PRI and used by political leaders to create the impression of political pluralism. The

UGOCM would lose momentum towards the end of the 1970s, but it would reemerge as

an important force in the 1990s when its new leader became the first PRD mayor of

Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl.

A group of students influenced by the 1960s student movement started a Maoist

organization, the Frente Popular Independiente (Independent Popular Front, FIPI) in

1974.[35] FIPI developed in the eastern parts of Mexico City, as well as Neza, where it

focused on fighting for land titles and services and against the rise in transportation

prices. The group divided in 1979 over whether to participate in the elections (and

following the death by torture of the organization's leader) but reemerged in 1980,

joining forces with a local popular school in the Villada neighborhood of Neza. The FIPI

and the Jesuit-inspired UNICON, were part of the burgeoning Urban Popular Movement

in Mexico that brought together urban social organizations from cities throughout Mexico

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[34] Rivera, "Planificación Urbana Municipal," pp. 113-115, and interview with UGOCM leader Valentín González Bautista, October 4, 2005.

[35] I base the description of the FIPI and its successor organizations (UCP-MRP and UPREZ) on an interview with Felilpe Rodríguez, local congressman and historical leader of the UPREZ nationally and in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, May 20, 2005; Rivera, "Planificación Urbana Municipal," pp. 118-19; and the pamphlet printed by UPREZ "Los siete aspectos que debes saber de la UPREZ" ("seven things you should know about UPREZ").

(including Tijuana's CUCUTAC, see chapter 7). By 1987, the organization had

metamorphosed once again, acquiring its current name and identity, Unión Popular

Revolucionario Emiliano Zapata (Emiliano Zapata Popular Revolutionary Union,

UPREZ). The UPREZ would go on to play a decisive role in the 1996 PRD victory and

subsequent leftist governments in the city.

Many of these independent groups played only small roles in the struggle for

social change in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in the 1970s and early 1980s. Their possibilities

for action were severely reduced by the almost complete dominance of the PRI and the

unwillingness of this party to deal with any organization that did not accept a degree of

loyalty to it. In 1981, however, a state constitutional change allowed for representatives

of minority parties to have seats in the city council. This led to the PAN winning both

minority party seats in 1982 (chart 8.1). In 1985, when another constitutional change had

expanded to three the minority seats, the PAN repeated in one, the PARM (a small party

close to the PRI) took another, and a coalition of left-wing parties -- the Mexican

Socialist Party (PMS) -- won the third one. The small but hegemony-breaking presence

of the PAN and the Mexican left in the council presaged even bigger changes just around

the corner (Figure 8.9).

Table 8.1: Mayors and City Council in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1964-1996

Term	No.	Mayor PRI	Council members PRI	Council members Opposition
1964-1966	1	Jorge Sánez Knoth	1 síndico (4 total) 3 regidores	0
1967-1969	2	Francisco González Romero	1 síndico (6 total) 5 regidores	0
1970-1972	3	Gonzalo Barquín Díaz	1 síndico (6 total) 5 regidores	0
1973-1975	4	Oscar Loya Ramírez	1 síndico (6 total) 5 regidores	0
1976-1978	5	Eleazar García Rodríguez	1 síndico (6 total) 5 regidores	0
1979-1981	6	José Luis García García	2 síndicos (9 total) 7 regidores	0
1982-1984	7	Juan Alvarado Jacco	2 síndicos (9 total) 7 regidores	2 PAN (2 total)
1985-1987	8	José Lucio Ramírez Ornelas	2 síndicos (11 total) 9 regidores	1 PAN (3 total) 1 PSUM 1 PARM
1988-1990	9	José Salinas Navarro	2 síndicos 9 regidores	1 PAN (3 total) 1 PMS/PSUM 1 PDM
1991-1993	10	Juan Gerardo Vizcaíno Covián	2 síndicos 11 regidores	5 total
1994-1996	11	Carlos Viña Paredes	No data	No data

Sources: Moises Raúl López Laines, *Nezahualcóyotl: Perfil Político, Anailisis y Alternativas,* Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl: Imprenta San Diego, 1989; Emilio Alvarado Guerara, *Yolhueyliztli: Historia de Nezahualcóyotl,* Mexico, D.F.: Editorial ARIES, 1996.

Figure 8.9: Municipal Elections in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1979-1987

	1978	1981	1984	1987
PRI	72.2%	88.0%	70.0%	66.9%
PAN	19.4%	7.7%	15.8%	17.1%
Other parties	8.4%	4.3%	14.2%	16.0%
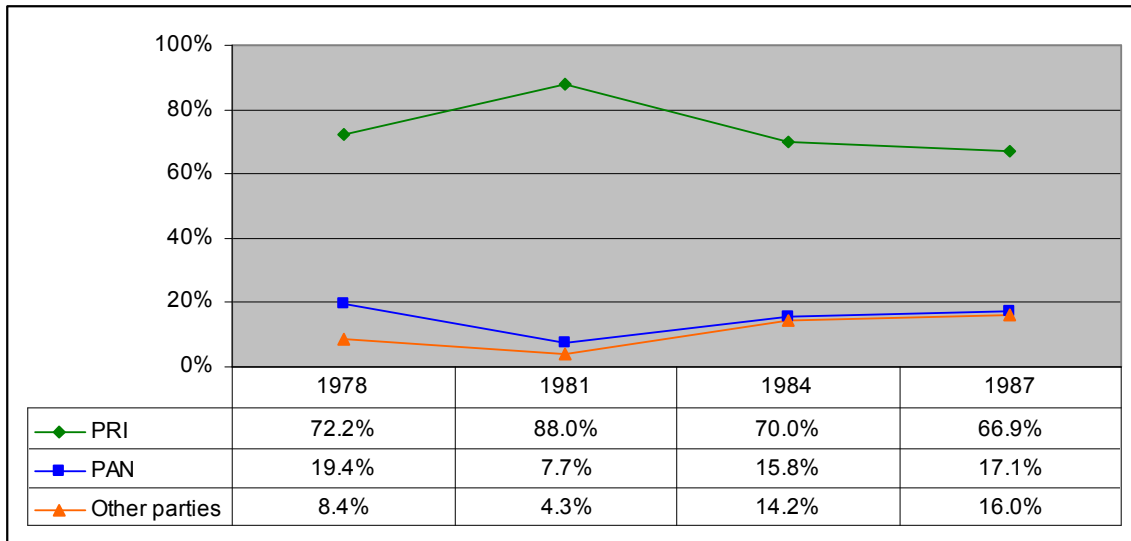
Note: Percentage for parties is of valid votes. Invalid votes were often quite high (23.8% in 1978, 15.6% in 1981, 7.9% in 1984, and 5.8% in 1987, which may suggest a silent protest against the electoral rules). Voter participation is calculated based on total votes against registered voters.
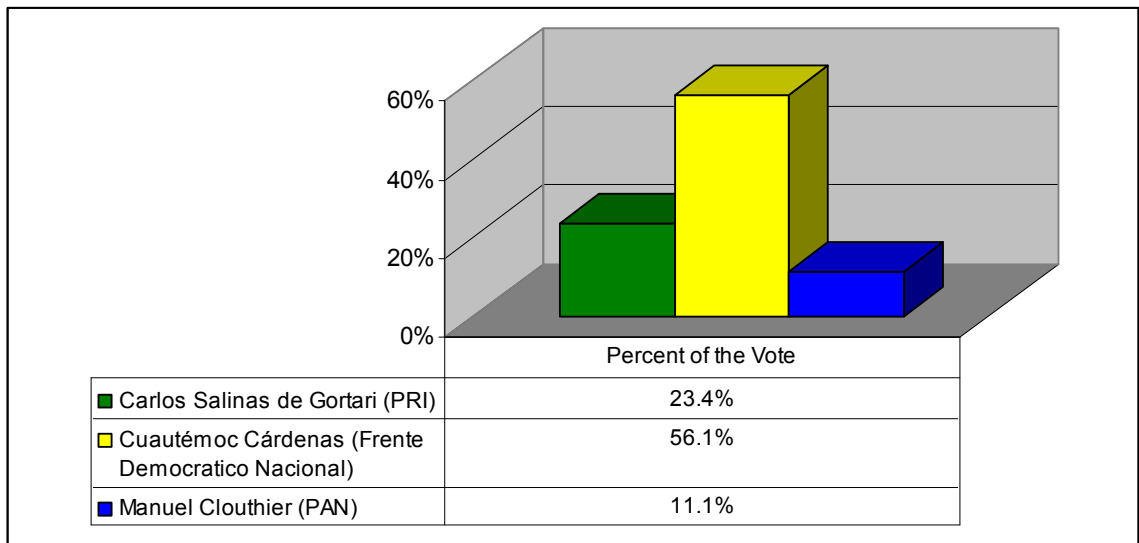Source: Adapted from Tosoni García, "Acerca de cómo participan los excluídos," Appendix, Table no. 16 (no page number), based on statistics available at the Centro de Estadística y Documentación Electoral of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

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Political Opening (1988-1996)

An outside observer of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl in 1987 would probably have seen little change in the ongoing dominance of the PRI and the traditional clientelistic forms of politics. However, the multiple struggles that had taken place around the margins of the dominant party, including both the MRC and the autonomous social and political organizations, had created political fissures that were being exacerbated by the severe economic crisis Mexico had been suffering since 1982. When Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas bolted from the PRI in 1988 and ran a left-of-center candidacy for president, his campaign brought together many of the disparate movements at the margins of the PRI and exposed the fissures. Odón Madariaga, erstwhile leader of the MRC, who had since served in Congress and the City Council but now found himself marginalized from the PRI, organized the Cárdenas campaign in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl and ran for Congress himself on the ticket of one of the parties supporting Cárdenas. The UPREZ, UGOCM, and the PMT, which had developed a small but dedicated following, all joined the campaign as well. To everyone's surprise, Cárdenas won handily in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, defeating PRI candidate Carlos Salinas de Gortari by 56.1% to 23.4% (with a respectable 11.1% for the PAN's Manuel Clouthier; see Figure 8.10). Madariaga and one other candidate from Cárdenas' coalition were elected to Congress.

Figure 8.10: Vote for President in the 1988 Elections in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl

	Percent of the Vote
■ Carlos Salinas de Gortari (PRI)	23.4%
■ Cuautémoc Cárdenas (Frente Democratico Nacional)	56.1%
■ Manuel Clouthier (PAN)	11.1%

Source: Adapted fromTosoni García, "Acerca de cómo participan los excluídos," Appendix, Table no. 16 (no page number), based on statistics available at the Centro de Estadística y Documentación Electoral of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana

The PRI's first loss in Ciudad Nezahualcoyótl—and by a sizeable margin—caused significant reflection within the local PRI. The party conducted an extensive survey to gauge citizens' attitudes toward the party and underwent self examination with respect to its internal rules for selecting candidates.[36] The analysis revealed that undemocratic practices within the party, the dominance of a few leaders, and the failure to reflect new citizen demands had all contributed to the party's loss of credibility. Nonetheless, several PRIistas interviewed observed that the party failed to correct these problems after 1988. Indeed, the same issues would contribute to the party's definitive loss in municipal elections eight years later.[37]

However, if the PRI had trouble learning the right lessons from the election and

[36] The results are published as López Laínes, *Nezahualcóyotl.*
[37] Interviews, Hector Pedroza, Arcadio López, and Luis Pérez, all April 23, 2005. See also Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," p. 190-91.

changing course, the left had even more trouble maintaining its loose coalition. Many of

the principal leaders who had supported Cárdenas came together in 1989 to found the

Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD); however, the leaders of some of the parties that

had supported his candidacy refused to join. The new party, with few resources and still

weak institutional structure, failed to make major gains in Mexico in its first few years.[38]

Similarly, in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, the PRD struggled over the next two elections to

maintain a fraction of its votes from 1988 (winning only 15.8% and 13.7% in 1990 and

1993 respectively). The coalition that had supported Cárdenas' presidential bid split up

and most of the social organizations returned to their primary tasks of community

organizing. Other key leaders from the 1988 coalition, including Odón Madariaga, soon

left the PRD or never joined at all.[39] The PRI won the next two municipal elections, each

time by a large margin (see Figure 8.8).

Figure 8.11: Vote for Mayor and City Council in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1990-1996

	1990	1993	1996
PRI	44.3%	54.1%	27.7%
PRD	13.9%	13.0%	32.6%
PAN	12.7%	12.0%	22.6%
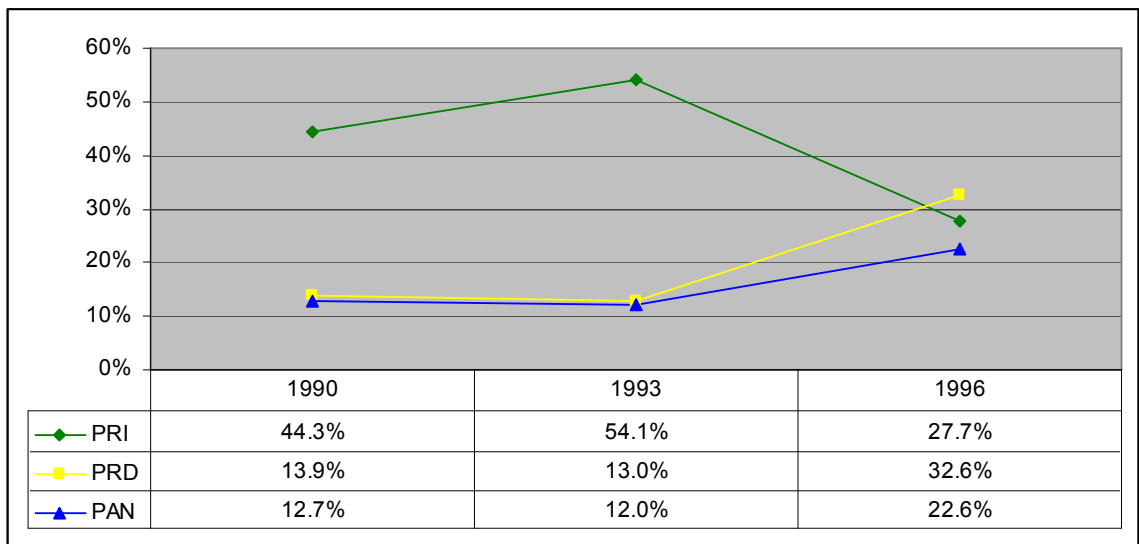
Note: Percentage of total vote. In 1990, many Cárdenas supporters cast blank ballots as a protest.
Source: Compiled from statistics of the Instituto Electoral del Estado de México, election results for
various years available at www.iiem.org.mx.

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[38] See Kathleen Brun, *Taking on Goliath, op. cit.*
[39] Madariaga joined the PRD and ran for mayor in 1990, but after losing left the party and largely retired
from politics. Interviews, Odón Madariaga and Hector Bautista.

Despite the failure of the left to capitalize on the 1988 victory, these elections and their aftermath proved a turning point for many of the social organizations that had participated. These elections forced the state and federal government to change electoral laws to include more representation of minority parties as a means of ensuring legitimacy in the eyes of public opinion. One of the organizations that took advantage of the new political climate was the Movimiento Vida Digna (Movement for a Dignified Life), born out of the socialist PMT in the early 1980s with the realization that political struggle needed to be "accompanied by the necessity of the stomach."[40] The group had begun in the Aguilas neighborhood, where they joined the fight for land titles and services. MOVIDIG, originally under a different name, had eventually become involved in distributing coupons throughout the city for subsidized food, supplied water to communities left without services during the 1985 earthquake, and later worked to obtain subsidized homes for people who lacked their own property. The leaders of the organization participated in the 1988 campaign for Cárdenas, but soon returned to their community organizing work, although with a new commitment to electoral involvement.

When the government cancelled the coupons for subsidized food (known as *tortibonos*) after the elections, MOVIDIG switched strategy and began food cooperatives throughout Neza, pooling resources to buy food in bulk and distributing it at low prices to their members. The membership grew until the organization was in every neighborhood of the city. With the success of its cooperative, MOVIDIG ran candidates for and in 1987, 1990, and 1993 won city council seats under the minority representation rule. The

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[40] This account of MOVIDIG is based on interviews with two of the organizations' historical leaders Hector Bautista, now a member of Congress and secretary of organization of the PRD, and Cirilo Revilla, director of Administration in the municipality. The quote is from Revilla, interview, May 19, 2005.

presence of MOVIDIG members on the city council marked an important turning point. With the salary of the council member, Hector Bautista (later mayor of Neza) and the support he was able to negotiate from the city government, MOVIDIG was able to invest in trucks to carry goods for the cooperative and strengthen their institutional infrastructure. Their second city council member defected from the movement (and the PRD), but with their third council member, Cirilo Revilla (now a municipal official), they were able to continue to strengthen MOVIDIG.

Other movements blossomed at the same time, inspired by the new climate of openness, political pluralism, and the experience of the 1988 elections. The UPREZ, described earlier, started its first "popular school" in 1987 to make up for the lack of official schools in one of the neighborhoods.[41] This innovation marked a switch away from their traditional struggle for services and housing. The UPREZ also joined Cárdenas' coalition in 1988 and joined the PRD the following year. Of more recent creation, the Movimiento de Liberación Nezahualcoyotlense (Neza Liberation Movement, MLN), was born in 1990 in the aftermath of the Cárdenas campaign.

Even while the PRD languished in the aftermath of the 1988 elections, several of the principal movements that had supported Cardenas' campaign were hard at work consolidating their social and political base in the new climate of openness and electoral competition. Independent movements could rarely make their demands heard to authorities in the 1970s and early 1980s if they did not accept a degree of loyalty to the PRI; the PRI as a near monopoly party saw no reason to deal with those who would not

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[41] Interview with Felipe Rodríguez, local congressman and historical leader of the UPREZ in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl. See also Rivera, "Planeación Urbana Municipal," pp. 173-75, and Shteingart and Duhau, "El primer gobierno perredista," pp. 187-88. By 2005 UPREZ had opened 57 popular schools in 10 municipalities, with a significant number in Neza, according to Rodríguez.

accept their "rules of the game." In contrast, in the 1990s, when political competition

was a reality (if still unequal), PRI governments were willing to deal with opposition-

supported organizations to keep them within reach of their control and, if possible, co-opt

them. As Hector Bautista of the MOVIDIG noted, the communities "where MOVIDIG

mobilized were urbanized more quickly…that is why the social organizations grew,

because the PRI gave something [to us]..."[42]

In 1996, the principal social organizations, MOVIDIG, UPREZ, MLN, and

UGOCM, decided to launch a joint candidacy in the municipal elections. None of the

organizations thought they could win, so they proposed Valentín González Bautista,

leader of the UGOCM, to run for mayor, and divided up the city council candidacies

among the major organizations. [43] The UGOCM had been one of the leading semi-

independent organizations in the 1970s,[44] but by 1996 it had a minimal presence in the

city. The MOVIDIG made an alliance with the UGOCM to promote González's

candidacy, but it appears to have met with little opposition (even though González was

not even a PRD member at the time). In the previous elections, the PRD had waged a

lackluster campaign with little unity among the social organizations; this time, they

banded together and González turned out to be a surprisingly effective candidate.

Perhaps most importantly, the PRD-affiliated organizations had grown in strength and

stature while the PRI had continued to lose credibility with the society in general.[45] At

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[42] Hector Bautista, interview.

[43] Hector Bautista, interview. See also the descriptions by Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," 188-89; and Arzaluz, "Participación Ciudadana," pp. 301 and 301f.

[44] It had been active in pursuing land grants through the legal system. Though linked to the semi-official Popular Socialist Party (PPS), in Neza the UGOCM had been seen as fairly independent from the PRI.

[45] One account written by a PRIista shortly before the 1996 election notes that the 1993-96 PRI administration in Neza was seen as particularly corrupt and unresponsive to social demands. Several PRI members interviewed noted that the party had continued to put forward the same candidates—or their relatives—over and over again, thereby creating frustration among many PRIistas who saw no chance to

the same time, in 1996 Cuautémoc Cárdenas, the erstwhile presidential candidate of the left, had launched his bid to become the first elected mayor of Mexico City. Although the Mexico City election, in which Cárdenas won, took place several months after the election in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, the simultaneous campaigns in both cities helped raise the profile of the PRD in voters' minds.[46] The election produced a surprise result: the PRD won over a third of the votes with the PRI and PAN close behind. Under the State of Mexico's electoral rules, this meant that the PRD was entitled to the mayor's office and a majority of city council seats. For the first time in the city's history, a party other than the PRI would govern. This change would also coincide with the push in Mexico to strengthen municipal governments. What would these changes mean for democratic governance in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl?

8.4 How Much Decentralization (1996-2005)?

The story of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl since 1996 has been one of increasing political pluralism and steadily strengthened municipal structure and finances. The PRD would win municipal elections again in 2000 and 2003, garnering an outright majority of votes in 2003. Neza had truly become a PRD bastion—just at the time that municipal finances and functions expanded dramatically.

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break into leadership roles in the party. Alvarado Guevara, *Yolhueyliztli*. This view was echoed by several PRI leaders interviewed: Hector Pedroza, Arcadio López, and Luis Pérez, April 23, 2005
[46] Interview, Odón Madariaga.

The municipality of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl has always struggled to raise revenue. Since there is little industry and most inhabitants work outside the city, the municipality has few options for leveraging local revenues compared to other cities of its size. Indeed, from 1989 to 1996, total municipal revenue remained almost completely static in real terms (Figure 8.12). Corruption under PRI-affiliated administrations appears to have played a major part in this poor performance. Before 1997, the municipal slaughterhouse, stadium, and zoo produced no income for the municipal government, and it appears that revenue generated from these sources entered the official party's coffers directly.[47] The PRD-affiliated administrations that governed after 1997 succeeded in increasing locally generated revenue by a third between 1997 and 2002 (see Figure 8.13).

Figure 8.12: Real Municipal Revenue by Source in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1989-2002 (in Millions of 2002 Constant Pesos)
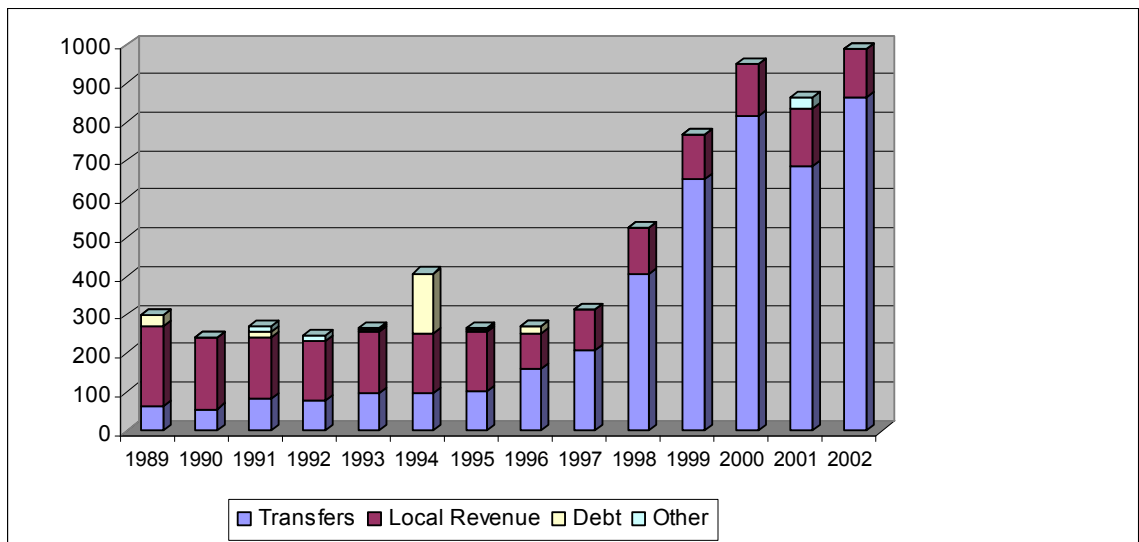
Source: Calculations based on data from INEGI, Sistema Municipal de Base de Datos.

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[47] Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," p. 201.

Figure 8.13: Own Source Revenue in Real Terms (Millions of 2002 Pesos), 1989-2002
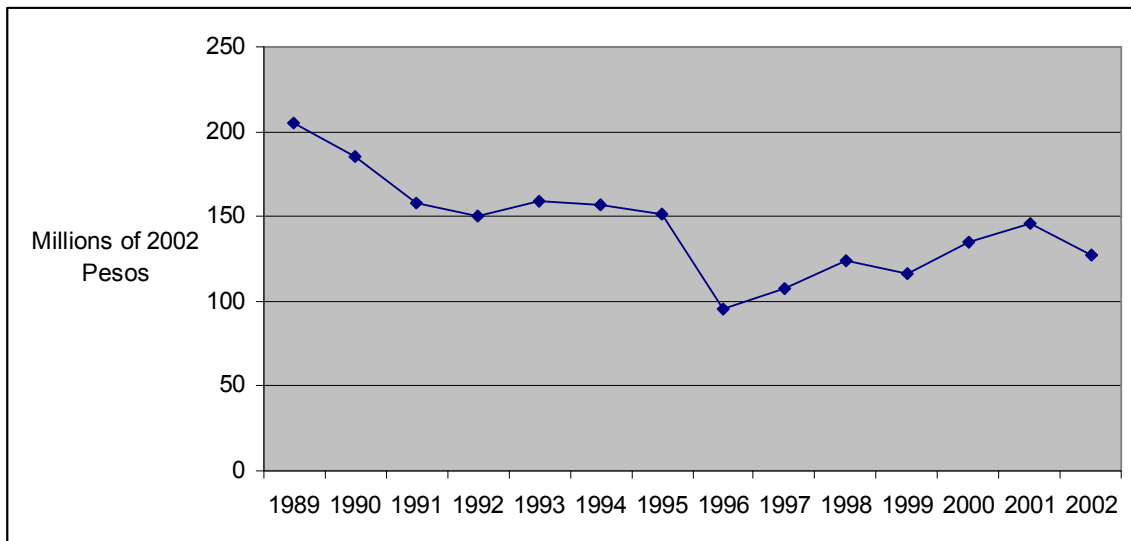
Source: INEGI, Sistema Municipal de Base de Datos.

The increase was particularly noticeable in the first three years when the slaughterhouse, stadium, and zoo began to produce revenue. The municipality also, like many of its Mexican and Latin American counterparts, has struggled to collect property taxes; fully 42% of residents did not pay any taxes on their property in 2003.[48] As a result, the boom in municipal finances that began in 1997 was largely the result of municipal transfers, especially Ramo 33, which had come to constitute over 40% of municipal revenue by 2002 (Figure 8.14).[49] Given this influx of new transfers, the city's finances more than tripled in *real terms* between 1997 and 2002 (Figure 8.12, above).[50]

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[48] *Plan de Desarrollo Municipal 2003-2006,* pp. 151-52.
[49] Ramo 33 has constituted over 40% of municipal revenue since 1999 (it was 35% in 1998). It has oscillated between 41% to 46% since 1999. Author's calculations based on the graphs presented.
[50] In absolute terms the increase in the municipal budget was almost five times, from 217 million to one billion pesos from 1997 to 2002. Author's calculations based on figures in INEGI, Sistema Municipal de Base de Datos.

Figure 8.14: Ramo 33 Funds Transferred to Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1998-2004

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
■ FORTAMUNDF	91	195	224	247	282	290	318
□ FAISM	30	45	57	68	54	57	61
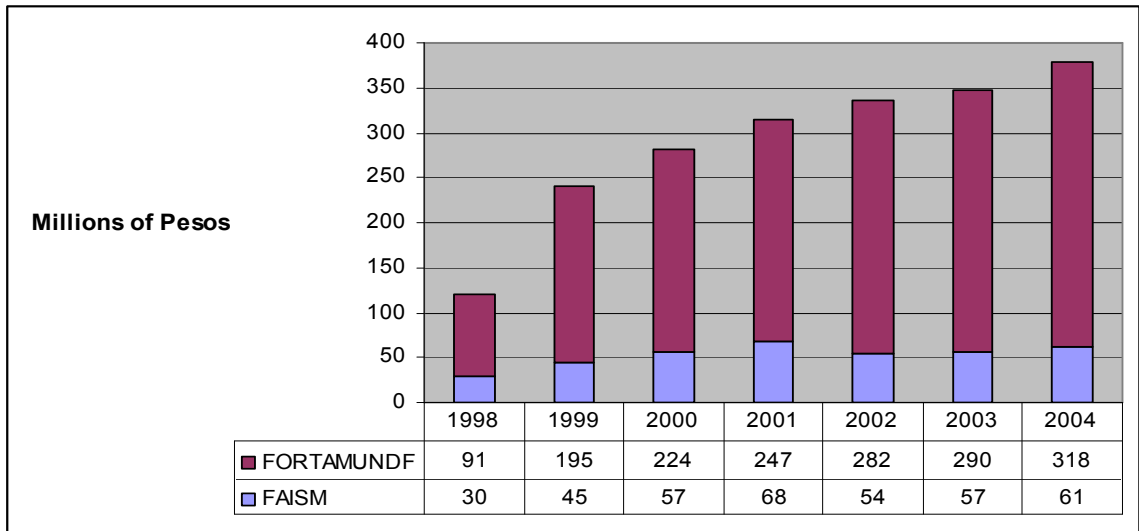
Source: INAFED, "Finanzas Públicas Locales," available at www.inafed.gob.mx.

The influx of federal revenues has meant a rapid growth in the municipality's ability to respond to pressing demands without negotiating *ad hoc* agreements with the state and federal governments. This has been particularly important in a period of democratic change, where the party in power at the municipal level has few allies in the state or federal government. A review of yearly reports by mayors of Neza in the 1990s reveals how much those governments depended on major investment funds granted by state and federal authorities in order to be able to achieve investments in infrastructure.[51] The formula-based federal transfers that went into effect after 1997 have allowed the city to operate with relative autonomy to set its own priorities. Since over three-quarters of these funds have been part of the FORTAMUNDF, which is essentially discretionary and can be used for any municipal government needs, the city was able to pay off a major water debt inherited from the PRI governments and to have considerable flexibility in setting spending priorities since then.

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[51] These annual reports include frequent expressions of gratitude to the federal and state governments for investments in roads, electricity, and water systems. Author's review of *Informes Municipales*.

As in other cities, however, federal transfers have two significant drawbacks. The first is that although transfers are no longer discretional at the federal level, state governments get to set the formula through which they are distributed to the municipalities. This means that discrepancies do exist in how the resources are distributed within states. Nonetheless, the requirement that they be strictly formula-based means that they have become increasingly equitable, though not perfectly so. Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl used to receive less than 40% of the state average for per capita federal transfers in 1989-1990; today it receives 82% of the state average and roughly around the same amount as most other large cities in the state (Figure 8.15).[52]

Figure 8.15: Average Federal Transfers to Municipalities in the State of Mexico, Showing the State Average, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, and Other Large Cities
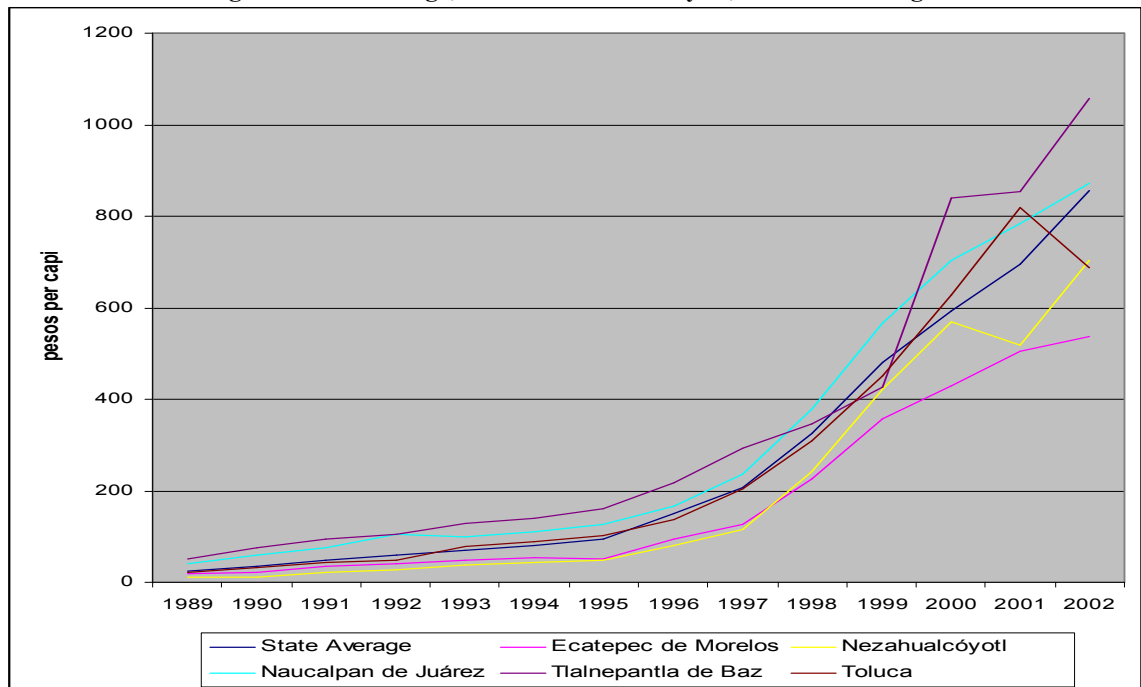
Source: All data from INEGI. Federal Transfers from Sistema Municipal de Base de Datos. Population figures for 1989-92 from *XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda 1990*. Population figures for 1993-97 from *Conteo de Población y Vivienda 1995*. Population figures for 1998-2002 from *XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda 2000*.

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[52] In the 1989-92 period, Neza received a quarter of the per capita transfers of Naucalpan and around a half of the per capita transfers to Toluca, the state capital. There remain only minimal differences today. The discrepancy started to change in 1998 with the creation of Ramo 33 and has improved significantly each year.

The second drawback of transfers is that the state government can decide on the timing of the distribution of funds. As in Tijuana (chapter 7), the state government has often delayed the transfer of funds, and city officials complain that this is often done to harass the municipal government and make it difficult for them to plan expenditures. In 2005, according to city officials the state government delayed the transfer of a new program for public security to most of the PRD-affiliated municipalities,.[53]

Nonetheless, the scorecard is still overwhelmingly positive for the municipal government of Neza in terms of autonomy and authority: they have increased their overall revenues by a significant amount and, despite the constrainst of the state forumulae and problems with timing, federal transfers have decreased the degree of control that state and federal governments once exercised over transfers to municipalities, which has been especially important for a government run by an opposition party. For a municipality that has few sources of local revenue, increased federal transfers have provided a new source of authority and the autonomy to make decisions.

8.5 The Impact on Democratic Governance (1996-2005)

System of Representation

Competitive Elections

Although the PRD has dominated politics in this period, elections have been

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[53] Interview, Martín Rosales, chief of staff to Mayor Luis Sánchez., May 19, 2005 Mayor Sánchez led a several day-protest in the state capital over this.

highly competitive (Figure 8.16). The PRD has won both remaining municipal elections (2000 and 2003) and most federal congressional seats; however, the PRI has maintained a strong base of support and continually threatens to return to power, while the PAN has shown surprising strength, even managing to win, on the coattails of Vicente Fox's presidential campaign, two of the municipality's five federal congressional seats in 2000. Indeed, since 2000, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl has been one of those unusual municipalities in Mexico where all three parties actually govern: the PRD in the municipal government, the PRI in the state government, and the PAN in the federal government. This is a far cry from the pre-1996 period where the PRI won every municipal election by more than 30 percentage points while controlling both the state and federal governments.

Figure 8.16: Municipal Elections in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1996 to 2003

	1996	2000	2003
PRD	32.6%	37.80%	50.70%
PRI	27.7%	26.30%	26.90%
PAN	22.6%	26.60%	15.00%
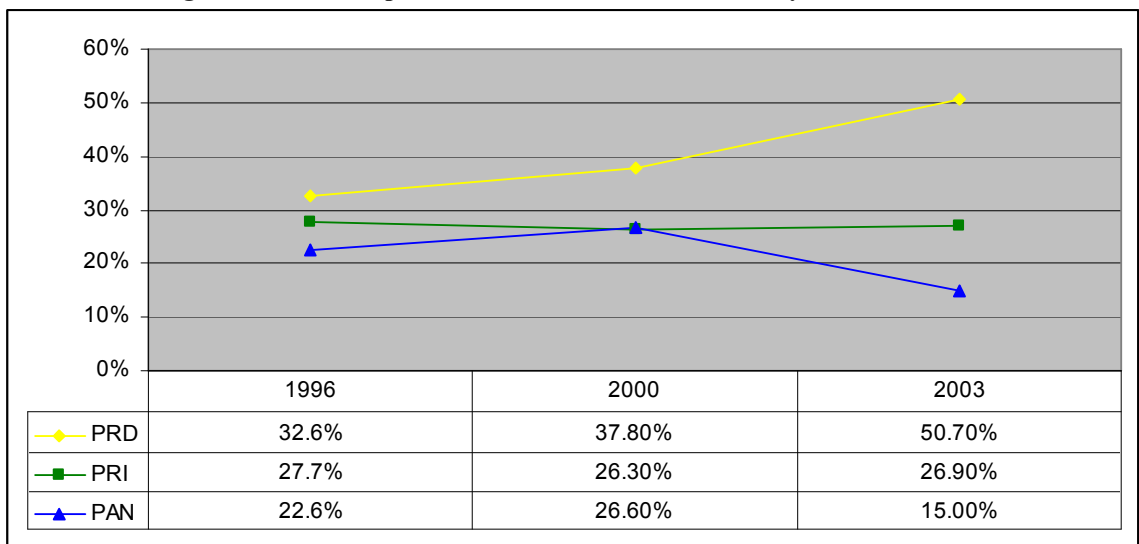
Note: A change in electoral laws in the State of Mexico shifted the electoral calendar ahead by several months. Instead of holding municipal elections in 1999 and 2002, as would have normally happened, the elections took place in 2000 and 2003. This meant that the term of the mayor in 1997-2000 was lengthened by several months. Note that the PRI went into the 2003 elections in a coalition with the Green Party (PVEM) and vote totals reflect the coalition's total.
Source: Compiled from statistics of the Instituto Electoral del Estado de México, election results for various years available at www.iiem.org.mx.

Considerable doubts remain about the impartiality of the state electoral institute,

and shortly before the 2005 gubernatorial elections all of the institute's counselors were forced to resign in the middle of a political scandal and the state congress chose new counselors. Traditionally the PRI has been seen by the opposition as maintaining a tight grip over the institute[54]; however, the forced resignations seem to have met with the satisfaction of all the major parties. Perhaps more importantly, regardless of any doubts that might be raised about the institute itself, all major parties (and quite a few smaller ones) have continued to win elections in the state. No opposition politicians in Neza seemed to believe that they had lost through fraud.[55]

The Mayor and Public Administration

The PRD carried out primary elections for its mayoral candidate in both the 2000 and 2003 elections, a first for any major party in the city. In 2000, this process involved an actual open primary for anyone with a voting card; in the second case, it involved a poll to determine the top two candidates followed by an actual election between those two candidates.[56] The existence of the primary has served to select candidates with a strong base of support and give citizens a voice in selecting who governs. As we will see below, the primaries also help determine who runs in the city council elections, which provides for greater citizen engagement in council elections than elsewhere in Mexico.

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[54] Interview, Rodrigo Iván Cortés, congressman and member of the PAN State Council in the state of Mexico, March 4, 2005.

[55] Interviews with four city council members of the Carlos Alberto Pérez Cuevas (PAN), April 22, 2005; Hector Pedroza (PRI), April 23, 2005; Cesar Pedro López Gómez (PRI), April 23, 2005; and Francisco Antio Ruíz López (PRI), April 23, 2005.

[56] In 1996, of course, there had been no primary since the PRD-affiliated organizations had little hope of winning. In 2000, MOVIDIG's leader, Hector Bautista, allied with the MLN, UGOCM, and smaller organizations, defeated UPREZ's leader, Felipe Rodríguez. In 2003, MOVIDIG was challenged by UPREZ, UGOCM, and the MLN in the first round. In the second round, MOVIDIG built a winning coalition with smaller groups while UPREZ won the support of the MLN and UGOCM. Interview, Felipe Rodríguez, May 20, 2005.

The first mayor of the PRD, Valentín González Bautista, had a very plural municipal administration. His party lacked qualified candidates for municipal office, so he relied on technically trained party members, and some former PRI officials, many of them from Mexico City. To create confidence, he named a comptroller from the PAN and a director of urban planning from the PRI. This approach created considerable conflict with other groups in the PRD, especially UPREZ and MLN (but also MOVIDIG), which felt excluded from power.[57]

The approach to filling government positions changed dramatically in the following two governments, which instead decided to consolidate a municipal administration made up primarily of PRD members. Hector Bautista, the leader of MOVIDIG and the second PRD mayor of Neza (2000-2003), complained that with González's administration:

> I didn't see any difference between a PRIista and a PRDista administration…when I arrived, it was important to give a different profile to the administration; the party members were going to be in the administration.[58]

Key positions went to the PRD and especially to members of MOVIDIG. This pattern repeated and intensified itself in the third PRD government of Luis Sánchez (2003-2006), in which almost all top-line positions went to members of MOVIDIG. Sánchez reserved only a few of the less strategic positions, such as ecology and public relations, for non-members of MOVIDIG, while making sure to install members of his group in the most sensitive or powerful positions (including secretary of the municipality and the directors

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[57] Duhau and Shteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," p. 197; Arzaluz, "Participación Ciudadana," pp. 302-04; confirmed in interviews with leaders of PRD-affiliated groups.
[58] Interview, Hector Baustista.

of government, finance, administration, and participation, among others).[59]

The City Council

Electoral laws in the State of Mexico, as in all states, assign a majority of seats in

the council to the winning party regardless of the vote total. This has led a significant

degree of overrepresentation of the PRD in many cases and an underrepresentation of the

PRI (see Table 8.2).   Despite this, divisions within the PRD make for a complicated and

occasionally competitive process of decision-making within the city council. During the

first administration, Mayor González often found himself at odds with UPREZ and MLN

and even, for a time, MOVIDIG, after he fired a member of MOVIDIG from his cabinet

in 1999. In the last two administrations, there has been less obvious division among the

PRD council members, but differences among groups are constantly being negotiated.[60]

According to former Mayor Hector Bautista, "Up to now, the PRD does not exist [as] a

militancy, a structure…they [sic] are the movements."[61]   The party that has benefited

most from this state of affairs is the PAN, which has established itself as an erstwhile ally

of the mayor on key policy matters. This was true during the first PRD administration

and continues to be so today.[62] The PRI has had a more difficult relationship with the

PRD, and a much more marginal impact on policy. According to one PRI council

[59] Interview with Cirilo Revilla, director of administration and a historical leader of MOVIDIG. Confirmed in interviews with other municipal officials and current and former city council members. The one notable exception was public security, however, where a director was named from a political group within the national PRD (who did not live in Neza or participate in any of the internal groups in the party within the city).

[60] Based on interviews with seven current and former members of the city council of all three parties: Alliet Bautista (PRD), April 22, 2005; Antonio Zanabría (PRD), April 22, 2005; Felipe Rodríguez (PRD), May 20, 2005; Carlos Alberto Pérez Cuevas (PAN), April 22, 2005;
Hector Pedroza (PRI), April 23, 2005; Cesar Pedro López Gómez (PRI), April 23, 2005; and Francisco Antonio Ruíz López (PRI), April 23, 2005.

[61] Interview with Hector Baustista.

[62] Interview with Carlos Pérez Cuevas, coordinador of the PAN in the city council (2003-2006), and Duhau and Schteingart, "El primer gobierno perredista," pp. 190-91.

member, "We have been able to have influence, but very little."[63] Nonetheless, the PRI

has often has been willing to negotiate support of major PRD initiatives in return for

economic support of initiatives that benefit its base.   Moreover, the PRI has been able to

use its linkages to the state government, still in control of the PRI, to negotiate resources

for projects that benefit its base.[64]

Table 8.2: Overrepresentation in the City Council of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, 1996-2005

Election Year	Mayor	Party	Vote	Council Seats*	% Council	Over/under-representation
1996	Valentín González	PRD	27.7%	13	59.1%	+31.4%
		PRI	32.6%	4	18.2%	-14.4%
		PAN	22.6%	4	18.2%	-4.4%
2000	Hector Bautista	PRD	37.8%	13	59.1%	+21.3%
		PRI	26.3%	4	18.2%	-8.1%
		PAN	26.6%	4	18.2%	-8.4%
2003	Luis Sánchez	PRD	50.7%	13	59.1%	+8.4%
		PRI/PVEM	26.9%	6	27.3%	+0.4%
		PAN	15.0%	3	13.6%	-1.4%

Note: We have included both síndicos and regidores in this number, but not the mayor. Though an argument could be made that the mayor is technically the "first among equals" in the council, the reality of municipal organization suggests otherwise. There was also a Green Party (PVEM) member in each period 1996-2000 and 2000-2003.
Source: Instituto Electoral del Estado de México, www.ieem.org.mx.

The PRD has used its open primary system, in part, to assign council seats among

its key factions: MOVIDIG, UPREZ, UGOCM, and MLN. According to the results of

the primaries, the various factions negotiate the number of positions each receives within

the party's slate for the city council. [65]   In some cases, the major factions in the PRD

have used the quotas they have negotiated in the party list to give spaces to small

affiliated factions.[66]   In some cases, the local factions have had to cede spaces to major

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[63] Interviews with members of the city council.

[64] Interviews with members of the city council.

[65] However, the system is entirely discretional. For example, the UPREZ, which finished second in the 2003 primary, ended up without seats in the council. Interview, Felipe Rodríguez.

[66] This practice is particularly true of MOVIDIG, which gave four seats to small factions in 2003, and to UPREZ, which gave two of its four seats to smaller factions in 2000.

groups in the national PRD, as well, as part of broader political negotiations. Since the major PRD-affiliated groups that originated in Neza have also become the most important political groups within the PRD in the State of Mexico, negotiations for spaces in the council often reflect alliances at the state and national level. As a result, the effect of the primaries on the composition of the city council has become increasingly diluted by multiple levels of political negotiation among party factions. Whatever effect primaries might have on making the party list system more representative is thus largely lost.

The operation of the city council is also far less effective than even its fragmented composition would suggest. The council primarily performs the function of bringing citizen demands to the municipal administration, the real decision maker, and that only in a highly sectarian way. The council is not a venue for rational scrutiny of proposals and forging an agreement on policy. Although commissions exist to cover most of the major responsibilities of the council, they rarely, if ever, meet and commission leadership seems to be largely used to obtain specific benefits for particular a social group or sector of a party.[67] There was significant activity at the outset of the first PRD government, when the council debated and created regulations and even drafted and passed their own internal council regulations[68] However, activity has slowed considerably since that time, despite occasional issues that generate debate (such as the approval during the second administration of a land grant to a private university to set up installations in the city).

Perhaps most telling is how the mayor and municipal administration see the city council and how the council members see themselves. In the 2003 elections, MOVIDIG

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[67] Commissions in theory consist of a president, a secretary, and two to four other members. This paragraph is based on interviews with the current and former council members cited earlier except where noted.
[68] Apparently suggested by a councilmember of the PAN and based on the council regulation of Tijuana (Arzaluz, "Participación Ciudadana, p. 356 and 356f).

chose not to run a single candidate for the council and ceded all of the seats they had

negotiated to other small groups close to them. At the same time, they retained almost all

of the leading administrative leadership positions for themselves. MOVIDIG's leaders

consider the administrative positions far more significant than the council. According to

one historic leader of MOVIDIG who serves in the administration, "The city council sets

a general outline of what to do (*lineamientos generales*), but it is not involved in

operations."[69] One PRI council member noted that "By tradition, the city council seats

have been centers for receiving demands (*centros de gestión*)." The PAN's council

coordinator observed that "People see us just as people to bring concrete demands to, not

as the government" (*"la gente nos ve como meros gestores, no como gobierno"*). Several

PRD council members recognized that they primarily responded to citizen concerns, but

that these were almost always concrete needs brought to them by neighborhood leaders

affiliated with their own group within the party. Major policy issues, they admitted, were

usually negotiated among the leaders of the factions before they were brought to the

council. In sum, the council served primarily as a way for PRD factions and opposition

parties to maintain a quota of influence within the government and to transmit specific

needs of their members to the administration.

Transparency

        Since 1996, the quality of municipal information made public has increased in

both quality and quantity. However, there have been ups and downs in this process, and

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[69] Interview, Cirilo Revilla.

citizens still have limited access to knowing how decisions are made by their elected authorities. The city's three-year development plans have become good sources of data on city finances and priorities, especially the 2000-2003 municipal development plan, which stands out of the extent of information included. The mayor's annual report varies in terms of completeness, but this too has become a useful reference point with considerable data. From 1997 to 2000, the municipality produced a bulletin called *Agenda 33* which published extensive data on the use of Ramo 33 funds (see next section). However, by 2000 the city had also stopped publishing the *Agenda 33,* and these figures have not since appeared in public municipal documents.[70]

In 2004, a maverick council member from the PRD and the council's PAN leader succeeded in passing legislation to create a municipal transparency law.[71] They used the fact that transparency was receiving a great deal of attention in the national press to press the issue in the council. Since citizens in Neza receive most of their information from the national press, based in neighboring Mexico City, they had a great deal of exposure to the debates about transparency taking place at the time. These two council members included a requirement in the legislation to force the municipality to reveal not only salaries but also bonuses and other forms of remuneration that high and mid-level public officials receive. Since mayors often use bonuses to reward supporters, buy off opposition votes, and hide funds for political campaigns, this requirement could represent a significant change in the practices of governance in the city.[72] At the time of this writing, the municipality had just implemented the law, and it is too early to know what

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[70] As far as this author could determine at least. They are not in the annual municipal report or on the webpage and no city council member had seen these figures published either.
[71] Interviews with Council Members Alliett Bautista (PRD) and Carlos Alberto Pérez Cuevas (PAN).

[72] Interview, Pérez Cuevas (PAN)/

impact it will have on governance. However, it is worth noting that the municipality now

publishes on its website all salary and bonus information for high and mid-level officials;

all major legislation and regulations; and an inventory of the documents in each

municipal office that can be requested by citizens. One of the council members who had

proposed the legislation noted that the municipality had done a far more complete job of

implementing the law than she ever expected.[73] With this transparency law, Ciudad

Nezahualcóyotl has become one of the few municipalities to have its own local

transparency law and it is the only one of the major cities in the state that has such

extensive information available on its website.[74] However, the law had just gone into

effect as of this writing and it is as yet too early to evaluate its effectiveness in practice.

The municipality performs less well in terms of making its ongoing actions

transparent. Despite the requirement that city council meetings be public and held at

least once a week, they appear to be held sporadically. They are neither announced ahead

of time nor truly public. As one councilmember noted, "the meetings are public, but the

meeting room is small and only a few people close to the council members come."[75] The

city has several small papers that report on the outcome of councils meetings, but rarely

are reporters inside to cover the debates in council meetings themselves.

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[73] Bautista, re-interview, September 3, 2005.
[74] Based on a review of the websites of the other major cities in the state in August 2005: Naucalpan,
Tlanepantla, Ecatepec, and Toluca.
[75] Interview, Alliett Bautista, Council Member (PRD).

Opportunities for Participation

The Municipal Development Council (CODEMUN)

One of the innovations of the first PRD administration was to activate the

Community Development Council, known as CODEMUN (Consejo para el Desarrollo

Municipal), a body that would oversee the funds supplied by Ramo 33 through the

Municipal Social Infrastructure Fund (FISM). The CODEMUN is a structure similar to

the COPLADEM (discussed in chapter 7 for Tijuana), which has as its central function to

give citizens a voice in deciding how to use funds supplied by FISM and monitor

implementation. Under federal law, every municipality is required to have a

CODEMUN or COPLADEM to receive FISM; however, in most cases, they are fictional

creatures, stacked with beneficiaries of programs or friends of the mayor to ensure strict

government control.[76] In the case of Neza, however, the first PRD administration

decided to hold open elections in public assemblies for twenty-five Neighborhood Social

Development Councils (five in each of the five federal electoral districts). Each

neighborhood council would then send a representative to the CODEMUN, which would

also include a representative of the city council, the director of social development, as

technical secretary, and the mayor as president.

It is unclear how democratic the election of the first CODEMUN was; however,

the result was an intense, public, and often participatory process that lasted throughout

the first PRD administration, often to the frustration of other elected authorities. The

election of neighborhood counselors took place with little previous notice, which ensured

that the PRD won 22 of the 25 councils and the PAN the remaining three, leaving the PRI

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[76] See chapters 5 and 6.

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out entirely.[77] Each of the PRD counselors had previous organizational experience and belonged to one of the PRD's main political factions (see Table 8.3).

However, this body proved in some cases to be more independent than even the city council and far more visible in its public profile. The CODEMUN asserted its right to decide on which infrastructure projects would get FISM funds from the municipality and, although the city council had legal authority in this matter, the CODEMUN succeeded in establishing *de facto* decision-making authority to do so. The body met once a week in highly public sessions, that were frequently well-attended by social organizations that had an interest in the outcome of infrastructure decisions. Equally significantly, the CODEMUN began publishing its own bulletin, *Agenda 33,* which reported on infrastructure investments with detailed information about decisions, expenditures, and completion dates. According to one prominent political leader, the CODEMUN "was the "communications system" between the city government and the citizens."[78] Nonetheless, like the City Council, the CODEMUN also made decisions based on bargaining among factions within the PRD.[79] It was far more public than the council, but its decision-making process was not terribly different. Nonetheless, it served the purpose of making decisions on community investments a highly public exercise that citizens could follow closely.

The experiment was not without detractors. Many political leaders felt that the CODEMUN was usurping the authority of the city council. Although the same

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[77] This is noted by Arzaluz, "Participación Ciudadana," p. 346, and confirmed by an interview with a former member of the CODEMUN. The rest of the paragraph is based on Arzaluz, "Participación Ciudadana," pp. 345-71, except as noted.

[78] The original quote is: "*Era el correo entre el ayuntamiento y los ciudadanos.*" Interview with Felipe Rodríguez, historical leader of UPREZ and city council member (2000-2003).

[79] Interviews, Martín Becerra, March 4, 2005, and Arelio Acero, November 18, 2005.

CODEMUN remained in functions, officially, through the second PRD administration, it quickly lost authority under the government of Hector Bautista. According to Bautista, the CODEMUN and the Citizen Participation Councils (described below) "became an opposition…it was very hard to work with them…I went around them; I went to the City Council." By 2002, the CODEMUN had stopped meeting, but it had lost authority long before that.

In August 2004, the administration of Mayor Luis Sánchez decided to revive the CODEMUN, but they took care to keep it firmly under their control and to share the benefits widely enough that every political faction and party would be happy. In a late night meeting, the mayor gave each faction a quota of seats to fill in the new CODEMUN (see Table 8.3).[80] The factions were happy to oblige and named their representatives. The PRI took seats related to areas where they felt they were weak and had no other representation. UPREZ was excluded, but the other major PRD factions joined, as did the PAN. In a few cases, sham elections were held to which only those whose faction was slated to win showed up; in other cases, no assemblies were held and attendance lists were fabricated. The sharing of the wealth meant that every party and faction could guarantee public works projects for their members and clients. A few of the city council members were embarrassed by the lack of transparency, but all recognized that it was a solution that kept everyone happy.

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[80] This information is based on interviews with four city council members and several administration officials.

Table 8.3: Party and Group Affiliation of Members of the CODEMUN, 1998-2004

Party	PRI	PAN	PRD
1998-2002	0	3	22
2004-	6	4	11

Note: The CODEMUN had 25 members in the first period and only 21 in the second. In the first period, MOVIDIG had 4 seats, UPREZ 5, MLN 4, UGOCM 5, and other groups 5.
Source: Arzaluz, "Participación Ciudadana," p. 351, for 1998-2002; for 2004 period, interviews with current and former city council members and administration officials.

The Citizen Participation Councils (Copacis)

Another ambitious experiment in citizen participation that was started under the first PRD government also would turn out to be less participatory than its name might suggest, yet still would open up significant spaces that citizens used to organize themselves, bring their needs to the city government, and create new channels of influence at the margin of old political leaderships. The Citizen Participation Councils, known as Copacis (*Consejos de Participación Ciudadana*), have existed for well over a decade and are required to exist under the state constitution. Under PRI governments, the presidents of the Copacis were selected by the PRI's neighborhood organizations (*seccionales*) or party leaders and were charged with providing intermediation between neighborhood concerns and the municipality.[81]

In April 1997, however, the new PRD government held open elections in 96 small districts for Citizen Participation Councils, made up of five members, including a president, secretary, and three counselors, elected on a single list. In many cases, the PRD tried to reproduce the alliance of factions that had brought it to power a few months earlier and negotiated lists that included several factions. In other cases, the PRD divided with several factions competing for seats. In most cases, the PRI and, occasionally, the

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[81] Based on interviews with three neighborhood leaders who participated in Copacis before 1997.

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PAN also jumped into the elections.[82] Only a fraction of registered voters participated:

approximately 25,000 voters or 8% of the 312,724 citizens who had voted in the mayoral

elections a few months before; however, this was still a significant number for a first-

time vote for neighborhood authorities that had few clear functions (see Table 8.4).

Table 8.4: Citizen Participation Council Elections, 1997 and 2003

	Total vote	1 list	2 lists	3 lists	4 lists	5 lists	6 lists	7 lists	N.D.
1997	25,000 (estimate)	19%	25%	29%	8%	5%	3%	3%	8%
2000	33,000 (estimate)	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
2003	66,248 (actual)	11%	30%	41%	7%	4%	4%	4%	N/A

Source: Source: Salazar, "La Participación Ciudadana Organizada" and Salazar, "Diagnóstico de los
Consejos Electos 2003-2006; and internal municipal documents. Vote total for 2003 cited in *Plan
Municipal de Desarrollo 2003-2006,* p. 132. 2000 estimate based on the assertion in the Plan that the 2003
election represented a 98% increase in voting. All other figures are estimates based on a sample of Citizen
Participation Councils (73 of 96 for 1997 and 27 of 79 for 2003), drawn from internal documents of the
municipality.

Although parties were officially not allowed to get involved in what was supposed

to be an election for non-partisan citizen counselors, only a handful of lists won that were

not backed by a faction or candidate affiliated with one of the parties. In the end, the

PRD won 64% and the PRI 27% of the councils for which data were available (see Table

8.5). The 2000 Copacis elections showed only a slight increase in participation, but the

2003 elections drew over 66,000 voters, roughly 22% of those who had voted in the

mayoral election, with significant competition in most districts (which had now been

reduced to 79; see Table 8.4). In 2003, the PRD would win 57% of the councils,

compared to 39% for the PRI (Table 8.5).[83] As in the city council and the CODEMUN,

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[82] Almost three quarters of the districts (73%) surveyed in one internal municipal study revealed
competition among two or more lists, and almost half (48%) had more than two lists competing.Author's
calculations, based on data on the 1997 Copaci election is drawn from Gerardo Salazar, "La Participación
Ciudadana Organizada," unpublished manuscript. Salazar, an anthropologist, would become the municipal
government's Coordinator of Citizen Participation shortly after the elections in 1997.
[83] However, a split in one of the PRI's factions would lead four of the councils to switch from the PRI to
the PRD a few months after the election. Interview, Gerardo Salazar, deputy coordinator of the municipal

disputes among the factions within the PRD dominated the Copaci elections as well

(Table 8.6).

Table 8.5: Citizen Participation Council Elections, 1997 and 2003, Winning Lists by Party

	Sample	PRD	PRI	PAN	Independent	No Data
1997	73 (76%)	47 (64%)	19 (26%)	0 (0%)	5 (7%)	2 (3%)
2003	79 100%)	45 (57%)	31 (39%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)

Note: Of these, 12 correspond to councils organized by PRI mayoral candidate Antonio Cabello, a former member of MOVIDIG. Soon after the election, four of them split from the PRI after one of Cabello's lead organizers formed a new PRD-affiliated group, MAS, and took four of the Copacis with him to the PRD.
Source: Salazar, "La Participación Ciudadana Organizada" and Salazar, "Diagnóstico de los Consejos Electos 2003-2006. I could not obtain data for the 2000 Copaci elections.

Table 8.6: Citizen Participation Council Elections, 1997 and 2003, Winning PRD Lists by Faction

	MOVIDIG	UPREZ	MLN	UGOCM	Others	Independent
1997	13 (28%)	8 (17%)	2 (4%)	6 (13%)	7 (15%)*	11 (23%)
2003	11 (24%)	4 (9%)	3 (7%)	7 (16%)	9 (20%)**	11 (24%)

* Councils close to particular political leaders who had separated from the major groups.
** Includes smaller groups, such as MOPAVI, UBADEZ, M4, MAX, UGOCM Histórico, and Gente en Movimiento.
Source: Salazar, "La Participación Ciudadana Organizada" and Salazar, "Diagnóstico de los Consejos Electos 2003-2006." Both are unpublished documents cited with the author's permission.

Extensive interviews with fourteen neighborhood leaders, including eleven

Copaci presidents (see Table 8.7), along with interviews with key municipal officials and

council members and a review of unpublished internal documents of the municipality

about these organizations, confirm that the Copacis are largely partisan organizations,

despite the legal framework that forbids parties from getting involved in Copaci

elections. Indeed, slates in Copacis elections are usually put together in complex

negotiations among the key political factions in the PRD and PRI or used by smaller

factions to show their strength to the large organizations. One leader of a small faction in

the PRD noted, for example, that having a Copaci "reaffirms the political space that I

have" and allows him to negotiate other demands with the municipality. A PRI Copaci

leader noted that serving on a Copaci is a "platform to a political career." Another

office of Citizen Participation.

Copaci leader stated that "The councils are tied to political parties, they work with them, through them." Yet another stated that "here one cannot talk really about a Copaci made up of citizens—all are politicians."[84]

Table 8.7: Neighborhood Interviews Conducted, 2005

Neighborhood	Sector	Copaci Leaders Interviewed	Other Leaders Interviewed	PRD Leaders	PRI Leaders
Benito Juarez	Center	3	1	1	3
Metropolitana	Center	3	0	0	3
Sol	Center	1	1	1	1
Juárez Pantitlan	Center	1	0	1	0
Virgincitas	Center	1	0	0	1
Maravillas	Center	0	1	1	0
Amplicación Revolución	Center	1	0	1	0
Reforma	Center	1	0	0	1
Perla	South	1	0	1	0
Campestre Guadalupana	North	1	0	1	0
Total		**11**	**3**	**7**	**9**

Note: All neighborhoods have roughly comparable socio-economic levels and have received land titles since the 1980s or before. The three neighborhood leaders who did not belong to Copacis served in other positions in PRD and PRI-affiliated organizations.

This view is echoed by municipal officials who see the Copacis primarily as political organizations where they measure the strength of different factions with the parties. Municipal documents about the Copacis invariably refer to them by their party affiliation and the specific faction they belong to within the party. Hector Bautista, the former mayor, observed that the Copacis "come out of political agreements; in many cases, they do not represent citizens…they are spaces of [political] projection."[85] The municipal director of public security stated that he saw little reason to work systematically with the councils because they were "a type of political expression…in many cases they have a political tilt."[86] MOVIDIG leader and municipal official Cirilo Revilla similarly commented that "we do that Copaci thing because it is a legal

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[84] Interviews, four Copaci leaders, see Table 8.7.
[85] Inteview, Hector Bautista, congressman and former mayor (2000-2003).
[86] Interview, Jorge Amador, director of public security.

requirement…the real leaderships are different."[87]

This would seem to be damning evidence that the Copacis are mere manifestations of political competition without a role in linking citizens deliberatively to each other or to the government. However, the Copacis do actually appear to play an important role as official intermediaries between neighborhood concerns and local leaders. The kinds of demands Copacis deal with are the bread and butter ones of neighborhood affairs: broken water pipes, flooding, insecurity, permits for vendors and for festivals, broken street lights, and the paving of roads. They are the everyday issues that affect people's quality of life. Without an exception—and regardless of party affiliation—every neighborhood leader interviewed saw the Copacis as an important avenue for resolving community concerns by enabling people to get their demands across to those who make the decisions. They recognized that these organizations existed alongside traditional forms of mediation within the different factions of the PRD and the PRI.

Copaci leaders recognized that municipal officials had little interest in the fate of the citizen participation councils. However, they also noted that the Copacis were elected community authorities and, therefore, possessed some democratic legitimacy. One PRI Copaci president stated, after noting the city government's lack of interest in the Copacis, "I am the government." He noted that even though municipal officials often did not want to pay attention to the Copacis, they had to. As he and others observed, the Copacis have official stationery with the seal of the municipality, which they can use to present demands to the corresponding agency of the municipal government, and the agencies are required by law to give them a response. This particular leader said that 80% of the

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[87] Interview, Cirilo Revilla, municipal director of administration.

demands he presented had been met. Other Copaci leaders of both PRI and PRD concurred with this interpretation. They felt that they were elected neighborhood authorities and municipal officials were obliged to respond to listen to them. Another PRI council president noted that the council's development "depends on how innovative a person is," though she added "the government plays with groups of councilors that are of their party." Based on the interviews, it became clear that the government tended to listen more to PRD-affiliated Copacis, and these were generally effective because they could leverage support from leaders of their party faction in the council or in the administration, However, even the PRI councilors felt that they were effective and able to get a hearing on most issues.

Several neighborhood leaders noted that the Copacis had been more active in the first period of PRD government, under Valentín González Bautista (1997-2001), when municipal officials met frequently with the councils and conducted a series of health campaigns with them. During this period, there was also a director of citizen participation in the municipal government who reported directly to the mayor. Former Mayor González Bautista, now a member of Congress, noted that "participation was the basis of everything we did."[88] His commitment to participation may have come in part out of his conviction as a social leader. However, it also seemed to be the result of his tenuous position in the mayor's office; González Bautista was elected mayor by a narrow margin from a small faction in the PRD and needed to construct a support base by mobilizing citizens. Much as early Tijuana mayors of the PAN felt they needed to mobilize citizens through participatory channels to gain legitimacy and establish a support base, the first PRD mayor in Neza knew he needed to reach out to citizens in

[88] Interview, Valentín González Bautista, October 4, 2005.

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creative ways if he were to be successful. After the next two PRD mayors won election by larger margins, however, they gradually abandoned the emphasis on the Copacis. The citizen participation director began to report to the municipal secretary (the number two official) instead of directly to the mayor and the municipality stopped meeting regularly with the Copacis. These citizen participation councils survived because the law afforded them a degree of legitimacy and many of the leaders were tenacious in making sure the government listened to them.

Despite the success of the Copacis in establishing themselves as official interlocutors between citizens and the government, they were by no means alone in this role. Indeed, as the interviews with city leaders indicate, the most significant grassroots leaderships were those tied directly to the factions within the PRD and the PRI. Leaders of MOVIDIG and UPREZ, in the PRD, and the CNOP (popular sector) of the PRI indicated in interviews that they maintained important representatives in each neighborhood who were charged with providing links between citizen concerns and the faction leaders, who in turn would bring these concerns to the attention of the government.[89] In many cases, the factions actually have offices within neighborhoods where they attend to the demands of citizens; in other cases, the designated faction leaders attend to citizens in their place of business or their home (which usually has a sign noting the party faction they represent). On balance, the predominant channels for intermediation between citizens and the government remained the informal structures of these party factions, tied each to a historical leader of a social movement in the city. However, the Copacis have gained a small foothold as an institutionalized channel for

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[89] Interview with Felipe Rodríguez (UPREZ/PRD); Hector Bautista and Cirilo Revilla (MOVIDIG/PRD); and Hector Pedroza and Luis Pérez Maldonado (CNOP/PRI).

intermediation as well.

For the most part, little public deliberation appears to take place within these participatory channels. However, looks may be deceiving in some cases. The PRD factions in particular emerged out of histories of social struggle by autonomous organizations. Although historical leaders seem to maintain tight control over these organizations, there are also legitimate processes of debate and negotiation that go on at the neighborhood level among average citizens who belong to these organizations. Leaders of the factions appear to maintain highly centralized control over their groups, but they also can do so because they listen to demands from the grassroots within their factions. It is possible that some neighborhoods with a history of collective action have local deliberative processes and this possibility merits further research. However, even if neighborhood-level processes are, in some cases, deliberative, they have to make demands through a political structure that requires bargaining through intermediaries within political factions. Indeed, the line between community deliberation, on one hand, and the strategic bargaining of leaders within a competitive political system, on the other hand, may at times be hard to draw. Copaci leaders and local leaders of factions may at times represent positions that emerge from processes of collective debate within their neighborhoods, but to have any influence on public decisions they have to act within a system that requires them to bargain through channels filled with complex processes of interest intermediation. Deliberation and negotiation are by no means exclusive possibilities. What is clear, however, is that the political system itself does not encourage broad public deliberation of public matters. Any deliberation that takes places is within neighborhoods or smaller groups and can only be projected into the political terrain

through strategic bargaining.

8.6 Conclusions

The victory of the PRD in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl coincided with a significant growth in the city's authority and autonomy and also contributed to this change. The advent of significant federal transfers multiplied the income of a municipality that had subsisted on debt and infusions of resources from the state government. After 1997, the PRD administrations were able to pay off their inherited debt and embark on ambitious initiatives to invest in the city's development. Moreover, by closing gaps in the municipal treasury, where previous administrations had siphoned off city funds for partisan purposes, they increased the municipality's locally generated revenue. However, these achievements also faced serious limitations. With most of its residents working outside the city limits or in informal jobs within the city, the municipality lacked a tax base of its own that it could tap. Therefore, while the municipal government grew significantly, it still remained far below other large cities in Mexico in the level of municipal expenditure *per capita*.

As decentralization took roots in Neza, the city was embarking on an ambitious experiment in democratic governance. For the first time in the history of Mexico, a coalition of social movements was taking over a large city government and it was committed to creating a new model of participatory democracy. Some of these efforts were—at least initially—a clear break with the past. The city council rose in importance

as disputes among factions created real strategic debates in the council for the first time. The municipality released a quality of public information far superior to any published before. And the government empowered the municipal development council, an elected citizens' organization, to make decisions on the use of some investment funds and charged dozens of Citizen Participation Councils (Copacis) to serve as the official conduit for citizen demands to the municipality.

The reality of these changes was far less ambitious than it seemed at first, however. The city council soon receded from view as the different factions within the PRD reached elite pacts on how to govern together; party leaders negotiated a backroom deal to appoint their followers to the Municipal Development Council in lieu of an open election; and information that had once been published openly on municipal investments soon disappeared from public view. Real decision-making power came to be held by the leaders of the party factions within the PRD, who negotiated strategically most major issues before they ever reached the city council or the development council. The local leaders of the PRI and the PAN maintained a quota of influence by deploying their relationships with the state and federal governments, respectively, which were in the hands of their parties. The Copacis, which had been an ambitious experiment in citizen participation, soon lost their visibility and had to compete with informal power brokers of the different party factions who reclaimed their role as the principal intermediaries between citizens and the municipality. Given the significant deficits in public services and the uneven access to the legal system, political brokers played a vital role in helping citizens make their rights effective. Few if any autonomous organizations existed and almost all collective efforts in the city were tied, in one way or another, to a faction

within one of the parties. By 2005, the landscape of Neza was one of inter-organizational bargaining among the three main political parties and among factions within them.

Although this style of minimalist democratic governance fell far short of the democratic ideal espoused in 1997, it was far ahead of the authoritarian, top-down politics that had dominated the city before the PRD's arrival. Citizens had highly competitive elections and a market of political intermediaries. They had recourse to Copaci leaders, council members, neighborhood representatives of the different PRD factions, section presidents in the PRI's grassroots structure, and dozens of other intermediaries who all made some claim on political influence and provided ways in which interests and demands got articulated and processed. Citizens had few institutional channels for influencing public decisions, no autonomous spaces outside the parties, and few opportunities for deliberating collectively, but they were not hostage to a single group or set of groups with exclusive control over political power. And while the leaders of the party factions had final say in most policy decisions, they had to take into account their own members as well as the range of other actors who legitimately represented voices in the city—smaller PRD-affiliated organizations, PRI-affiliated organizations, the PAN, and even the Copacis. A dense web of social and political interactions, mediated by hundreds of community brokers representing different parties and party factions, tied leaders and constituents together in a sort of complicity of governance. It hardly met the criteria for good and deep democratic governance laid out in the strong normative ideal of this project, but it was a significant advance, nonetheless. Indeed, the links that social organizations maintained to the different political parties helped preserve their influence in the political process and gave citizens an ongoing voice in public decision-making,

even if indirectly.

Epilogue

In June 2005, the State of Mexico held gubernatorial elections. The PRI won almost half the votes in the state and more than double the votes of the PRD's candidate for governor, a little known businesswoman name Yeidkol Polevnsky. The PRD won only one municipality in the entire state and did so by a large margin: Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl. The PRD's method of governance might not be deeply democratic, but it appeared to have won the sympathy of the voters nonetheless—at least for the time being. And there was still that sense of pride in Neza too—the pride that was still associated with having thrown out the once all-powerful PRI. The voters were not about to let the PRI back in again—at least not quite yet.

Section IV

Conclusions

Chapter 9
The Paradox of Local Empowerment

9.1 Findings: The Paradox of Local Empowerment

Mexican municipalities have increasingly assumed new functions, powers, and resources, and gained a decision-making margin to use these. Decentralization reforms have not been as ambitious in Mexico as in several other countries in Latin America, but there is no question that they have empowered municipalities in ways that were almost unimaginable two decades ago. Municipalities have passed from being mere stepping stones for political advancement to important government entities with both policy scope and political influence.

Nonetheless, the form of democratic governance that has emerged in these newly empowered municipalities is often permeated by authoritarian institutions and practices that have carried over from the period of one party-dominant rule. Although municipalities now have competitive elections, elections alone have proved unable to produce local governance that makes public authorities responsive and accountable to citizens or enables citizens to become engaged in public affairs. Indeed, because of the way local representative systems are structured, elected municipal officials remain primarily responsive and accountable to party leaders rather than to citizens, and they have few incentives to pursue initiatives that would make public decisions more transparent or to create institutional channels for citizen participation.

Moreover, the clientelistic practices that were once the basis of Mexico's political system remain a powerful legacy that shape political practices today. These practices

create a form of "indirect citizenship" in which individuals can enforce their rights or be heard by public authorities only by using political intermediaries. This phenomenon is not merely a case of authoritarian leaders surviving at local levels after they are thrust out of power nationally, but rather the permeation of authoritarian practices among the range of political actors, old and new, that contest power in Mexico, within the context of a political system that creates few incentives for responsiveness and accountability. The fragmentation of civil society and the weak enforcement of citizenship rights conspire to sustain these authoritarian practices even with the advent of political competition. The paradox of local empowerment is that simply empowering local governments does not necessarily empower citizens locally. In other words, bringing the government closer to citizens does not necessarily bring citizens closer to government.

Nonetheless, the three cases explored in this study show that decentralization also produces different effects in different contexts of state-society relations. Where social organizations are weak and largely controlled by a single political party, decentralization tends to reinforce existing power structures. Where strong social organizations exist prior to decentralization, local empowerment has a greater chance of producing better forms of democratic governance. However, given the party-centric nature of Mexican municipalities and the limited degree of integration among social organizations, it appears that social organizations with ties to political parties actually may perform better at linking citizens to public decision-making than loose organizations with few ties to parties or among themselves.

Decentralization

Decentralization to municipal governments is proceeding gradually but continuously. In just over two decades municipalities have gone from being mere political appendages of higher levels of government to having their own significant areas of authority and autonomy. They have come a long way since the early 1990s when Tijuana launched the first municipal lawsuit against the federal government over jurisdictional issues. Since then, a constitutional change has determined that municipalities have their own functions and powers that cannot be revoked or overruled by other levels of government. Moreover, municipal expenditures have risen from around one percent of total public expenditures in 1982 to over seven percent today. This percentage is far below the participation of municipalities in public expenditures in several other countries in Latin America, including Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, and Guatemala, but it is significantly higher than only a few years earlier in Mexico and roughly comparable to a few other countries, such as Chile and Argentina.[1]

However, significant challenges remain. The ability of state governments to overrule municipal decisions, although it is prohibited by the constitution, remains a ongoing point of contention. Although federal transfers to municipalities must be based on formulas, state governments get to decide which formulas to use. As a result, state governments end up having a great deal of discretion over the formulas used and the timing of transfers. In both the cases of Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl and Tijuana, for

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[1] See Selee, "Introduction," in Tulchin and Selee, *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America.*

example, state governments have used their discretion over transfers to control or punish the municipal government. The state government withheld resources from Neza, for example, because of political differences with the city government. In contrast, in Tijuana both state and municipal governments are of the same party but political differences among public officials have led to the withholding of resources.   In the case of Chilpancingo, the state government has used its control over resources to influence spending priorities of the municipal government.[2]

At the same time, most municipalities in Mexico have few ways of raising significant revenue on their own. Large cities with significant industry and commerce, like Tijuana, have successfully innovated in creating their own sources of revenue. But smaller and medium-sized municipalities, like Chilpancingo, and large municipalities with little local industry or commerce, like Neza, have come to depend overwhelmingly on federal largesse.   Indeed, municipalities under 100,000 inhabitants receive over 80% of their revenue, on average, from federal transfers. Medium-sized cities (100-500,000 inhabitants) receive 63% of their revenue, on average, from federal transfers, while even large cities (over 100,000) receive a slight majority of their revenue, on average, from these transfers.[3] Federal transfers have played an important role in equalizing municipal revenues across municipalities of different sizes. However, given the degree of arbitrariness in how states assign (and channel) these transfers, the dependency on transfers has also limited the autonomy of municipal governments. The alternative of requiring greater autonomy in revenue-generation would be likely to increase inequality

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[2] These problems are similar to those of Argentinean municipalities, where state governments have even greater discretion over transfers. However, other countries in the region, including Bolivia and Brazil, have developed ways of avoiding this problem by transferring a set percentage of tax revenues from the national government to the municipalities without passing through intermediate levels of government.
[3] Data from Figure 5.14.

among municipalities sharply.

Chart 9.1 summarizes the state of decentralization—the independent variable in

this study—according to the indicators set out in Chapter 3.

Chart 9.1: Findings on Decentralization

Variables	Indicators	Findings
Authority	The change in functions that municipal governments perform.	Significantly increased functions; most municipalities are assuming responsibility for key core functions, planning, and occasionally additional functions once reserved to the state.
	Whether municipal governments have exclusive or overlapping responsibility for new functions.	Most functions are exclusive for municipalities.
	The change in powers municipalities have for determining regulations and other policies within their jurisdiction.	Municipalities have increasing powers to set regulations; recent court case bars states from overruling, but it is too early to gauge the impact of the ruling.
	Whether new functions and powers are mandated by constitutional changes, new laws, or just administrative decrees.	Most changes in federal and state constitutions; few state constitutions go beyond the federal minimum set of functions and powers, however.
	Whether municipalities have sufficient resources to carry out their functions and powers.	Municipalities have increasing resources but it is still less than the needs overall.
Autonomy	The percentage of revenue that is locally raised and not subject to control by other levels of government.	Percentage of local revenue is limited, except for largest municipalities
	The percentage of transfers that are non-discretional and unconditional (set in formulas with clear timing for transfers).	Transfers are increasingly set by formula, but they still leave discretion to the states for altering formulas, timing; situation is much better for municipalities than in mid-1990s
	The degree of borrowing authority that municipal governments have.	Municipalities are gaining increased borrowing authority, with approval of state legislatures; however, only a very few large or wealthy medium-sized cities can take advantage of private borrowing.
	Whether municipalities have broad policymaking discretion for deciding their expenditures.	Most municipalities now have powers to decide their own expenditures without outside review; more reporting requirements on Ramo 33 might actually be appropriate for accountability.
	Whether local authorities can be removed by higher level authorities or their decisions reversed.	It is increasingly difficult for state authorities to remove mayors/councils as was common before.

Democratic Governance

Proponents of decentralization have argued that it might enhance representation by empowering elected authorities who are closer to citizens, more likely to know their preferences, and more likely to be held to account by citizens at election time. Moreover, government would be more transparent since citizens would be able to monitor the actions of their elected authorities more easily in local spaces. In addition, increased local decision-making would facilitate citizens' participation in public affairs, especially their ability to engage with each other and with authorities in public deliberation and decision-making. Skeptics have worried that decentralization would, on the contrary, open government to capture by elite factions or create governments that were too institutionally weak to be effective.

I find evidence that neither the promise nor the perils of decentralization are being realized. Local governments mostly do have competitive elections, publish some information on their decisions, and have channels for citizens to make their views known. However, these systems rarely work as well as they could and ultimately produce governance that limits responsiveness and accountability and excludes citizens' active participation in public affairs.

Systems of Representation

Representation in Mexican municipalities is far stronger than it was previously. Competition is pervasive and over three-quarters of municipalities, where 85% of Mexicans live, has seen at least one change in political party. Even 70% of small rural

municipalities (with under 15,000 inhabitants) and 88.8% of those between 15,000 and 100,000 inhabitants have had at least one change of political party in power since 1983. This finding appears to contradict the idea that municipalities are redoubts of the old one-party system in an otherwise plural democracy. Despite fears that local governments are given to dominance by single leaders or groups, most Mexican municipalities appear to be experiencing considerable competition among several political parties. In the three cases explored here—all medium to large municipalities—at least two parties compete actively at all times and each party has competition among distinct groups within it. These cities all appear to have multiple and overlapping cleavages that are expressed through political competition. I would leave open the possibility that small municipalities might be more given to dominance by a single leader or faction (i.e., elite capture), but the evidence on competition suggests that this is not the case even in a majority of smaller municipalities.

Despite advances in competition, all municipalities, regardless of the party in power, suffer from the legacy of authoritarianism. Rules of the old order remain in effect: supermajorities for the winning party, party lists, no independent candidacies, and no reelection. During the period where one party, the PRI, was hegemonic, these rules served to ensure local politicians' loyalty to the party hierarchy and to higher level officials in the state and federal government. However, today these same rules sharply limit the democratic potential of municipalities. They keep council members subservient to the mayor or to the party; ensure mayor's subservience to party or to higher level authorities with influence in his party; and keep citizens from knowing (or caring) who their council members are.

Even though most municipalities (62.2%) do not have a majority party, one party always controls the municipal government, and the second party is almost always heavily underrepresented in the council. Minority parties are thus forced to rely on two- or three-level games to have a voice in council proceedings, using their influence with members of their party in the state congress or national government. Despite the strength of the PRD in Chilpancingo and the PRI in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, for example, their real influence has come from appealing to their party's strength at the state level. The PAN in both cities, though a smaller party, has been effective at becoming a channel to federal authorities, who belong to the same party and control key resources for the municipality. In Tijuana, where the PAN controlled both the city and state government in the period of study, the PRI relied on divisions within the PAN during some years to leverage influence by blocking legislation.

In all municipalities, the winning party governs with a slate of city council members who are selected by party leaders or the mayoral candidate and thus have no personal political base or direct connection to citizens. Even in cases, such as Tijuana, where the governing party (PAN) decided to allow primaries for council member slates, this provision only allowed only slightly more than one percent of the electorate, who were members of this party, to participate in selecting the slate. Moreover, the prohibition on independent candidacies gives the parties a monopoly over political power. In a system where entry to these parties is seriously restricted, party leaderships preserve tight control over political power and citizens' options for political participation are restricted. The combination of closed, hierarchical parties and rules that grant a monopoly of control over candidacies to these parties leads to a system that is only

weakly responsive and accountable. The prohibition on reelection compounds these weaknesses by making politicians more concerned with appealing to party leaders (or party notables), who determine a politician's next opportunity, rather than to voters who could reward or punish them for their performance in their current office.[4]

Decentralization may well improve the quality of representation, by reducing the distance between citizens and their elected authorities, but only if electoral rules create the right incentives for these authorities to listen to their constituents and the means for voters to reward or punish them at the ballot box. Ironically, both federal and all state congressional elections in Mexico follow rules that mix single-member districts with proportional representation.[5] These systems perform far better than the municipal party lists because they ensure both the direct election of representatives and a composition of the legislature that reflects the relative strength of the various political parties. The federal and state elections also suffer from serious design flaws that undermine responsiveness and accountability, including prohibitions on reelection and independent candidacies. Nonetheless, they are far more effective than municipal elections at providing effective representation.

Transparency

The quantity and quality of information that municipalities report to citizens have

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[4] Party list systems are very common in Latin America—and in other recent democracies, including several in Africa. In a few cases, however, the worst effects of party lists are somewhat mitigated by having low barriers to entry into parties (e.g. Uruguay). In these cases, elections are through party lists but party hierarchies have little control over who is a candidate. Colombia recently abandoned party list voting altogether in municipal elections with seemingly positive effects for democratic governance. Municipalities have become vibrant centers of democratic innovation, often driven by independent candidates who have won local elections in cities such as Bogotá and Medellín.

[5] These mixed elections systems are similar to the electoral systems for national elections in Germany and New Zealand.

increased noticeably in recent years. In the three cities explored here, the quality of annual municipal reports has increased dramatically, often providing valuable information on local government finances and decisions. Moreover, all three municipalities have dramatically improved the quality of information available on their websites, including basic information on municipal salaries and public works projects. Tijuana is notable for including a detailed list of public contracts on the city's official website.

Another important, though very recent, advance has been the approval of state "access to information" laws that allow citizens to access state and municipal documents on demand. As of this writing, 25 of the country's 32 states (including Mexico City) had passed such laws. Most of these laws are of recent passage, however, and in many cases have not yet been fully implemented. Therefore, it is difficult to know what impact they might have on citizens' access to information about what their municipal governments' do. Of the three municipalities studied here, none, as of yet, has a functioning state law. Both the State of Mexico and, as of September 2005, Guerrero, have passed laws, but they have not yet taken effect. The access to information law in Baja California remains a bill in the state legislature, and the governor firmly opposed.

An important, but very recent, addition to this debate has been the passage of municipal access to information laws in both Tijuana and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, as well as in a small number of other cities across the country. The law in Neza seems to be particularly well-crafted, in that it provides a public listing of all municipal documents available to citizens in each municipal government department. It also requires that the municipality publish all payments that government officials receive, including those that

fall outside their usual salary. Publishing full payment information is significant since mayors in Mexico often use unreported "bonuses" as a way of buying support from council members or getting subordinates to make hefty campaign donations. However, we need further research to determine how well this law is functioning in practice, since its implementation appears to rest on a commission named by the mayor.[6]

Although these are all very positive steps towards encouraging municipal transparency, citizens still have trouble knowing what their elected authorities are doing on their behalf. Access to information laws, where they exist, help give citizens information after the fact on what their authorities have decided, but they give citizens little information on how decisions are made. Despite requirements in all three cities studied here that council be meetings be open to the public, councils almost always meet behind closed doors. In Tijuana council meetings are taped and put on the municipal website, but this provision is a long way from allowing citizens to be present in the hearings (and still allows for the council to edit the broadcast if they so choose). In none of the cities are council meetings announced ahead of time or specific votes reported afterwards. Since municipal corruption often involves favoritism in the awarding of contracts, allowing full access to hearings and a recording of decisions made by councils would help in detecting corruption as well as allow citizens to make more informed judgments about their elected authorities.

Moreover, most municipalities still do not publish detailed financial data in a timely fashion. Neza stands out for disclosing full information on salaries and bonuses, but few (if any) other municipalities do this. Municipal budgets published often leave out

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[6] The law was implemented after the end of my period of investigation so I do not have trustworthy evidence of how well it is functioning.

key financial data. The budgets published in Chilpancingo have often left out municipal debt; in Neza published budgets have failed to note a large amount of federal transfers that are left unspent at the end of several fiscal years.

Given their physical closeness to citizens, municipalities should be more transparent than state or national governments. However, the weaknesses in institutional design often make them less transparent than other levels of government. Ironically, the federal government already has an extensive access to information law with an autonomous body that provides oversight. Although not all hearings are public, decisions of the full Congress are published regularly and in a timely manner. Municipal governments may be closer to citizens, but their institutional design has worked against them becoming more transparent than higher levels of government.

Opportunities for Participation

One kind of opportunity for participation is for citizens to have clear institutional channels to make demands to public authorities. Many municipalities have created regulations to govern the role of neighborhood committees and require them to be elected in public assemblies or at the ballot box, as in all three cases in this project. Despite this practice, these committees can generally only get their demands heard if they belong to clientelistic networks, "trade favors" with politicians, or belong to political groups within one of the parties. In the three case studies, these practices range from a dense system of political engagement in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, where committees use membership in party factions to have influence; to Chilpancingo, where local committees generally belong to clientelistic networks; to Tijuana, where direct clientelism has been reduced but

replaced by a system in which citizens have little voice in public affairs. In none of these cases do political leaders seem to place much emphasis on these committees except at election time, and these committees have few links among themselves that would allow them to scale up their engagement or function as arenas for deliberation on broader public issues. In Neza, however, the committees have been perhaps more successful at getting their concerns heard, in large part because of their direct links to the political parties and the leaders of the major party factions.

In addition to getting demands heard, a second way in which citizens might participate is in taking part in public discussion, deliberation, and decision making. In all three cases studied, mayors implemented systems of participatory planning and structured public deliberation. These systems were generally set up to give citizens a role in decisions on investments in public infrastructure, although in Tijuana the municipality also created committees to address a number of cross-cutting concerns such as the environment, migration, and disability. In one case, Chilpancingo, the participatory planning system existed in name only, since officials restricted the Municipal Planning Council meetings to those who had already benefited from municipal projects. In Tijuana and Neza, in contrast, mayors implemented real systems of participatory planning with initially positive results. In Neza, the Municipal Development Council became quite influential in infrastructure decisions during the first period of PRD government, but the next two mayors reduced its influence. By the third period the mayor had succeeded in dividing the Council among political parties and party factions and thus eliminated it as a space for citizen engagement. In Tijuana, the second and third PAN mayors implemented a wide-ranging system of elected citizen representatives to decide on

investments within several districts of the city, along with committees of government authorities and citizen organizations around key issue areas. These bodies all met periodically in a citywide council that allowed citizens to have a voice in setting broad policy directions for the municipality. However, by the fourth and fifth PAN administrations, the mayors had ensured that candidates favorable to the government would win most elections and thus eliminated these bodies as a space for real participation in deciding public priorities.

The experiences of Tijuana and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl suggest that local governments can serve as a vibrant arena for citizen engagement and public deliberation. However, the failure of these participatory systems indicates that local governments do not automatically play this role absent favorable conditions to do so. Indeed, traditional political practices appear to have won out over new styles of participatory governance in all three municipalities.

Chart 9.2 summarizes the findings with regards to democratic governance according to the indicators set forth in Chapter 3.

Chart 9.2: Findings on Democratic Governance

Variables	*Indicators*	*Findings*
Democratic Governance (dependent variable)		
Representation	All citizens have equal rights to vote or be voted for public office, as well as express opinions and organize autonomous organizations	In most places, the rights to organize, express opinions, and vote are respected; in some high-violence areas these rights are still precarious
	Elections are free and fair.	The right to be voted is restricted to those who are members of a political party; independent candidacies are barred in all local elections
	An independent, respected electoral institution oversees the elections.	Electoral institutions and tribunals are generally credible, although concerns remain
	Voting preferences are translated into	Municipal parties receive supermajorities in all

	representative bodies in roughly proportional amounts. Elected officials have incentives to be responsive to citizen demands.	municipalities; second party usually is underrepresented Party list system and ban on reelection undermine council members' sense of accountability to citizens and creates "upward accountability" to party leaders and other political authorities of their party
Transparency	There a legal framework that gives citizens access to municipal documents on demand. Municipal documents are published and made available regularly, especially city council resolutions, municipal development plans, annual budgets, infrastructure investment expenditures, contracted debt amounts, the salaries of high level municipal officials, and contracts with private parties. Municipal council meetings are generally open and their decisions are public record.	Twenty-two states have access to information laws, but these are uneven in their scope and application; many states have resisted this innovation and few municipalities have separate laws on information access Information published by municipalities is very uneven—both among municipalities and within them from year to year—and what needs to be published is almost entirely at the discretion of the mayor; there is little consistent way for citizens to know what the municipality does unless the mayor chooses to inform on this Few municipal council meetings are open, even when rules require them to be.
Participation	Neighborhood councils serve as meaningful conduits for citizen concerns. Citizens have clear institutional channels for presenting demands to public authorities and for commenting on municipal initiatives. These channels are the real channels of participation and influence rather than informal networks based on personal relations and patronage. Participatory planning/participatory budgeting processes exist which involve a broad cross-section of citizens and have a real impact on deciding and monitoring investment decisions.	Many municipalities appear to have regulations establishing official neighborhood committees, but rarely do these committees have clear institutional channels for engaging with public authorities unless they are willing to engage in political tradeoffs. The primary way that citizens get things done is through personal relationships with political leaders. Official channels serve only as a formality. Patronage and intra-party relationships remain paramount to influence in policy. Participatory planning exists in theory in many municipalities, but it rarely functions well unless the mayor is personally committed to it. Existing participatory planning systems tend to be used to legitimize decisions made by the mayor and (occasionally) council rather than to engage citizens in municipal affairs.

9.2 Interpretation: Understanding the Paradox

The paradox of local empowerment is that empowering local governments does not necessarily empower citizens within those localities. If local governments are closer to citizens, why do they fail in the cases explored here to generate substantially better democratic governance that could empower citizens as deliberators on public issues and the ultimate arbiters of public power?

I argue that, at least in these three cases, the weight of the past overpowers the promise of the present; that is, the legacy of institutions and practices left over from an authoritarian period pervade the structure of municipalities and the behavior of key actors. These legacies undermine the potential to generate better representation, greater transparency, and deeper citizen participation. However, the different texture of state-society relations in each of the three municipalities produces a somewhat different outcome for democratic governance in the process of decentralization. Although none of the three municipalities produces the kind of vibrant democratic governance that proponents of decentralization might predict, each municipality produces a different kind of governance, some which augur far better for future democratic development than others. Understanding the variations among the three municipal experiences turns out to be as important as understanding the commonalities among them. In this section, I look first at the findings that are shared across the three cases and then examine the reasons for the differences among them.

The Limits of Local Democratic Governance

Why do elements of the old authoritarian order survive even in a period of democratic opening? The answer does not appear to confirm the worst fears of the skeptics that municipalities would fall prey to weak institutions and the power of local elites. Municipal governments suffer from significant weaknesses in institutional capacity, but their democratic failures are not principally a result of these. Although elite capture may present a problem for the smallest municipalities, it does not seem to be part of the problem for most Mexican municipalities which have significant competition among two or more political parties.

Rather, the old order survives, in large part, because political leaders have few incentives to change a system that is functional for their purposes, and social actors have too little influence to demand change. The system of representation prevalent in Mexican municipalities—with no re-election, closed party lists, guaranteed majorities, and no independent candidacies—creates little downward accountability and, therefore, few reasons to pursue reforms that would democratize municipalities themselves.[7] This lack of downward accountability means that municipal authorities have little sustainable interest in pursuing strategies for transparency and citizen participation. Individual leaders may see a political benefit in measures designed to encourage a closer relationship between citizens and the municipality, particularly if they need to build a

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[7] Municipal elections are set by state constitutions, not municipal law, so any changes would have to be made at the state level. However, it is notable that municipal elected officials have displayed no interest in this topic.

new coalition for their party or their policies, as happened when opposition parties won for the first time in both Tijuana and Neza. However, the lack of downward accountability greatly undermines the long-term incentive to sustain these measures once a party has built a strong electoral coalition. The absence of a strong representative system that generates downward accountability thus undermines the possibilities for creating greater transparency and opportunities for citizen participation. In much of the literature on participatory democracy, this is treated as a separate category from representative democracy or a better and deeper form of democratic practice. These results indicate that neither participatory practices nor transparency measures are likely to emerge if representative democracy is not robust. Participation and transparency are not alternatives to representation, but rather necessary

Municipal democracy received a great deal of attention in 1980s and 1990s from opposition parties (primarily the PAN and PRD), because they saw the opening of competition as a way of prying open a closed political system. However, no party has shown particular interest in changing the formal rules that govern municipal governance because these rules serve their interests. The absence of reelection, the existence of party lists, and the prohibition on independent candidacies all ensure that local leaders are loyal to party and to more senior elected official of the party. Moreover, having a supermajority in municipal council has proved beneficial to each party. The PRI has fixed its sights on controlling the largest number of municipalities in the country; the PAN on controlling the largest municipalities. The PRD has largely ignored municipalities in recent years as a strategy of achieving power (focusing instead on

control of Mexico City and a good showing in national elections).[8] For the PRI and the PAN, supermajorities allow them to govern unfettered in their municipalities of influence. Ceding majority control would mean they have less control over the municipalities that are most important to them.

Moreover, each party has a particular style of relating to citizens that is influenced by the legacy of the single party-dominant system that prevailed in Mexico for several decades. The PRI has been and continues to be a mass-based party built on mobilizing citizens within the party framework through corporatist organizations and clientelistic networks. The party operates through a network of intermediaries who resolve issues for citizens at community (or workplace) level and who, in turn, respond to higher level intermediaries within the party hierarchy. Although this system is increasingly less effective than it once was, as more people fall outside these channels of mediation, it still works sufficiently well to win elections, especially when turnout is low or other parties fail to present strong alternatives.

The PRD has been formed largely out of two currents: the traditional left, which built itself around mobilizing citizens in social movements outside the then hegemonic PRI; and excisions from the PRI, which have brought political leaders into the left who replicate their old party's practices. As the experience of Neza shows, the traditional left had to learn how to compete with the PRI by constructing its own networks of intermediaries who provided concrete benefits to its members. Once in power, the PRD leaders in many ways have replicated the practices that they once fought against: they provide concrete public benefits to those associated with their own networks at the

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[8] There was, a period in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the PRD focused extensively on municipalities; however, the party has since focused more on national elections.

expense of the larger public. The left has long employed a discourse of inclusive social participation, and has been responsible over the years for many of the most creative attempts at generating participatory institutional channels, but this discourse contrasts with the PRD's *de facto* structure, which is based on layers of intermediaries. Ironically, the clientelism of the PRI led to a clientelism of the left. In some cases these practices within the PRD are a result of PRI leaders migrating to the PRD and bringing with them their ways of conducting politics. However, frequently, as in Neza, the left generated its own clientelistic and personalistic networks as a means of counteracting the clientelism of the PRI. In some cases, as in Neza, it is very likely that the PRD's systems of intermediaries are less hierarchically structured than the PRI's systems and, as a result, more open to citizen demands. While the PRI's intermediaries are often vertically integrated within a corporatist hierarchy, the PRD's intermediaries appear to be horizontally distributed and in constant competition with each other. Citizens thus have more options about which intermediaries to use for their purposes.[9]

The PAN has followed a different path. In response to the PRI's ability to penetrate society, including most opposition organizations, the PAN constituted itself as a small party with closed membership. At election time it reached out to unaffiliated voters, but it kept its actual membership small and protected. The PAN made it especially difficult for people to join the party, relying instead on small cadres of long-standing members to be candidates and organizers. The party's liberal orientation has

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[9] In both cases, these are tendencies: the PRI has some competition among intermediaries within neighborhoods and labor fields, for example among organizations that represent street vendors in Neza; however, it is more common for the PRI to have only one set of intermediaries in each neighborhood, as in Chilpancingo and Neza. In contrast, the PRD may have multiple intermediaries in any given neighborhood or labor field, and there is no central leadership capable of settling the disputes over "clients" among these intermediaries.

given its members a strong belief in citizens' right to engage in public affairs as individuals, unmediated by corporatist or clientelistic networks. As a result, elected PAN officials, as was the case in Tijuana, have often been inclined to find institutional ways of involving unaffiliated citizens in governance once the party wins municipal governments. However, the PAN has not been willing, to this day, to open itself significantly to new members. Despite winning the presidential election in 2000, the PAN continues to have only 221,599 full members nationally out of almost 65 million registered voters.[10] The two models live in permanent tension for PAN governments. On one hand, a small party elite sees itself as responsible for directing public affairs; on the other hand, party leaders want to engage individual citizens in public affairs through institutional channels. In the case of Tijuana, the vision of a participatory democracy lost out over time to the practice of an efficient government directed by the party faithful. Not surprisingly, this pattern has been replicated in other cities governed by the PAN, such as Ciudad Juárez and León, where vibrant participatory experiences gradually lost their impact within municipal governance.

Citizens, faced with governments that allow no public channels for ongoing citizen voice and deliberative input into public affairs, resort to the only means they have for political influence, short of rebellion: personalistic and clientelistic networks that give them some means of access to elected authorities on decisions that affect their lives. This dependency is augmented by the arbitrary enforcement of the law and vast economic

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[10] Official data of the PAN, published on the party's website: www.pan.org.mx/padronAN/index.aspx, accessed October 16, 2005. There are another 876,802 registered "sympathizers," who have fewer rights and obligations within the party structure. There were 64.71 million voters registered nationally in the 2003 elections. Data on registered voters from Instituto Federal Electoral, "Comparativo de Participación Ciudadana a Nivel Nacional: Estadística de las Elecciones Federales de 1991-2003," available at www.ife.gob.mx, accessed January 8, 2006.

disparities, which make personal connections to people in high places a form of insurance policy against disaster, especially for the poor. Dependency on personal political ties, in turn, undercuts citizens' ability to make demands for greater transparency, better electoral rules, or institutional channels of participation. It replicates a long-standing history in Mexico of indirect citizenship, where citizens must rely on intermediaries to make their voices heard or enforce their basic rights.

As a result, civil society in Mexico has also been affected by the legacies of authoritarianism. During the period of one party dominant rule, social organizations had to operate at the margins of the political party system, negotiating their demands in return for supporting the party in power. During this period, many social organizations, such as the Inhabitants Restoration Movement (MRC) in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, ended up co-opted by the PRI. Others, such as Cucutac in Tijuana, found refuge and support in parties of the left as a bulwark against co-optation. Few were able to maintain a margin of independence from political parties. In the three cases studied, Chilpancingo presents a model where most social organizations, with some independent mobilization at the margins, have been incorporated within the governing PRI. Chilpancingo continues to present patterns of political incorporation of social organizations within a single party similar to most Mexican municipalities fifteen or twenty years earlier. Tijuana is a case of thin social organization, due in large part to the demographic and economic mobility of the city. A few autonomous non-governmental organizations, largely geared to social assistance, operate in the city, but there are few strong community-based organizations. Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, in contrast, is a densely organized city, with dozens of social organizations with strong community bases. These groups are almost always affiliated

with either the PRD or PRI and with specific political groups within these parties. Neza has few truly independent civil society organizations, though it does have a dense texture of organization within the political parties. In none of the three cities do we find strong independent social organizations capable of challenging the government in power.

The media, which might offer another venue for citizen participation, are similarly weak in most localities in Mexico. At a national level, the media have played an important role in monitoring public officials, pushing for transparency laws, and giving citizens a voice on major demands for political changes. However, most local media in Mexico remain dependent on the goodwill of a few key political or government leaders for their advertising revenue. Major national media can diversify among different levels of government (often run by different political parties), numerous public agencies (including several autonomous ones), and a mixture of public and private sector companies. In contrast, local media often depend almost entirely on the business of a few state government departments, the dominant political parties, and major urban municipalities. This dependency reduces their margin of autonomy to monitor and critique state and municipal governments.

The paradox of local empowerment is thus maintained by a combination of old institutions that create upward accountability, political parties with few incentives to change the status quo, and civil society and media organizations unable to create a demand for change from the outside. In this context, institutions and practices developed during authoritarian times persist in a period of political competition. This perseverance of the old order in the new, in turn, limits the ability of decentralization to produce better democratic governance. It also limits the consolidation of Mexico's democracy by

preserving old patterns of state-society relations even as the political system becomes increasingly open and competitive.

These findings also suggest an important theoretical insight. The potential for stronger and deeper forms of democratic practice—those that allow for greater citizen voice and monitoring between elections—depends in large measure on the quality of representative democracy. In much of the literature, participatory democracy is seen as an alternative to representation or as a corrective for its inability to give citizens a greater role in the political process. In contrast, these findings suggest that a democratic system that lacks strong and effective institutions for representation is unlikely to develop sustainable opportunities for citizen participation or mechanisms for transparency. Only public authorities who are responsive and accountable primarily to citizens are likely to innovate in strategies for giving citizens greater voice and allowing them to monitor public decisions. In Mexico, a substantial part of the problem for both participation and transparency appears to be derived from the lack of strong systems of representation in municipalities. This problem is then compounded by legacies of the past, the preferences of political parties for a closed political system and the weaknesses of civil society and the media to serve as a counterweight.

The Variations in Democratic Governance

Despite limitations in each of the three cases explored, the cities each display somewhat different effects of decentralization on democratic governance. I argue that these differences result from distinct patterns of state-society relations—in particular, the

way citizens are linked to the political process—in each municipality prior to decentralization. In particular, municipalities where social organizations independent from the government existed prior to decentralization – these municipalities appear to develop more democratic practices of governance after decentralization. However, the way these organizations are linked to the political process is also quite important.

In the case of Chilpancingo, few social organizations outside the PRI existed prior to decentralization. During the 1980s and early 1990s, several community groups did come together to form a larger urban popular movement; however, this movement was never as strong in Chilpancingo as in other cities in Mexico and faded during the course of the 1990s. By the time the municipality gained greater authority and autonomy those social organizations that still existed outside the PRI were small and atomized. Similarly, most media in the city maintained a close relationship with the PRI since the only sources of advertising were the state and city governments, both in the hands of that party. In this environment, the PRI has succeeded in maintaining its electoral edge, and PRI-affiliated governments have made little attempt to implement initiatives to make government more transparent or to engage citizens as participants or deliberators in public affairs. The party itself is changing, allowing new sectors of society to gain influence within the PRI; however, this has not affected the nature of governance as yet. Figure 9.1 shows, in a simplified schematic way, the nature of state-society relations in Chilpancingo. Although the nature of political groups and intermediaries change, most of the channels of influence remain vertically integrated within the PRI.

Figure 9.1: Schematic Representation of State-Society Relations in Chilpancingo
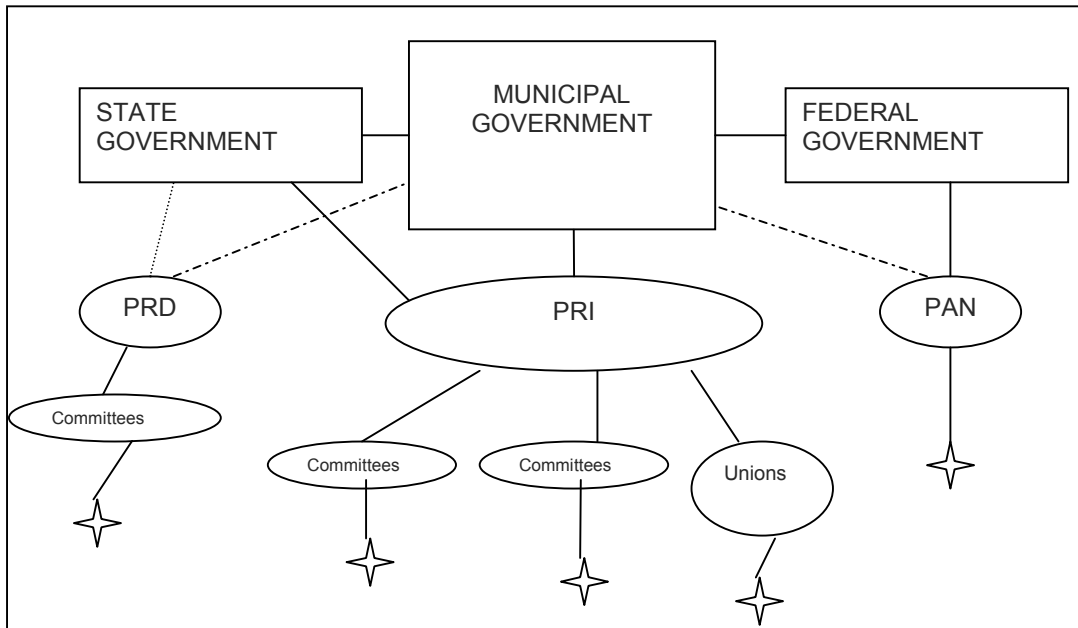
Note: The stars represent citizens; the lines channels for negotiation between key social and political actors with the dotted lines representing weak relationships and the solid lines strong relationships. This schematic diagram necessarily oversimplifies the relationships but it is intended to show a general framework for the dominant forms of interactions between state and society.

In contrast, the PAN came to power in Tijuana slightly before the push for decentralization took place in Mexico, and PAN-affiliated governments helped push this process further by experimenting with debt financing, the first lawsuit over municipal jurisdiction, and the creation of a national mayors' association. Tijuana had never had a strong network of PRI social organizations similar to that in most other Mexican cities, and the left similarly failed to develop a strong base of social organizations. Although Tijuana had had an important urban popular movement in the early 1980s, in response to the city's rapid urbanization, this movement lost strength in the late 1980s as the state and city governments expanded their land titling program. The city has had numerous small non-governmental organizations and neighborhood-based associations, but these have rarely achieved any significant scale. Rapid migration to the city and a relatively high

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degree of economic mobility reduced the incentives for the city's inhabitants to form or join social organizations either in or outside of political parties. In some ways, this city of independent citizens seemed highly suited to a PAN administration that sought to create participatory mechanisms for citizens to become engaged in policy outside of corporatist and clientelistic channels.

Indeed, the experiences under the second and third PAN governments in Tijuana showed some of the best design elements for good democratic governance: expanding representation in the council; increased transparency; and a well-designed structure for citizen participation. In particular, the attempt to create a structure for citizen participation served to give citizens a direct voice in policy decisions that affected them and built arenas for public deliberation among citizens in different communities and with public authorities. However, this effort failed to create a strong base of stakeholders who could carry the process forward when later PAN mayors failed to support the process. This city filled with unorganized, independent citizens was ideally suited to a participatory approach to governance that would bypass traditional political intermediaries; but it was poorly suited to maintaining these practices when political leaders lost interest. The fact that most social organizations had few ties to the political parties allowed for a deeper form of citizen participation while the participatory mechanisms lasted. However, since the social organizations also had few ties among themselves, they were unable to defend the process against the vagaries of politics. Over time the innovations in transparency and representation also lost steam in the face of a lack of organized social pressure – a pressure that could have driven them forward when political leaders lost interest and commitment to democratic change. Figure 9.2 presents

a rough schematic representation of state-society relations in Tijuana, showing that the only strong state-society relationship is between the PAN and the municipal government, while most other citizens and committees are only weakly or indirectly linked to the municipality.

Figure 9.2: Schematic Representation of State-Society Relations in Tijuana
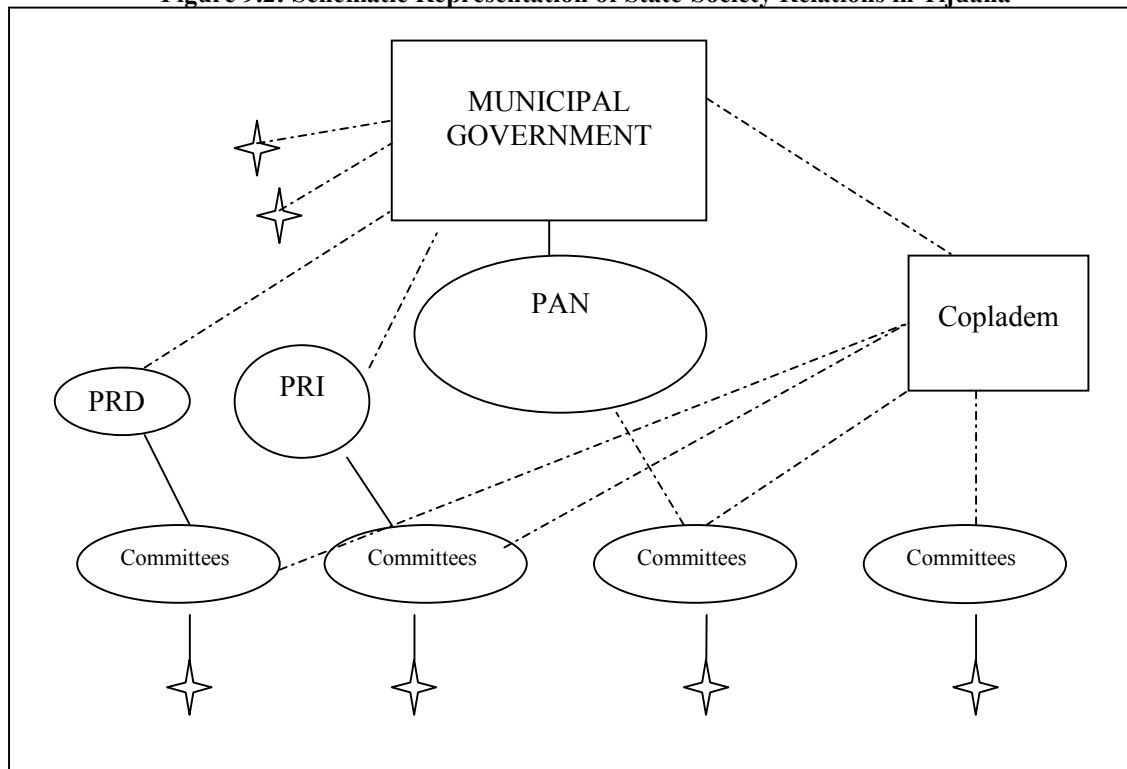
Note: The stars represent citizens; the lines channels for negotiation between key social and political actors with the dotted lines representing weak relationships and the solid lines strong relationships. This schematic diagram necessarily oversimplifies the relationships but it is intended to show a general framework for the dominant forms of interactions between state and society.

Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, on the other hand, has long had a dense set of social organizations. The PRI formed its own social organizations within the party, and several independently created social organizations, such as the MRC, affiliated with the party as a strategy for pursuing their demands. At the same time, the pressure of an expanding population in conditions of scarcity led to the formation of autonomous social movements

affiliated with the left. These left movements would eventually join together to create the PRD in Neza and launch a successful candidacy for mayor in 1996 at the same time that decentralization began to empower the municipal government with newfound autonomy and authority. Most social organizations remain within these two parties and are represented by intermediaries who serve as a bridge between average citizens and government authorities. To a large extent, the participatory mechanisms that have been attempted in Neza have empowered these intermediaries, who compete in elections for the Participation Councils, serve in the Municipal Development Council, and aspire to join the Municipal Council or the administration. Politics in Neza is carried out as a series of negotiations among leaders of political groups, who in turn depend on these intermediaries to mobilize support at election time. The intermediaries, in return, communicate citizens' concerns to the leaders who have the power to resolve problems.

In Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, decentralization has not produced vibrant democratic governance that engages individual citizens but rather a competitive market of intermediaries who represent citizens. The existing participatory arenas involve strategic bargaining among these intermediaries and between intermediaries and public authorities. On the face of it, this competitive market of intermediaries would seem to be far inferior to Tijuana's once participatory approach that engaged individual citizens in deliberation about public affairs. However, whereas Tijuana experienced the decay of its participatory mechanisms, leaving citizens without a means to have their voices heard, Neza continues to have a complex array of intermediaries who compete among each other to represent citizens' voices. This approach to democratic governance through competing intermediaries is far inferior in promise to the notion of individually engaged

citizens, but it turns out to be far more sustainable. Even when public authorities have

wanted to eliminate the participation councils, for example, they have been unable to do

so because they create strong incentives for organized groups to defend them. The

continued persistence of strong social organizations tied to the political parties in Neza

undermines the emergence of more direct and deliberative forms of citizen participation,

but it also helps sustain what spaces for citizen voice currently exist against the

ambivalence of political leaders. Figure 9.3 shows a rough schematic representation of

state-society relations in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl showing the multiple and overlapping

relationships between the government and social actors.

Figure 9.3: Schematic Representation of State-Society Relations in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl
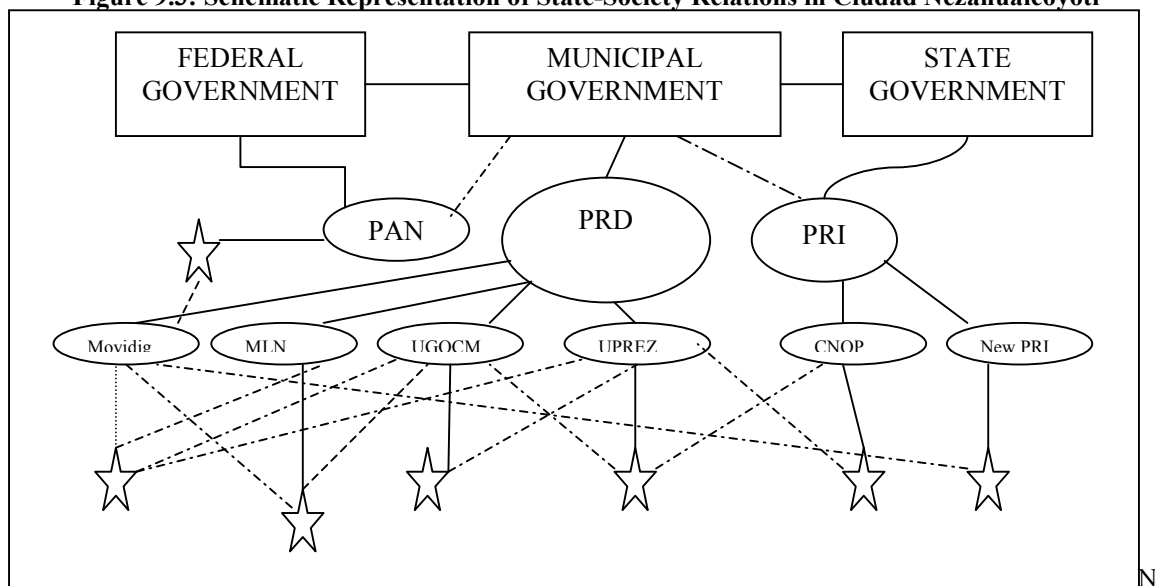
ote: The stars represent citizens; the lines channels for negotiation between key social and political actors with the dotted lines representing weak relationships and the solid lines strong relationships. This schematic diagram necessarily oversimplifies the relationships but it is intended to show a general framework for the dominant forms of interactions between state and society.

In a political system that is as party-centric as that of Mexican municipalities, the

existence of strong social organizations tied to the parties may be the best means citizens

have in the short-term to ensure that their voices are heard between elections, though it

does little to promote deliberation. When these organizations are tied only to one dominant party, as in the case of Chilpancingo, they are unlikely to serve as motors of change. However, when they exist in competing parties, it is possible that they may generate a market of competing intermediaries, as in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, and this process, in turn, gives citizens options for getting their voice heard. This arrangement is far from ideal; citizens still depend on intermediaries to put forth demands, but they get to choose who they entrust with their demands, both between parties and within parties, which sets up a degree of competition by these intermediaries to represent citizens. In some cases, real deliberation may take place in neighborhoods and social groups, which are then represented strategically through intermediaries; however, this subject needs further research. Nonetheless, the system itself does nothing to encourage deliberation among groups or communities or between these and public authorities. The existence of an independent, unorganized citizenry, as in Tijuana, may be suitable for deeper forms of democratic engagement and public deliberation, but activating this potential depends on political will or on linking citizens together through larger, more complex forms of social organization than currently exist. For the reasons put forth above, we should be skeptical that any party can long maintain political will to innovate in favor of better democratic governance under the existing institutional rules of Mexican municipalities.[11]

These findings suggest that there may at times be a tradeoff between channels that provide effective citizen input into public decisions and those that generate deliberative modes of citizen engagement. The Tijuana model generated a more deliberative

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[11] For a complementary argument about why participatory budgeting in Brazil works better in some municipalities than others, based on the configurations of state-society relations, see Leonardo Avritzer, "Presupuesto Participativo en Tres Contextos," presentation at the seminar on Decentralización, Iniciativas Locales y Ciudadanía organized by the Woodrow Wilson Center and Fundación Pent in Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 17, 2005.

approach but ultimately proved of limited use in providing citizen voice in the political process. The model in Neza is far less deliberative (or even internally democratic); however, it has proven fairly resilient in providing an ongoing channel for citizen voice. Given the choice, most citizens would probably prefer an effective channel for input to one that is ideally deliberative. It remains to be seen, however, if effective, but nondeliberative models of citizen participation, such as that in Neza, might transition over time into more deliberative arenas for citizen engagement and under what conditions this might be possible.

9.3 Recommendations: Getting Beyond the Paradox

Political competition, even among political elites and party intermediaries, is still far better than virtual one party rule; however, it is a far cry from the kind of democratic energies that decentralization is supposed to release by allowing citizens to participate actively in public affairs, know what their leaders are doing, and get them to respond to their concerns and be accountable to them. The existing state of affairs of local democracy in Mexico remains quite distant from the normative understanding of democracy as a system of institutionalized public deliberation.

This research points to the importance of knowing the context of prevailing electoral institutions and political practices in order to understand the impact of decentralization on democratic governance. As a result, its findings also point toward a set of policy recommendations that may address some of the particular concerns raised

about local democratic governance in Mexico and may be the basis for improving the democratic impact of decentralization. None of these are easy to achieve, but given the right combination of circumstances—inspired leadership, strategic coalitions, or public pressure—these recommendations might find opportunities for advancement.   Despite the incentives against change, reforms in one state are likely to create a demonstration effect that may lead to change in other states. Reforms that strengthen social organizations may particularly generate virtuous cycles that strengthen democratic governance over time. It is important to emphasize, however, that democratic change is cannot be reduced to a question of institutional engineering; rather, it requires simultaneous attention to institutions and to the configuration of state-society relations.

Reforming Electoral Institutions: Four aspects of the current system undercut responsive and accountable representation and would benefit from change: party list systems with party leaders' control over candidacies; provisions granting automatic majorities to winning parties; the prohibition on reelection; and the prohibition on independent candidacies. Allowing reelection would give policymakers incentives to pay attention to constituents' concerns and citizens a chance to reward or punish their elected officials. If this change were coupled with a mixed electoral system that combines district and at-large elections for municipal council, it would be far easier for citizens to hold their council members accountable. Although this newfound accountability would most directly affect the district council members, it would also increase citizen awareness of the council members and their role overall. Eliminating supermajorities for the winning party would further force politicians to listen to voters and build coalitions if they could not obtain a majority. Losing parties would have a meaningful role in the

council and winning parties could not take the opposition for granted. Finally, introducing independent candidacies in local elections would allow people to run citizen slates if they could not work through the parties. Given the degree of closed entry into the parties, this would go a long way toward ensuring that all citizens can "vote and be voted."[12]

Improving Access to Information: Several efforts could be undertaken to ensure that citizens have greater access to information about what their municipal officials do and decide. The existence of access to information laws that apply to municipal governments is a good first step, especially if these include guarantees of privacy to the person who requests information, covers all documents produced by the municipalities, and is overseen by an autonomous council with sufficient resources to comply with their mandate. In addition to this, municipalities would benefit from efforts to create laws and regulations (either at the state or municipal level) that govern public access to municipal council meetings and minimum standards of reporting on municipal finances, salaries, and council decisions. Since many citizens have limited access to the internet and cannot make trips to the state capital, municipal transparency laws that prove systems for obtaining documents directly from the municipality would be especially helpful.

Improving Participatory Models: The models for citizen participation developed

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[12] Guatemala has a system of independent candidacies, called civic committees, where local organizations can register their own list for municipal elections. These have never governed in more than 8% of all municipalities at the same time (and usually fewer), but the experiences to date appear to be quite positive and they have forced the political parties to improve their practices. See Jesus Puente Alcaraz and Luis Felipe Linares López, "A General View of the Institutional State of Decentralization in Guatemala," in Joseph S. Tulchin and Andrew Selee, eds., *Decentralization and Democratic Governance in Latin America,* Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2004, especially pp. 256-57. Similarly, Colombia allows independent candidacies in local elections. This provision has been credited with producing more dynamic governments at a local level and unleashing a process of municipal innovation. See Gabriel Murillo and Victoria Gómez, eds., *Redefinición del espacio público: eslabonamiento conceptual y seguimiento de las políticas públicas en Colombia,* Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes, 2005.

in Tijuana and Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl provide an excellent guide to what is possible if authorities want to implement a serious program of citizen engagement. The Tijuana model, as initially implemented, provides several design elements that make it a particularly appealing approach. It included thirteen citizen councilors from each district of the city who were elected as individuals, rather than on a slate of candidates, thus reducing partisan interference and making it more possible for individuals not associated with parties to win seats. It also included a parallel set of sectoral committees that dealt with substantive, cross-cutting issues, such as the environment, migration, disability, and public security. In a context where many urban issues affect different populations, these sectoral committees provided an opportunity to build cross-class dialogue on major policy issues, while the district committees dealt with investment decisions in specific zones. The model also allowed for frequent meeting among all of the various committees, which engaged citizens in deliberation over major, city-wide priorities rather than just their own community and sectoral concerns. Finally, the Tijuana model made all policy issues pass through the participatory planning structure for discussion but with final decision-making authority left to the elected city council, whose members chair the various committees. With a mayor who gave serious attention to the system, it both gave citizens an influential voice in almost every aspect of public policy and gave them direct access to elected officials, but also preserved the ultimate authority of the elected representatives.

The Tijuana model, however, lacked two important elements. First, it included no formal mechanism for the government and citizen councilors to report back to citizens at large within their neighborhoods. This reporting mechanism is an important element

built into many participatory budgeting processes in Brazil. Secondly, this model did

little to resolve non-infrastructure related issues within each of the districts. Here the

model employed in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl to create elected citizen participation councils

with their office in the municipality and with official stationery is particularly appealing.

Even with scant attention from the municipality, the participation councils have a legal

mandate to speak on a range of issues affecting their districts. With a real commitment

from municipal authorities, this model could provide a potent link between citizens and

the government and institutionalize a range of demands that now have to be channeled

through informal contacts and clientelistic networks.

Strengthen Civic Organizations and Independent Media: Perhaps the most

important set of reforms deal with how to strengthen civic organizations and independent

media. As argued above, the existence of strong social organizations linked to political

parties appears to be the single best determinant of sustaining a political process that

empowers citizens' voices. Strengthening the voice of citizens through organized groups

inside and outside of political parties and in independent media would go a long way to

motivating political leaders to innovate in favor of better democratic governance and to

sustain these innovations over time. However, for organizations outside of parties to be

effective they need to have sufficient ties among themselves so as to have an impact on

the political system. Where autonomous organizations exist with few links among

themselves, as in Tijuana, they tend to become irrelevant to political decision-makers. In

the much vaunted experience of Porto Alegre in Brazil, for example, the presence of

strong social organizations outside of the governing Workers' Party (PT) forced PT

governments to implement and maintain participatory budgeting as a means of

channeling the multiple voices of civil society that otherwise might have proved a challenge to their continuance in office.[13] The absence of strong civic and media organizations in Mexican municipalities means that they have little external pressure for change or to sustain innovation when it does occur.

None of these reforms alone would change state-society relations automatically or magically transform democratic governance in Mexico's municipalities. However, each would make a step in the right direction; taken together they would be a powerful force for change. The institutional changes in representation would certainly improve the responsiveness and accountability of elected officials. Laws and regulations on access to information would give citizens more direct knowledge of what decisions public authorities make. Serious attempts at participatory planning would create a powerful engagement of citizens in the political process and institutional mechanisms for citizen voice and deliberation that could, eventually, replace the informal processes for conducting politics through clientelism and particularism. Most importantly, strengthening civic organizations and independent media could both help stimulate change and provide a means to sustain it over time.

9.4 Broader Lessons: Deepening Democracy in Latin America

The findings of this study shed light on why decentralization has not gone further in improving democratic governance in Mexico and also how the effect of decentralization varies among municipalities depending on the nature of state-society

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[13] Marcus Melo, "Democratizing Budgetary Decisions and Execution in Brazil."

relations. The lessons of this study, however, go far beyond understanding the impact of decentralization; they also shed light on some of the broader challenges of democracy, especially in Latin America.

Democracy in Latin America is in a crisis. Opinion polls have consistently shown moderately declining public support for democracy in most countries in the region and a growing dissatisfaction with the way actual democracies work.[14] In part, the public's confidence in democracy has to do with the "output" side of these democracies: most countries in Latin America, including Mexico, have gone through democratic transitions at the same time that they have faced economic crises, increasing inequality, and an overall slowdown in growth.[15] For the most part, this result appears not to reflect failures of democracy, per se, but of simultaneous processes of democratization and economic stagnation. Indeed, in many countries, economic crises forced authoritarian regimes to open the political system, as in Mexico, but democracies have been unable to revive the economy sufficiently to win full public confidence.

However, some of the citizens' loss of faith in democracy also reflects "input" factors that have to do with the way these democracies operate. Citizens often do not find that their democracies produce governments that are accountable and responsive or create opportunities for their involvement in public decision-making. Democracies face declining public confidence, in part, because they are insufficiently democratic. This

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[14] See "The Latinobarometro Polls: Democracy's Low-Level Equilibrium," *The Economist,* August 12, 2004. In particular, the time series of the question "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government" is telling: it shows a decline in recent years in almost every country in the region, including Mexico. See also *Informe Latinobarómetro 1995-2005,* Santiago, Chile: Corporación Latinobarómetro, 2005, especially p. 52; and *Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens Democracy*, New York: United Nations Development Program, 2004.

[15] Kurt Weyland, "The Input and Output Sides of Democracy," unpublished paper presented at the seminar on "the Study of New Democracies in Latin American and Elsewhere: Reflections on the 25th Anniversary of the 'Transitions Project'" held at the Woodrow Wilson Center on Friday, October 1, 2004.

study points to several of the key elements in this failure, at least for Mexico; however, I suspect that many of the results analyzed here are likely to have a broader resonance in other countries of the region. Systems of representation create perverse incentives that keep elected authorities from being responsive and accountable to citizens; as a result, public authorities have few incentives to pursue transparency measures or to create opportunities for citizen participation outside of preexisting channels based on informal exchanges through political intermediaries. Old practices of clientelism and particularism thus persist and remain the primary way that citizens are linked to the political process. As a result, citizenship remains indirect for most people—that is, they have to appeal to political intermediaries to have their concerns heard by public authorities and, in many cases, to enforce their rights. The weak enforcement of citizenship rights further enforces the persistence of indirect citizenship. Since rule of law is weak and citizens have few hopes of obtaining state benefits without political connections, they depend on these intermediaries as an alternative to enforceable rights.

However, the quality of democracy also shows substantial variation across localities within each country. The findings here suggest that the way institutions develop and political and social actors interact help shape this varied texture. In the case of Mexico, the institutional structure of politics differs little from place to place. However, the nature of state-society relationship does vary considerably. Where civil society organizations are strong and linked effectively to the political system, there appears to be greater possibility that the political process will reflect citizens' views. Where independent media have the ability to monitor and critique public authorities, there is more likelihood of transparency. While further research is needed to determine

the exact configurations of state-society relations that produce the most effective forms of democratic governance, it is clear that new democracies in Latin America are likely to show great variations in the quality of governance across different municipalities. These differences will become increasingly important as municipalities increase their authority and autonomy within the state. These differences will matter a great deal for the way citizens experience democracy and how they evaluate its worth over time.