



Trading with Power: Mexico City's Markets, 1867-1958

Citation

Bleynat, Ingrid. 2013. Trading with Power: Mexico City's Markets, 1867-1958. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University.

Permanent link

<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:10860159>

Terms of Use

This article was downloaded from Harvard University's DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA>

Share Your Story

The Harvard community has made this article openly available.
Please share how this access benefits you. [Submit a story](#).

[Accessibility](#)

Trading with Power: Mexico City's Markets, 1867-1958

A dissertation presented

by

Ingrid Bleynat

to

The Department of History

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

History

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

April 2013

© 2013 Ingrid Bleynat

All rights reserved.

Dissertation Advisor: John Womack, Jr.

Ingrid Bleynat

Trading with Power: Mexico City's Markets, 1867-1958

Abstract

This dissertation traces the history of Mexico City's municipal markets from a patchwork of sites of customary trade dating from the colonial era to a network of state-controlled modernist halls in the 1950s. It shows how, as small-scale vendors of tomatoes, straw hats, charcoal and all manner of every-day necessities plied their trade and fought to protect their livelihoods, their interactions with the government and other social groups and classes transformed the city's markets and shaped the contours of popular politics in modern Mexico. More broadly, it uncovers vendors' role in the dual process of economic development and state formation.

Table of Contents

Title page	i
Copyright page	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgments	vi
Dedication	x
Introduction: Mexico, City of Markets	1
Chapter One: Taxes and Compassion, 1867 to 1880	5
1.1 Liberal Factionalism and a Sluggish Economy	6
1.2 Commerce and the City	8
1.3 Municipal Markets, Fiscal Needs, and Moral Economy	19
1.4 Vendor politics: Negotiating at the Fringe of the City’s Public Sphere	36
1.5 Conclusion	47
Chapter Two: The Business of Modernity, 1880 to 1903	49
2.1 Mexico in Peace and in Business	50
2.2 “Manto de Magnificencia ... Harapos de Mendigo”	53
2.3 New Halls, New Troubles	62
2.4 Locatarios in the Making: Compliance and Resistance	79
2.5 Conclusion	88
Chapter Three: From Plea to Grievance, 1903 to 1928	92
3.1 Imperialist Threats and Domestic Turmoil	93

3.2 Fragmented Markets, Orphaned Vendors	98
3.3 No Island is an Island	110
3.4 Vendors, Workers, or “Pueblo Ametrallado por Intereses Políticos”?	123
3.5 Conclusion	139
Chapter Four: Crises and Opportunities, 1929 to 1945	142
4.1 Mexico between the Big Crash and World War II	143
4.2 The Consejo Consultivo, an Experiment in “Democracia Funcional”	150
4.3 One city, many markets	166
4.4 Vendors’ Tribulations: Inflation Management and Contested Elections	183
4.5 Conclusion	189
Chapter Five: The Business of Development, 1945-1958	193
5.1 <i>Desarrollismo</i> in Mexico	194
5.2 Vendors and the Cost of Living	200
5.3 Growing City, Growing Challenges	215
5.4 Ernesto P. Uruchurtu, Peddler of Dreams	230
5.5 Conclusion	245
Conclusions	247
Appendix	249
References	270
Archives	270
Newspapers and Periodicals	272
Bibliography	273

Acknowledgements

I began this dissertation nine long years ago, incurring many debts along the way which, while they cannot be repaid, are a pleasure to acknowledge. My first thanks have to be to John Womack, Jr. I could have not hoped for a more inspiring, generous, patient, and knowledgeable advisor, who also had the wisest and kindest words when life turned both dark and bright. I will always cherish all he taught me about so much more than history. John Coatsworth's inquiring brilliance and intellectual energy never failed to convey an excitement for our field, and his talent for institution building as the Director of the Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies created the resources that enabled me, and many other Latin Americanist historians, to pursue part of my research. Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato has been a generous friend and guide since my first trips to Mexico, where she housed me, provided me with connections, and helped me to find my way around an entirely new country. Pablo Piccato's engagement with my project when it was most needed helped it come to fruition, and his insightful comments clarified and sharpened key arguments.

Harvard University was a superb base. The graduate studies coordinators Gail Rock and Matthew Corcoran were always supportive despite my foibles. Its libraries are an academic's paradise and would, even on their own, make Harvard an extraordinary place to study. It's financial support, through the history department, the GSAS, and the Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, made this PhD possible. I also had the luck and the privilege to study with the late Angeliki Laiou, whose dazzling intellect and passion for history are much missed. In Mexico City, I found libraries and archives wonderful places to work. The staff at the Archivo General de la Nación, the Archivo

Histórico del Distrito Federal, the Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca, the Biblioteca Lerdo de Tejada, and the library at the Instituto Mora were many times obliging beyond the call of duty. In particular, I want to thank the late Victoria San Vicente of the AHDF, for helping me locate the “lost” Actas y Versiones del Consejo Consultivo. I spent many days at La Merced market, asking boring questions to anybody kind enough to humor me. Víctor Manuel Martínez Cruz, of the Locatarios Unidos de La Merced, made sure I had plenty to drink and eat while at it, and saved me from some uncomfortable situations. Ernesto González Aldana provided invaluable research assistance. Conversations with Alejandra Moreno Toscano, Martha Schteingart, Soledad Loaeza, Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, and Andrés Lira contributed to the framing of this project and pointed in useful directions. In Buenos Aires, Pablo Levín has always made me feel I still have an intellectual home at the Centro de Estudios para la Planificación del Desarrollo. I shall always be grateful to him for teaching me that science can be emancipatory.

I have very special debts to my dear friends and fellow historians Nicolás Kwiatkowski, Olga González-Silén, Miles Rodríguez, and Louise Walker. Nicolás is responsible for my adventure into history, and has never stopped amazing me with his generosity and breadth of knowledge. Olga is a natural born historian if I ever met one. Her sophisticated historical sensibility molded my understanding of all things past, and improved my dissertation in countless ways. Miles taught me about the intricacies of Mexico’s labor struggles. His dedication and commitment to scholarship are an example I hope to follow. I was lucky to meet Louise at a *cantina* in Mexico City as I started research for this dissertation, and I do not exaggerate when I say I learned all I know

about the practice of historical research from her. Her warmth, creativity, intelligence, and professionalism are a constant source of inspiration. The four of them read my every attempt at making sense of Mexico City's markets and I learned from them more than I can thank them for.

Graduate school is a trying experience, which I would not have endured without good friends. Luck had it that the Harvard Latin American History bunch proved to be a fun and caring group, and for that I am grateful. Among them, Daniel Gutiérrez, Hal Jones, and Julia Sarreal guided me through the early years of coursework and exams; Amílcar Challú welcomed me in Mexico when I first traveled there, and took the time to introduce me to the city and its markets; Alison Adams, Sergio and Patty Silva, and Rainer Schultz always made me feel *sus casas son mis casas*. In Mexico, Bomee Jung, Louise Walker, Raphie Folsom, Laura Serna, Thom Rath, and Susanne Eineigel made the vagaries of research much more interesting and productive. Back in Buenos Aires, Mercedes D'Alessandro, Eduardo Crespo, Julián Verardi, and Axel Kicillof were always willing to discuss my work in between far more important matters, and have some fun while at it. Whether in Buenos Aires, London or elsewhere Paula Porroni reminded me that life, as well as history, is a succession of presents, and made sure I enjoyed at least some of them. In Oxford María Ana Lugo and Karen Croxson helped me settle in my third adopted country, and saw that I found a place to start writing. I also greatly appreciated Guy Geltner's inexhaustible willingness to talk history. Most recently, in Brighton, Emily Hahn and Ed Hogan became fictive family and provided my son the best of company while I was finishing this dissertation.

My parents deserve a big thanks for encouraging me to pursue my PhD even if they could not possibly understand why I would want to do it. My mother has always had a way of making me feel free, and supported me even when it meant I had to move abroad. I wish my father had lived to see me graduate, but I know he would be proud. My siblings never failed to be amused that their older sister remained a student long after they had become successful professionals. They always make me put things in perspective. Along the way I gained the most terrific family in-law. In particular, my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law have become dear friends. I could have not completed this dissertation without them.

Paul Segal, my wonderful husband, cheerleader, critic, and friend deserves most credit for this dissertation. I am forever grateful for his laughter, intelligence, and delicious meals, as well as for his unwavering belief that, no matter what I said or did, this day would come. Finally, my amazing son Camilo, still so little, has already taught me so much about the meaning of love, beauty, and work. I dedicate this dissertation to them. I owe them the world over.

To Paul and Camilo

Introduction:

Mexico, City of Markets

This dissertation traces the history of Mexico City's municipal markets from a patchwork of sites of customary trade dating from the colonial era to a network of state-controlled modernist halls in the 1950s. It shows how, as small-scale vendors of tomatoes, straw hats, charcoal and all manner of every-day necessities plied their trade and fought to protect their livelihoods, their interactions with the government and other social groups and classes transformed the city's markets and shaped the contours of popular politics in modern Mexico. More broadly, it uncovers vendors' role in the dual process of economic development and state formation.

Markets were a strategic public service that fed the population of the capital and provided the city government with much-needed fiscal revenue. A social space where different classes intermingled, municipal markets were also a locus of multiple, conflicting interests. Market vendors' livelihoods were threatened by government regulations and the elite's repeated attempts to turn the city into the elegant, or at least presentable, face of the nation. They were equally at risk of a gradual erosion of municipal markets due to official neglect. Their responses to these challenges changed with Mexican society, from invocations of custom and appeals to the authorities' compassion in the late-nineteenth century, through their appropriation of the language of rights of militant workers and the formation of unions during the Revolution and its aftermath, to the development of political connections in the 1920s and 1930s and

incorporation into the PRI's corporatist structures after World War II. Through careful negotiations they gained access to improved market infrastructure, protection from competition, and favorable arbitration in distributional struggles.

Market vendors' particular story is a product of their ambiguity as a social class. They are not workers, formal or informal, whose immediate conflict is with their employers over wages and conditions; neither are they capitalists in the usual sense, for while they employ a modest working capital to generate a profit, the only labor they exploit is their own or that of family members. For better or worse, market vendors remained locked into proprietary trading, competing among themselves and with street vendors over customers, with their suppliers and creditors over profit margins, and, as capitalism developed in Mexico, with modern forms of retail that tried to squeeze them out of their traditional position in the local economy. Their defenses of their interests were correspondingly idiosyncratic, sometimes in alliance with the labor movement, sometimes taking advantage of the state's efforts to repress it, and always in bitter tension with other retailers. Through an analysis of these conflicts, alliances, and negotiations, this dissertation seeks to understand the complexity of Mexico City's class structure, and its political implications.

Though difficult to categorize, market vendors appear in an array of primary sources. The first two chapters are based on materials from the archive of the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de Mexico between 1867 and 1903, including council minutes and reports, official speeches, laws and decrees, vendors' and merchants' petitions and complaints, and the responses by councilors and the Governor of the District. Chapter 1 finds vendors still embedded in a Catholic moral economy that

enabled a chronically-poor city council to effectively manage social inequalities. This chapter also uses newspaper articles to discuss vendors' position at the fringe of the local public sphere. Chapter 2 describes the Porfirian market construction boom and concomitant redefinition of what amounted to acceptable commercial practices. As a repressive consensus emerged, divisions between different groups of vendors sharpened.

Chapter 3 covers the period from the federalization of the city in 1903 to the second, final abolition of the city council in 1928. From 1903 to 1917 the city was run by a Consejo Superior de Gobierno composed of three presidential appointees answerable to the secretary of Gobernación: the governor of the Federal District, the general director of Public Works, and the president of the Superior Council of Public Health. The documents produced by, and addressed to, their offices show that markets stopped being a priority for the government, and that market management lost coherence as a result of the new distribution of responsibilities. These sources also show that vendors responded to the authorities' antagonism by expanding their political repertoire. While the Revolution did not improve markets' situation, it instilled new attitudes and expectations in vendors. After the Ayuntamiento was reinstated, newly-formed vendor unions allied themselves with worker federations to fight for economic and political rights. The footprints vendors left in presidential archives, the files of the labor department and the secretariat of Gobernación, and the press reveal that they belonged to a mobilized civil society that transformed the city and its public sphere.

The fourth and fifth chapters chronicle the government's efforts to respond to the demands of an increasingly mobilized but also fragmented vendor movement. After 1929, vendors were active within the Consultative Council, a proto-corporatist experiment the

government had launched to include representatives of different social classes in the discussion of urban policies. The minutes from this council's meetings have received very little attention from historians, but are a key source on the city's political economy during the 1930s and are analyzed in Chapter 4. As inflation escalated in the late 1930s, a pact between capitalists, workers and the state led to government intervention to keep consumer prices low, resulting in a squeeze on vendors' livelihoods, a trend that continued during and after World War II. Chapter 5 describes how economic growth and industrialization after 1945 came with a strong modernization drive that threatened to exclude vendors even further. Vendors reacted to these challenges by participating in national electoral campaigns, fighting to elect sympathetic congressmen through the CNOP, and strengthening their organizations to lobby at the local level. Complementing the materials from the presidential archives and the press, previously inaccessible intelligence service reports provide a new window into vendor politics, helping us understand how they carved themselves a space in the so-called Mexican miracle.

Chapter One:

Taxes and Compassion, 1867 to 1880

Mexico's public markets have always played an essential role in the life of city. This chapter examines the economic, political and moral dimensions of these markets before 1880, when besides feeding the local population, they were central to elite and popular constructions of public space, social cohesion, and political legitimacy. The *Ayuntamiento*, or municipal council, had governed markets since colonial times, regulating the economic activity of large swaths of the population across the social spectrum. In the republican period markets and the fiscal revenues they generated grew in importance to the Ayuntamiento, as it gradually lost funding and prerogatives to the federal government. Their contributions to the chronically-stretched city's coffers gave vendors and merchants greater bargaining power in their continuous negotiations with the authorities over their right to use public spaces for private, commercial purposes.

This empowerment, however, did not imply that vendors and merchants were able to participate in the restricted local public sphere, where councilmen, liberal politicians, and journalists alone debated market policies and, in general, what amounted to the public good. When vendors and merchants appear in these debates their presence is always mediated by the actions and voices of the journalists and politicians who, responding to their pleas, acted as their protectors. This exclusionary protection evidenced the continuity of a traditional, Catholic moral economy that placed market

vendors under the responsibility of an elite that perceived them as vulnerable and was thus obliged to treat them with compassion. The performance of this duty enabled an apt management of social inequalities which, combined with the effective allocation of scarce public resources, explains the absence of major urban conflicts.

1.1 Liberal Factionalism and a Sluggish Economy

In 1867, Mexico was once again a constitutional republic. Though nobody could know it at the time, the foreign military interventions of the nineteenth century, which had threatened the existence of Mexico as a country and cost its inhabitants so dearly, were a thing of the past. After Napoleon III withdrew French troops, leaving Austrian emperor Maximilian and his Conservative supporters to their fate, Liberals definitively became the rulers of the country.

At the end of four years of French occupation, and having witnessed the loss of almost half of the country's territory to the United States of America, President Benito Juárez was aware of the risks of continued civil strife.¹ As he sought political conciliation, Conservatives either withdrew from public life or were assimilated to liberalism, a project that perceived the stability of republican forms as a necessity for the country's survival as a sovereign state. Thus, it was essential to the construction of a viable polity to constrain the actions of the Catholic Church, which under Pope Pius IX condemned the separation of church and state, freedom of speech and religion, and other

¹ Friedrich Katz, "The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato," in ed. Leslie Bethell, *Mexico since Independence* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-124; Brian R. Hamnett, *Juárez* (London: Longman, 1994); Frank A. Knapp, *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, 1823-1889* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951); Alan Knight, "El liberalismo mexicano, de la Reforma a hasta la Revolución (una interpretación)," *Historia Mexicana* 35, no. 1 (July-September 1985): 59-92.

liberal principles, as modern errors.² As a result, Catholicism was banned from official politics even if it remained the professed faith of virtually all the citizenry.

Still, secular constitutionalism did not mean the end of conflict. While violence, including that resulting from banditry and agrarian social unrest, was widespread and remained the norm outside of Mexico City, the most relevant political features of the period were bitter liberal factionalism and personal struggles for power. Reforms to the federalist constitution of 1857 provided for a stronger central government, leading to opposition and revolts against the national executive in several states. The last successful liberal uprising brought General Porfirio Díaz to the presidency in 1876.³

As an economic project liberalism also encountered problems. Just like the quest for peace, economic prosperity turned out to be elusive in this period. The scant data available suggest that national product grew slowly, while indicators such as federal revenues and railroad construction improved only slightly before 1880. An empty treasury made repayment of foreign debts difficult and infrastructure works impossible. Lack of investment and employment opportunities meant that political appointments and military actions were the only path to upward social mobility. Mining, mostly silver, and sisal revitalized foreign trade, but prohibitively expensive internal communications,

² See papal encyclical *Quanta Cura* and its appendix, the *Syllabus Errorum*, both from December 8, 1864.

³ On liberal infighting: Brian R. Hamnett, "Liberalism Divided: Regional Politics and the National Project during the Mexican Restored Republic, 1867-1876," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (Nov. 1996): 659-689; Laurens Ballard Perry, *Juárez and Díaz: Machine Politics in Mexico* (DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 1978), 184-185; Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). For an analysis of liberalism from the bottom up, see Guy P. C. Thomson, "Popular Aspects of Liberalism in Mexico, 1848-1888," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 10, no. 3. (1991): 265-292.

deficient capital markets, and other institutional constraints prevented domestic economic integration and economic growth.⁴

1.2 Commerce and the City

Seat of the federal government, the capital Mexico City was the bureaucratic center of the country. It was a hub for officials on public payrolls and ambitious individuals seeking connections and concessions. Since those who could afford it spent their fortunes on mansions and townhouses, organized banquets, and kept stables and servants, Mexico City was the center of the country's conspicuous consumption. With a population of 200,000-225,000 it was also the most populous city in the country and the largest consumers' market.⁵ Yet, with a quarter of its residents described as *léperos*, a term encompassing petty thieves, vagrants, and beggars, the capital was a city of stark contrasts.⁶

⁴ On liberalism as an economic project: Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato Freer and Emilio Kouri, "La reforma económica. Finanzas públicas, mercados y tierras," in ed. Erika Pani, *Nación, constitución y reforma. 1821-1908* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica / CIDE / INEHRM / CONACULTA, 2010); Marcello Carmagnani, *Estado y Mercado: La economía pública del liberalismo mexicano, 1850-1911* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica/Colegio de México, 1994). On economic performance: Enrique Cárdenas, *Cuando se originó el atraso económico de México: La economía mexicana en el largo siglo XIX, 1720-1920* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Fundación Ortega y Gasset, 2003), chapter IV; Paolo Riguzzi, "Los caminos del atraso: Tecnología, instituciones en inversión en los ferrocarriles mexicanos, 1850-1900," in eds. Sandra Kuntz Ficker and Paolo Riguzzi, *Ferrocarriles y vida económica en México, 1850-1950: Del surgimiento tardío al decaimiento precoz* (Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense/Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco, 1996), 31-97.

⁵ *Estadísticas históricas de México* (Aguascalientes: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, 1990), 1:24.

⁶ Francisco López Cámara, *La estructura económica y social de México en la época de la reforma* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1976), 227-228; Luis González y González, Emma Cosío Villegas, and Guadalupe Monroy, *La República Restaurada: Vida social*, vol. 3 of *Historia moderna de México*, ed. Daniel Cosío Villegas (Mexico City: Hermes, 1957), 100; "The leperos [sic] of the city of Mexico are that peculiar nondescript class which in Europe is only to be found in the lazzaroni of Naples. Clad in rags, with no fixed abode, they earn their livelihood in the most mysterious manner, and ever cheerful in temperament, they combine unusual shrewdness with a remarkable ability for repartee." John Lewis

Public markets dotted an urban economic landscape dominated by commercial establishments, a pattern that would remain unaltered for many decades to come. Of nearly 1,200 economic units in the city council registry, three-quarters were devoted to purely commercial activities, large and small, with some selling multiple goods, and others specializing, for example, in charcoal or silk products. Most of the remaining quarter combined production with commercialization, as in the case of bakeries, carpenters' shops, cobblers, blacksmiths, and the like. Labor intensive and small in scale, they produced for the local urban population.⁷

These registered establishments divided into retail and wholesale stores.⁸ Wholesale stores dealt in manufactures, both national and imported, and were mostly in the hands of foreigners who supplied merchants in different parts of the country.⁹ Among

Geiger, *A Peep at Mexico: Narrative of a Journey across the Republic from the Pacific to the Gulf in December 1873 and January 1874* (London: Trübner & Co., 1874), 294; on how the term was introduced in Mexico starting with Humboldt's use of it, see Silvia M. Arrom, *Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), 34-35.

⁷ In contrast, larger factories tended to be in the city's outskirts: for example, glass was produced near el Paseo de la Viga, crockery at Salto del Agua on the road to San Angel, and cloth and paper in San Angel, la Magdalena, and Tlalpan. Adriana López Monjardin, "El espacio en la producción: Ciudad de México, 1850," in ed. Alejandra Moreno Toscano, *Ciudad de México: Ensayo de construcción de una historia* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1978), 57. On textile production see Dawn Keremitsis, *La industria textil mexicana en el siglo XIX* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1973); on bakeries, Robert G. Weis, *Basques and Bakers: A Social History of Bread in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012); Carlos Illades, "Composición de la fuerza de trabajo y de las unidades productivas en la Ciudad de México, 1788-1873," in ed. Regina Hernández Frayunti, *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 1994), 2:265-268; Francisco R. Calderón, *La República Restaurada: Vida Económica*, vol. 2 of *Historia moderna*, ed. Cosío Villegas (1955), 87-88.

⁸ A list of types of commercial and industrial establishments in Mexico in 1879 and a census of industrial enterprises in the Federal District can be found in volume 1 of Emiliano Busto, *Estadística de la República Mexicana. Estado que guardan la agricultura, industria, minería y comercio. Resumen y análisis de los informes rendidos a la Secretaría de Hacienda por los agricultores, mineros, industriales y comerciantes de la república y los agentes de México en el exterior, en respuesta a las circulares de 1 de agosto de 1877*. (Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1880). Unfortunately he produced no census of the Federal District's commercial firms.

⁹ Laura Elena Castillo Méndez, *Historia del comercio en la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal, Secretaría de Obras y Servicios, Colección Popular, 1973), 45-46.

them were the richest merchants in Mexico. Perhaps the most significant wholesale activities were those involving imported textiles. In the late 1860s German and Spanish immigrants dominated this trade but soon they would be displaced by the French Barcelonettes, who, having established themselves in retail trade by operating small stores selling fabric bought from textile mills all over the country, moved into wholesale and put their competitors out of business. Eventually, they would also open the first department stores in Mexico City.¹⁰

Registered retail stores sold imported goods, the products of Mexican factories, those of artisanal production, particular foodstuffs such as meat, and daily necessities such as firewood. They ranged from the most elegant stores on Plateros Street, where luxury items in general and the latest French fashion in particular could be found, to the shops in the Portal de Mercaderes, where “tailors, hatters, milliners, jewelers” were “the chief occupants.”¹¹ More ordinary garments could be bought in specialized stores on Monterilla Street, and in less central streets the workshops of local artisans devoted a space overlooking the street to the sale of their goods.¹² There were also a large number of licensed meat shops scattered throughout the city, including many in lower-class areas.¹³ Businessmen of French, German, and Spanish origins were prominent figures in

¹⁰ Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato Freer, “The Impact of Revolution: Business and Labor in Mexican Textile Industry, Orizaba, Veracruz, 1900-1930” (Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 1999), 59-61.

¹¹ Geiger, *Peep at Mexico*, 250.

¹² Marcos Arróniz, *Manual del viajero en Méjico, o Compendio de la historia de la Ciudad de Méjico* (Mexico City: Librería de Rosa y Bouret, 1858), 41.

¹³ Jeffrey M. Pilcher, “Fajitas and the Failure of Refrigerated Meatpacking in Mexico: Consumer Culture and Porfirian Capitalism,” *The Americas* 60, no.3 (Jan. 2004), 417; Popular consumption of meat was not a new phenomenon: Enriqueta Quiroz, *Entre el lujo y la subsistencia. Mercado, abastecimiento, y precio de la carne en la Ciudad de México, 1750-1812* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Centro de Estudios Históricos Instituto Dr. José María Luis Mora, 2005).

high-end, highly profitable, retail activities catering exclusively to the upper and middle classes, while Mexicans ran most of all other retail ventures.¹⁴

At the other end of the commercial spectrum were the ubiquitous itinerant vendors. No contemporaneous observer, whether foreign or national, failed to note the myriad street peddlers.¹⁵ As one British traveler reminisced:

Flower-girls exhibit their magnificent bouquets, which they offer for a few *reales*, spread out temptingly on a wide part of the pavement; *aguadores* cased in their leather garments with huge water-jars on their backs, suspended by straps from their foreheads ... ; *carboneros*, men and women, bending under their dingy huacalitos, wander from house to house; whilst countless hawkers of confectionary, dulces, agua fresca, tamales (a species of savoury roll, made of maize-dough and meat), and a hundred other dainties, carry their wares on their heads, and make the air ring with their motley cries.¹⁶

These itinerant vendors sold all sorts of items, from toys and traditional Mexican shawls, the *rebozos*, to a great variety of foodstuffs and herbs. Among them were those who offered prepared foods to the city's laboring classes who, pressed for time and lacking cooking facilities where they lived, took their meals on the city's streets. Some of them were poor single women or widows struggling to provide for their families.¹⁷ Others were wives and children of factory workers or artisans who by selling on the

¹⁴ López, *Estructura económica y social*, 83-84.

¹⁵ Several examples can be found in eds. Hira de Gortari Rabiela and Regina Hernández Frayunti, *Memoria y encuentros: La Ciudad de México y el Distrito Federal, 1824-1928* (Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal/Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, 1988), 3:188-207.

¹⁶ Geiger, *Peep at Mexico*, 290-291. Aguadores are water carriers; carboneros are sellers of charcoal, their huacalitos being their baskets. Dulces is a generic word for sweets; agua fresca is flavored water, usually with fruits or flowers.

¹⁷ Susie S. Porter, *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879-1931* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 133-138; Silvia M. Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 158-159.

streets contributed to their household income.¹⁸ In addition, among street vendors were artisans who, unable to find a clientele to sell to directly or incapable or unwilling to find an outlet for their products in the established retail stores, peddled the streets with their wares. Finally, small-scale producers of flowers, vegetables and fruits from the city's hinterland participated in this trade. While some foreigners like John Lewis Geiger found peddlers and their products picturesque, wealthy Mexicans complained acrimoniously about their permanent presence in the capital.¹⁹ Though lambasted by local journalists and writers, this commercial practice was nevertheless sometimes justified by the authorities as the last resort of the poor, whose material survival demanded tolerance.

In between the worlds of the established, registered stores and the peddlers were the city's public markets—public in the sense that they were a service to be provided by the city council for urban residents, with their accessibility, adequate supply, order, and cleanliness a paramount matter of good polity.²⁰ While the more affluent city dwellers purchased many goods in the retail shops described above, the vast majority of the urban population depended on the smooth functioning of public markets for reliable access to essential goods such as charcoal, oil, hats, chilies, and beans. A disruption of their supply could trigger riots in the national capital, where most of the country's richest people lived. The city authorities were well aware of the risks, and from this followed their

¹⁸ Lanny Thompson, "Artisans, Marginals, and Proletarians: The Households of the Popular Classes in Mexico City, 1876-1950," in eds. Virginia Guedea and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *5 Centuries of Mexican History/5 Siglos de Historia Mexicana* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/University of California Irvine, 1992), 1:308-312.

¹⁹ López, *Estructura económica y social*, 413.

²⁰ *Memoria que el Ayuntamiento popular de 1869 presenta a sus comitentes* (Mexico City: Tipografía del Comercio de N. Chavez, 1870), 159-160. Hereafter *Memoria 1869*. The same applies to other *Memorias*.

constant concern with public markets. Public markets were not just a public necessity, but a strategic service.

Nonetheless, in 1868 the six existing markets were in poor shape, as indicated by the Ayuntamiento's markets administrator. Some were too old or poorly built, and others mere improvised gatherings of vendors.²¹ La Merced, for example, was a completely undeveloped lot, a city property where vendors had been carrying out their transactions in precarious stalls or directly from mats placed on the ground since they had been moved there from other locations around the city in 1865.²² Santa Catarina, Iturbide, and El Jardín had been remodeled in the late 1840's and early 1850's, but were already in ruins, while the unfinished but active Jesús Market had been under construction since 1857.²³ The main market for foodstuffs and basic consumption goods, El Volador, was in constant need of repairs, not least because its wooden frames frequently caught fire.

Public markets were hardly homogeneous places. The physical infrastructure was varied even within each market. Moreover, as discussed later on, their physical boundaries were ill-defined, encompassing agglomerations of stalls and vending spots around the few existing halls as well as in nearby streets. This was especially true of El Volador, the biggest gathering of merchants and vendors in the city. In addition to a hall containing one hundred internal fixed stalls, and another hundred overlooking the streets (*cajones interiores* and *cajones exteriores*, respectively), this market also included an upper floor used as a warehouse, as well as semi-fixed and mobile booths called *puestos*

²¹ *Memoria que el Ayuntamiento constitucional del año de 1868 presenta para el conocimiento de sus comitentes* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1869), 149.

²² 3/1/1865, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3733, exp. 424; 2/28/1865, vol. 3733, exp. 427.

²³ *Memoria 1868*, 155-6.

eventuales and eighteen stands under a shed, the *tinglados*. Finally, there were the *sombras*, the tripod parasols under which many vendors, especially women, carried out their business.²⁴

Earlier in the century, customers had gone to public markets in search of both imported and Mexican products, as well as to provide themselves with luxury and basic items. The richest retail merchants, those with shops in El Parián Market in the city center, sold imported luxury goods, including textiles from Japan and the Philippines.²⁵ Looted in 1828 in the midst of the Acordada revolt, El Parián went into a decline that lasted until 1843 when President Santa Anna ordered its demolition.²⁶ As importers sought private accommodations, public markets became specialized in the sale of Mexican products for everyday consumption, so by the late 1860s only these products were found there.

According to the rules and regulations, foodstuffs were to be sold in markets, as concentration would facilitate the monitoring of prices, qualities, weights, and measures; allocation of stalls was therefore supposed to privilege requests from merchants and

²⁴ Ibid., 154; *Memoria 1869*, 161.

²⁵ Guillermo Prieto, *Memorias de mis tiempos, 1828 a 1840* (Mexico City: Librería de la Vda. de C. Bouret, 1906), 33-35.

²⁶ Silvia M. Arrom, "Popular Politics in Mexico City: The Parian Riot, 1828," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (May 1988), 256; María Rebeca Yoma Medina and Luis Alberto Martos López, *Dos mercados de en la historia de la Ciudad de México: El Volador y La Merced* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1990), 58-59; for the revolt in the broader political context see: Richard A. Warren, *Vagrants and Citizens: Politics and the Masses in Mexico City from Colony to Republic* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2001), chapter 4; Donald F. Stevens, "Riot, Rebellion, and Instability in Nineteenth-Century Mexico," in Guedea and Rodríguez, *5 Centuries*, 1:344-354. For a thorough and insightful history of El Parián, as well as of the foodstuffs and second-hand goods markets that occupied the Plaza Mayor from the sixteenth century to the 1790s, see Jorge Olvera Ramos, *Los mercados de la Plaza Mayor de México* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 2007).

vendors of foodstuffs.²⁷ This privilege was not, however, exclusive. The goods sold in public markets included everything necessary for running a household, from fruits, vegetables, and flowers, to cloth, construction materials, and household goods made by artisans. The two hundred fixed and most expensive *cajones* in El Volador Market sold mainly non-perishables, as only these generated enough profits to pay for them, while fresh foodstuffs were relegated to the market's four less costly open squares, where they were sold in *puestos eventuales* and *sombras*.²⁸ In Iturbide Market, also called San Juan after the plaza on which it was built, the council's attempt to control the type of commerce taking place there was reflected in a detailed municipal bylaw that partitioned the market by the types of goods that could be sold at each section. Internal stalls numbered one through six were meant for butchers, while stalls numbered eight through ten could be rented to merchants dealing in earthenware, glass objects, and similar goods. Remaining spaces could be occupied by vendors of pork, poultry, fish, game, and salted meats, and the sale of cotton cloth, shawls, and serapes, and of washtubs, trays, and large earthen jars was allowed as long as it did not hurt the trade in foodstuffs. Stalls in the exterior part of the market, though expected to serve sellers of fresh produce, could house trade in charcoal and tar, as well as construction materials such as bricks, sand, and lime.

²⁷ "Sobre ordenanzas de los mercados," in ed. José M. del Castillo Velasco, *Colección de leyes, supremas órdenes, bandos, disposiciones de policía y reglamentos municipales de administración del Distrito Federal* (Mexico City: Castillo Velasco e Hijos, 1874), 319-323; *Reglamento para el nuevo mercado de San Juan de la Penitenciaría de la Ciudad de México*, 1850, arts. 3, 6, and 11. A complete version of this document can be found in Archivo Salubridad Pública: fondo Salubridad Pública, sección Higiene Pública, serie Inspección de Alimentos y Bebidas, caja 1, exp. 3. It is also reproduced, though partially, under the title of "Reglamento para el mercado Iturbide," in Gortari Rabiela and Hernández Franyuti, *Memoria y encuentros*, 3:219-220. The quotations below are from the complete document, hereafter referred to as *Reglamento mercado San Juan*.

²⁸ *Memoria 1868*, 154; "Informe presentado el 16 de Junio por la Comisión de Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, June 26, 1879, 1.

Some of these products, due to their combustible nature, were to be traded there in order to avoid fires inside.²⁹

Different ways of doing business coexisted in public markets. Hidden behind the homogenizing rubric of *comerciantes* were two types of traders. On the one hand, there were capitalist merchants, some of whom individually ran multiple stalls, as was the case of Donasiano Serna and Mr. Ocaranza, who rented respectively three and four stalls in El Volador.³⁰ Rules governing markets allowed individuals to rent as many stalls as they deemed convenient, and inside El Volador, where the richest merchants in dry-goods, hardware, and non-perishable foodstuffs operated, there were ten or twelve stores occupying up to forty square meters each.³¹ These merchants had enough capital to hire employees to take care of customers, and they signed leases for their stalls for up to ten years.³² They sold the products of factories and artisans' workshops, and staples such as beans and meat, which they bought from the *introduectores*, the wholesalers in charge of bringing the goods into the city.³³

On the other hand, larger numbers of less affluent vendors, usually dealing in perishable goods such as foodstuffs and flowers or other essential items like straw hats and *petates*, traded independently with no help other than from their families, paying

²⁹ *Reglamento mercado San Juan*, arts. 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12.

³⁰ "De la Comisión de Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, November 24, 1877, 1; "De la Comisión de Hacienda," *Municipio Libre*, February 9, 1878, 1.

³¹ *Reglamento mercado San Juan*, art. 43; "Informe presentado el 16 de Junio por la Comisión de Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, June 26, 1879, 1; "[De la] Comisión de Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, April 21, 1887, 1.

³² *Reglamento mercado San Juan*, art. 35.

³³ Pilcher, "Fajitas," 416.

daily fees for the much smaller booths or spaces they occupied.³⁴ During 1869, according to Administrator Juan G. Brito's estimate in his report to the Ayuntamiento, 2,322 vendors paid daily fees to the city's collectors for the use of *puestos eventuales* alone.³⁵ Their position in the city's commercial structure depended on the line of business they were in. For example, sellers of hats and mats bought from artisans or were themselves the producers, while vendors of *vísceras* bought them from the slaughterhouse workers in charge of the killing floor.³⁶ Sellers of fruits and vegetables bought from small-scale agricultural producers from the city's hinterland who brought their products into town. In general their working capital was small, which might explain why in the improvised La Merced Market, producers protested that vendors there did not pay them for their vegetables on the spot, but delayed payments for several days.³⁷ These vendors had to adapt to the seasonal availability of goods, and therefore some of their stalls and commercial spaces were vacant during part of the year, especially the winter months.³⁸

³⁴ Castillo, *Historia del comercio*, 46. *Petates* were multipurpose mats used by the lower classes during their complete life cycle, starting as cradle, then as bed, table-cloth, and umbrella, and finally as shroud. González, Cosío and Monroy, *La República Restaurada: Vida social*, 255.

³⁵ *Memoria que el Ayuntamiento popular de 1869 presenta a sus comitentes* (Mexico City: Tipografía del Comercio de N. Chávez, 1870), 165. The total number of people selling in public markets every day is reported as more than 3000 for the following decades in Diego G. López Rosado, *Los mercados de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Comercio, 1982), 189. He gives no indication of the source of this estimate, however.

³⁶ Pilcher, "Fajitas," 417; *Memoria 1868*, 153.

³⁷ 05/22/1871, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3734, exp. 550.

³⁸ Judith E. Martí, "Subsistence and the State: Municipal Government Policies and Urban Markets in Developing Nations: the Case of Mexico City and Guadalajara, 1877-1910" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Anthropology Department, University of California, Los Angeles, 1990), 131; *Memoria 1868*, 157-159.

Many of the small-scale producers of flowers, fruit, and vegetables who sold to market vendors came from the *chinampas*, the floating gardens to the south of the city.³⁹ These man-made islands, constructed in the lakes and canals and irrigated by the surrounding waters, had been supplying Mexico City since before colonial times.⁴⁰ In late January 1873, a journalist based in Havana, Cuba, traveling to the city on the occasion of the inauguration of the first railway connecting Veracruz with the capital, visited the *chinampas* and wrote: “I think I have just contemplated Moctezuma’s empire as Cortés found it, with its flower islands, its delicious *huertas*, its canoes, and its Indians.”⁴¹

The peasants from the *chinampas* contributed to the traffic of the busy Chalco Canal through which every morning at daybreak “hundreds of Indian canoes, of different forms and sizes, freighted with the greatest variety of the animal and vegetable productions of the neighborhood,” entered the city. Among their cargoes were “the finest cultivated vegetables which are produced in European gardens” and “the numberless fruits of the torrid zone,” all “piled up in pyramids, and decorated with the most gaudy

³⁹ Jorge Silva Riquer, “El abasto al mercado urbano de la Ciudad de México, 1830-1860,” in Hernández Franyuti, *La Ciudad de México*, 1:78-80; López Rosado, *Los mercados*, 182.

⁴⁰ Charles Gibson, *Aztecs under Spanish Rule, A history of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico 1519-1810* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), 321. The major chinampa region, which extended from Santa Ana, Ixtacalco, and San Juanico to Mexicalzingo and Xochimilco, survived into the twentieth century.

⁴¹ José F. Vergéz, *Recuerdos de Méjico* (Barcelona: Imprenta de Henrich y Cía., 1902), 197. This was not only a foreigner’s view; for a similar statement by a famous local chronicler see: Antonio García Cubas, “Las Estaciones en el Valle de México,” in *Escritos Diversos de 1870 a 1874* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1874), 107.

flowers.”⁴² These canoes, carrying about eighty thousand loads per year at the beginning of the 1860s, supplied the city with most of its daily needs of fresh produce.⁴³

1.3 Municipal Markets, Fiscal Needs, and Moral Economy

By 1867, the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, the city council, had the exclusive prerogative to build, open, tax, and administer public markets. This meant that neither the Gobierno del Distrito, the arm of the federal government in Mexico City, nor an individual or group of individuals could buy or build a structure with stalls and rent them out to individual merchants. Nor could the governor or the president issue licenses for vendors to set up their own stalls. The claim by the Ayuntamiento to a legal and practical monopoly over issues pertaining to markets was paired with the acceptance of the material burden and the public responsibility that watching over their appropriate functioning entailed. For these purposes the Ayuntamiento appointed a markets administrator to supervise the collection of market fees, apply markets’ rules and regulations, solve minor conflicts between *comerciantes* and their customers and among vendors and merchants themselves, and provide for the cleanliness of the fountains and the market in general, all with the assistance of municipal employees.⁴⁴

Over the nineteenth century, the consolidation of the Ayuntamiento’s power over markets was part of a broader process establishing the city council’s competence and

⁴² William Bullock, *Six Months Residence and Travels in Mexico* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, [1824] 1971), 188-189.

⁴³ Pérez Hernández reports the number of canoe loads entering Mexico City as 78,934 and 81,217 in 1860 and 1861 respectively in José María Pérez Hernández, *Estadística de la República Mejicana* (Guadalajara: Tipográfica del Gobierno, 1862), 171.

⁴⁴ *Reglamento mercado San Juan*, in particular, arts. 4-5, 18, 24-25, 27, and 60-65.

administrative jurisdiction relative to other authorities. In 1812, building upon the realities and long-standing institutional provisions of the Spanish Empire, the Cortes de Cádiz kept the government of cities, towns, and *pueblos* in the hands of Ayuntamientos, while making them subject to the control of a provincial Jefe Superior Político appointed by the Crown.⁴⁵ A year later the Cortes confirmed the old colonial duties of the Ayuntamientos: they would be in charge of the polity of the cities, which involved, among other responsibilities, maintaining the cleanliness of streets and markets, the appropriate supply to cities, and the conservation of public fountains.⁴⁶ After independence, the Ayuntamientos' legal standing had to be accommodated within the new set of republican institutions. As before, these elected bodies would fulfill certain functions required for good urban polity, now overseen by state governments with veto powers over their decisions and regulated by state constitutions. In the case of Mexico City, which after being federalized in 1824 was not subject to the authority of any state, both the relationship with "higher authorities" and its executive responsibilities were left unclear and would remain legally unsettled until the issue of the *Ordenanzas Municipales* of 1840.

The relationship between the Ayuntamiento and the national government was ridden with conflict, especially over the limits and scope of the Ayuntamiento's jurisdiction vis-à-vis those of the government of the Federal District, and then the government of the Departamento de México during the first centralist republic (1836-

⁴⁵ "Constitución política de la monarquía española, promulgada en Cádiz el 19 de marzo de 1812," arts. 309, 321, 323, 324, and 325, in *Los derechos del pueblo mexicano, México a través de sus constituciones*, 15 vols. (Mexico City: Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión/Porrúa Grupo Editorial, 2000), 11:143.

⁴⁶ "Decreto de 23 de junio de 1813," arts. 1 and 5, in *Los derechos del pueblo mexicano*, 11:149.

1843). These jurisdictional disputes involved contentions, negotiations, and competition over, for example, the provision and regulation of public services, and the definition and collection of taxes.⁴⁷ Tensions derived in part from the role assigned to the Ayuntamiento in elections held in the city, especially after 1830, when it fell on the council to appoint the commissioners who would take a census of the electorate, distribute ballots among those eligible to vote, and supervise voting on election days.⁴⁸ More generally, the fact that this body had to coexist in Mexico City with the national government during the arduous process that eventually led to the formation of a federalist state created ample grounds for conflict.⁴⁹

The Ordenanzas of 1840 defined and regulated the city council's specific functions and its obligations to provide public services.⁵⁰ They also determined that any decision made by the Ayuntamiento had to be approved by the governor of the Departamento, which in practice meant the consent of the secretary de Gobernación and the president. As Ariel Rodríguez Kuri shows in his attempt to recover the “forgotten experience” of the city's institutions, the innovation brought by the Ordenanzas in 1840 was the simultaneous institutionalization of the political control of the national government over the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, and the confirmation of a

⁴⁷ Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “Política e institucionalidad. El Ayuntamiento de México y la evolución del conflicto jurisdiccional, 1808-1850,” in Hernández Franyuti, *La Ciudad de México*, 2:51-94.

⁴⁸ Richard A. Warren, “Desafío y trastorno en el gobierno municipal: El Ayuntamiento de México y la dinámica política nacional, 1821-1855,” in eds. Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931* (Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán/UAM, 1996), 123-124.

⁴⁹ Hira de Gortari Rabiela, “Política y Administración en la Ciudad de México. Relaciones entre el Ayuntamiento y el Gobierno del Distrito Federal y el Departamental: 1824-1843,” in Hernández Franyuti, *La Ciudad de México*, 2:166-183.

⁵⁰ “Ordenanzas formadas por la Junta Departamental en el año de 1840,” in Castillo, *Colección de leyes*, 293-339.

certain degree of autonomy by the Ayuntamiento to exercise a series of functions with immediate implications for the city's landscape.⁵¹ Tensions endured, but the Ordenanzas created a stable framework for the working of the Ayuntamiento. What is more, as we shall see, by giving the city council some freedom to act upon the city, they delineated the boundaries of a local political sphere.

As for public markets, their control by the Ayuntamiento had been built not only in legal and practical confrontations with other authorities, but also by removing certain activities from private hands. Over the first two decades after independence, the plazas in which markets were held were bought from the individual owners, and one very lucrative type of stall, the *sombras*, became a municipal operation removed from the control of private interests. In 1837, for example, the Ayuntamiento bought from the Marquesado del Valle de Oaxaca, the biggest non-ecclesiastic urban real estate holder of the time, the property on which El Volador Market was located.⁵² The purchase took place after decades of conflict over the rents the city council had failed to pay due to lack of resources.⁵³ In the case of the *sombras* in this market, the Ayuntamiento called attention to the need to secure the rents from this type of stall at least as early as 1830, when it reported that three individuals were renting out five hundred parasols, producing 4,800 pesos per annum, in violation to the principle that markets were “for the benefit of the Ayuntamiento.” It recommended that the markets commission build the tripod parasols and hire employees, who, under the watch of the administrator, would set them up and

⁵¹ Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *La experiencia olvidada, El Ayuntamiento de México: política y gobierno, 1876-1912* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Azcapotzalco, 1996), 26.

⁵² María Dolores Morales, “Estructura urbana y distribución de la propiedad de la Ciudad de México en 1813,” *Historia Mexicana* 25, no. 3 (Jan.-Mar. 1976): 385-386, 399-400.

⁵³ Yoma and Martos, *Dos mercados*, 109.

put them away each day.⁵⁴ The same report called for action against private landings by the canals, where the owners charged for the use of the offloading area.

The jurisdiction over markets spelled out in the Ordenanzas of 1840 was then ratified in fiscal laws passed in 1848. By then, running markets was one of the activities of the Ayuntamiento that would not be effectively challenged either by private interests or by other authorities. The fact that jurisdiction over markets had been clarified encouraged the municipal body to complete the purchase of other plazas such as San Juan and Jesús. It also persuaded the Ayuntamiento to improve the conditions of the existing markets and to build new ones, to the extent afforded by municipal resources. In Villamil Market, seventy wooden stalls were rebuilt between 1850 and 1851. Santa Catarina's stalls were also refurbished, and masonry walls and ceilings put up during those same years; the sidewalks surrounding it were paved. The Iturbide Market on the recently acquired San Juan plaza was inaugurated in late January 1850.⁵⁵

Later in the decade, the importance of markets to the Ayuntamiento was reinforced when attacks on corporate holdings became law. The *Ley Lerdo* of 1856 and the 1857 Constitution forbade civil and religious corporations from owning or administering properties others than those "directly and immediately used for the purpose

⁵⁴ *Memoria económica de la Municipalidad de México formada por orden del Excelentísimo Ayuntamiento, por comisión de su seno en 1830* (Mexico City: Martín Rivere, 1830), quoted in de Gortari and Hernández, *Memoria y encuentros*, 3:168. By the late 1870s this had become standard practice. See for example: "De la [Comisión] de Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, July 11, 1878, 1.

⁵⁵ Manuel Orozco y Berra, *Historia de la Ciudad de México, desde su fundación hasta 1854, Selección de artículos publicados en el Diccionario Universal de Historia y Geografía (1854) preparada por el Seminario de Historia Urbana del Departamento de Investigaciones Históricas del INAH* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Septentas, 1973), 122-131.

and object of the institution.”⁵⁶ Not just religious corporations and peasant communities were forced to divest themselves of valuable assets by the desamortization laws; in Mexico City the public sector as a whole saw its share in the value of property owned there decline from over 6 percent in 1848 to less than 1 percent of the total in 1864, mostly due to the forced sale of property held by the Ayuntamiento.⁵⁷ With the “purpose and object” of the Ayuntamiento codified in the Ordenanzas, public markets became one of the few instances in which the Ayuntamiento retained the right to own property and, therefore, to exert direct control over the cityscape.⁵⁸

Parallel to the construction of the Ayuntamiento’s sphere of jurisdiction over urban matters was the need for a fiscal structure that could, at least in principle, support the obligations this implied. The development of such a structure involved further conflict with the national government, stemming from direct competition over revenue generated in the city, the only portion of the country’s territory over which the national authorities exerted fiscal control.⁵⁹ In this context, financial subjection of the city council became the norm, starting with the nationalization of the city’s customs revenues in 1826. As

⁵⁶ Constitution of 1857, art. 23. On desamortization of ecclesiastical properties: Jan Bazant, *Alienation of Church Wealth in Mexico: Social and Economic Aspects of the Liberal Revolution, 1856-1875* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1970); On the liberal reforms the desamortization laws were part of see: Richard N. Sinkin, *The Mexican Reform, 1855-1876: A Study in Liberal Nation-Building* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979).

⁵⁷ María Dolores Morales, “Espacio, propiedad y órganos de poder en la ciudad de México en el siglo XIX,” in Illades and Rodríguez, *Ciudad de México*, 169.

⁵⁸ Beyond markets, hospitals, abattoirs, and cemeteries made the bulk of the properties that would remain in the hands of the Ayuntamiento.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 308.

Marcello Carmagnani suggests, an examination of the city's finances illuminates the connection between local socioeconomic realities and the existing political project.⁶⁰

The Ayuntamiento's resources came from two sources: first, the federal government provided about half of the city's revenues in the form of *arbitrios*. These were a share of certain taxes accruing to the national authorities that passed on to the Ayuntamiento. The most significant of these transfers in terms of the amounts involved were the *derechos municipales*, or the portion of internal customs, or *alcabalas*, allocated to the city council. On average these supplied 46 percent of the Ayuntamiento's total revenue between 1870 and 1880, making *derechos municipales* the largest item in the budget.⁶¹ The city council could negotiate an enlargement of its *arbitrios*, but legally and institutionally it was not in its power to make any decision about them. Second, in addition to the *arbitrios*, the city counted on the *propios*, which were resources derived from selling or renting municipal assets and from certain activities belonging to the specific competence of the Ayuntamiento, such as the use of all municipal markets and abattoirs, the administration of water rights, and the provision of certain urban transportation services, the *carruajes de alquiler*. Despite their name, the rates at which *propios* were charged were also under control of the National Executive.

⁶⁰ Marcello Carmagnani, "Finanzas y estado en México, 1820-1880," *Ibero Amerikanisches Archiv* 9, no. 3-4 (1983), 281.

⁶¹ On the proportion of *propios* and *arbitrios* during the first half of the nineteenth century see Ricardo Gamboa Ramírez, "Las finanzas municipales de la Ciudad de México, 1800-1850," in Hernández Franyuti, *La Ciudad de México*, 1:58; on the importance of the *derechos municipales*: Rodríguez, *Experiencia olvidada*, chapter IV; on the *alcabalas*: Silva Riquer, "El abasto," 64-76; on the fiscal structure of another important Mexican city: Francisco Téllez Guerrero and Elvira Brito Martínez, "La hacienda municipal de Puebla en el siglo XIX," *Historia Mexicana* 39 (April-June 1990): 951-978; on the state of Mexico, including its relationship with the national government: Carlos Marichal, Manuel Miño Grijalva, and Paolo Riguzzi, *El primer siglo de la hacienda pública del Estado de México, 1824-1923* (Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense/Gobierno del Estado de México, 1994); on the political tenets of Mexican liberal fiscal policy see: Marcello Carmagnani, "El liberalismo, los impuestos internos y el estado federal mexicano, 1857-1911," *Historia Mexicana* 38, no. 3 (Jan.-Mar. 1989), 471-496.

In 1848 President Herrera issued a new *Ley de Dotación del Fondo Municipal*, overhauling both components of municipal finances, the propios and the arbitrios. Because the Ordenanzas of 1840 had consolidated the competency of the Ayuntamiento, they also created the need to clarify the fiscal situation of the city. Now the new fiscal regime increased the city's capacity to generate revenue, granting its authorities a certain level of financial solidity.⁶² But simultaneously, by means of the *Ley de Dotación*, the National Executive cemented its ability to decide what activities the city could tax as well as what rates it could impose. The city council could neither create new taxes nor change the rates charged for the existing ones. Yet as Ricardo Gamboa Ramírez has demonstrated, a delicate combination of stability and scarcity allowed the city council to attend to the city's material needs, even if imperfectly.⁶³ The desamortization laws of the mid-1850s then shook this equilibrium by eliminating part of the rent accruing to the city, along with the properties it could no longer own. The city's coffers were subsequently helped by the *leyes de dotación municipal* of 1863 and 1867, but scarcity remained the norm.⁶⁴

⁶² *Exposición del Exmo. Sr. Ministro de Hacienda al Congreso dando cuenta del decreto de 6 de octubre último sobre dotación del fondo municipal de la capital leída en la Cámara de Diputados el día 19 de enero de 1849* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Vicente García Torres, 1849); for the conflicts that surrounded this decree see: Sergio Miranda Pacheco, "Conflicto político, finanzas federales y municipales en la Ciudad de México, 1846-1855," in eds. Carlos Marichal and Daniela Marino, *De Colonia a Nación: Impuestos y política en México, 1750-1860* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2001), 215-245. In this article the author focuses on the short term context of the Ley of 1848, namely the financial urgency created by the US occupation of the city. The interpretation proposed here belongs to a longer time horizon, but it does not negate the importance the war with the USA as a catalyst.

⁶³ Gamboa, "Las finanzas," 50-55.

⁶⁴ "Ley para la dotación del fondo Municipal de México, decreto de la Regencia del Imperio del 25 de septiembre de 1863," reproduced in *Memoria de los principales ramos de la policía urbana y de los fondos de la Ciudad de México presentado a la Serenísima Regencia del Imperio en cumplimiento de sus órdenes y de las leyes por el Prefecto Municipal* (Mexico City: Imprenta de J.M. Andrade, 1864), 198-209; "Ley de 28 de noviembre de 1867," in ed. Nicolás Islas y Bustamante, *Colección de leyes y disposiciones gubernativas, municipales y de policía vigentes en el Distrito Federal, formada por acuerdo del C. Gobernador Lic. Carlos Rivas*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Imprenta y litografía de Ireneo Paz, 1884), 1:6-7.

Year after year Ayuntamiento members repeated that it lacked enough resources to provide the local population with due services. In every published yearly report there are disclaimers about how little could be done in public works, even maintenance, for lack of funds. For example, in 1870, the council declared: “Unfortunately, the city has been for quite a while in a deplorable state, not due to the negligence or lack of will of those responsible for its conservation, but because improving its situation would require large sums [of money] that the Ayuntamiento cannot afford.”⁶⁵ This statement was, on the one hand, a justification and a defense against the criticisms that circulated in the city’s public sphere. On the other hand, it was a political intervention, an implicit criticism if not of the political structure, then of the decisions made by the National Executive on how to allocate resources.⁶⁶

Given the fiscal structure of the city, public markets were of considerable importance. They were the second largest source of revenue, generating around 10 percent of the total each year between 1870 and 1880.⁶⁷ Moreover, markets fell in the *propios* category, to which they contributed approximately 20 percent during the period under consideration.⁶⁸ Market revenues were composed by two accounts, *arrendamientos* and *viento*. While the few hundred fixed stalls in the existing market halls paid into the

⁶⁵ *Memoria que el Ayuntamiento Constitucional de 1870 presenta a sus comitentes* (Mexico City: Imprenta del Comercio de N. Chavez, 1871), 159.

⁶⁶ There are notes on the scarcity the Ayuntamiento endured in literally every Memoria Municipal, especially in the section on public works; a straight-forward editorial describing the scope of the responsibilities of the city council, and expressing frustration about the financial constraints it faced when attempting to act upon them as well as about the dependency on federal authorities can be found in the council’s periodical, “Administración Municipal,” *Municipio Libre*, July 28, 1877, 1.

⁶⁷ See Appendix, Table 1 and Figure 1.

⁶⁸ The percentage was significantly higher during the first half of the century. Between 1820 and 1850 *plazas y mercados* produced 46% of the *propios*. Gamboa, “Las finanzas,” 36.

Ayuntamiento's *arrendamientos* account, vendors in their thousands, in *puestos eventuales* and under the *sombras*, paid into the *viento* account.

The *viento* account, which grouped stalls literally “out in the wind,” included the *puestos eventuales* and *sombras* within and around market halls. It also included stalls and booths crowded in certain streets and plazas as well as those scattered individually around the city. Within the *viento* category were the vendors of fresh produce in El Volador, and all of those doing business in La Merced during this period. These *puestos eventuales* and *sombras* were not ad-hoc formations, but clearly regulated, well-established spaces from which between 1870 and 1880 the city derived on average three quarters of the revenue produced by markets, and 7 percent of the Ayuntamiento's total resources.⁶⁹ As this suggests, *viento* sales were an essential part of the city's public markets.

While fiscal laws beyond the control of the Ayuntamiento dictated the rates to be charged for different types of stalls, they secured it the right to decide which parts of the city would be turned into commercial spaces. As a result, markets represented an opportunity for the Ayuntamiento to expand its fiscal base. Their income-generating capacity, together with the fact that the revenues collected there would go directly and completely into the city's coffers, convinced the Ayuntamiento of the desirability of increasing the number of fee-paying stalls.

One of the possibilities contemplated by the council was to build new market halls, which would increase the *arrendamientos*. But as a general rule, in the context of the chronic scarcity noted above, major public works were unfeasible during this period.

⁶⁹ See Appendix, Table 2 and Figure 2.

The city council could rarely afford works beyond basic repairs and minor improvements. This explains why Markets Administrator Juan G. Brito's articulate lobbying to replace existing wooden market structures with more durable masonry was to no avail. He argued repeatedly that beyond the increase in revenue they would entail, more and better markets were necessary to comfortably provide daily supplies for the city's population. On several occasions, he made the case for the convenience of removing El Volador from the city's central square, where it stood too close to the Palacio Nacional, not doing justice to the cleanliness and elegance the place deserved.⁷⁰ He abhorred the state of the always-crowded Volador Market, with its narrow aisles permanently covered in organic debris, and complained that, owing to the absence of a proper unloading platform, the central streets of Portacoeli, Flamencos, la Universidad and Meleros bore witness to a "confusion of men and beasts" where the elegant carriages of the well-to-do collided with carts transporting merchandise.⁷¹

Brito's proposed solution was to build a new hall in order to relocate the merchants and vendors of El Volador to La Merced. He believed that the latter could replace the former as the city's main market owing to its favorable location next to the Chalco Canal, which was one of the city's most important entry points for produce. Moreover, it was not so far as to inconvenience those who were used to shopping at El Volador, but far enough to avoid disturbing the owners and customers of near-by stores selling luxury goods.⁷² Though Brito's ideas would be executed during the following two

⁷⁰ *Memoria 1869*, 159-160.

⁷¹ *Memoria 1868*, 151.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 151.

decades, during the 1870s it was impossible for the Ayuntamiento to build a new hall for El Volador, even given the urgency brought by a fire that consumed it in March 1870. Instead, it took the city authorities several years to rebuild it, and many more to build a market hall for the vendors of La Merced. Only in 1882 did *arrendamientos* surpass their 1869, pre-fire value.⁷³

Increasing the number of *viento* stalls presented a second possibility for generating additional market revenues.⁷⁴ In principle the Ayuntamiento could grant permission to vendors to set up their fee-paying stalls wherever it saw fit. Though it did not require significant infrastructure expenditures, expanding the *ramo del viento* posed its own challenges: it necessitated effective monitoring of extended parts of the city in order to prevent the embezzlement of fees by collectors and evasion by vendors, who, often selling their goods from mats placed on the ground or from mobile booths, were able to move around to avoid being charged. Mostly, vendors could easily avoid the council's control, and therefore instead of selling *al viento*, they joined the ranks of the unregulated peddlers. As a result, the Ayuntamiento sought to concentrate *viento* vendors in certain areas, in the streets adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of, existing market halls from which the fiscal control of commercial activities was carried out. Improving control of the *ramo del viento* had the potential to increase revenue, making it a third alternative. Several attempts were made, but given the lack of resources that dominated

⁷³ El Volador was rebuilt in 1875 while works on a hall for La Merced Market were initiated in 1880. Figures on *arrendamientos* in 1882, "Comisión de Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, January 10, 1884, 2.

⁷⁴ According to the city authorities, it was the small number and poor state of public markets that led so many people to sell *al viento*. On how the lack of a market in the sixth borough meant that stalls were scattered around different streets see: *Memoria 1869*, 172. On how the terrible state of La Merced Market made many vendors prefer to sell on other locations: *Memoria 1870*, 190.

its actions it was prohibitively expensive to hire the necessary personnel, and this too proved to be out of reach.⁷⁵

Owing to the Ayuntamiento's need for revenue, and councilors' acknowledgement of their incapability of doing otherwise, the city authorities of this period were tolerant, if not encouraging, of a multiplicity of commercial practices associated with *viento* sales and the particular use of the city's public spaces that these practices implied. For that reason, markets and streets were not separated spaces. Instead, as far as the Ayuntamiento was concerned, the social divide was between those who paid taxes, and those who did not.

There was another, more intangible constraint on the Ayuntamiento's capacity to generate revenue from markets. A paternalistic notion of responsibility for the livelihood of "those unfortunate people who, with their labors like those of ants, the bearing of wild fruits of the earth, or the traffic in products of primitive agriculture or industry, hardly obtain enough for the most miserable diets and clothes" sometimes prevailed over the Ayuntamiento's thirst for income, leading to a certain degree of acceptance for unregulated, untaxed peddling, and fee reductions for market vendors.⁷⁶ That so many of the city's poor lived off retail activities, or supplemented their meager household incomes with them, made markets an obvious locus for the performance of the authorities' moral

⁷⁵ *Memoria del Ayuntamiento que comenzó a funcionar el 5 de Diciembre de 1876 y concluyó el 31 de Diciembre de 1877* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1878), 90-91.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 89-90. The Ayuntamiento explicitly raised the tension between fiscal demands and the imperative to act compassionately, and is worth quoting in full: "Two considerations have weighed, alternately, on the minds of our legislators, or those in charge of public life, when dictating the rules pertaining to Mexico [City]'s markets; at times they have considered their primordial objective to enrich municipal coffers, on which rest the demands of the culture and refinement of a great capital; at others, they have yielded to compassion for those unfortunate people who, with their labors like those of ants, the bearing of wild fruits of the earth, or the traffic in products of primitive agriculture or industry, hardly obtain enough for the most miserable diets and for clothes that do not keep them warm, nor always satisfy the needs for decency, and least of all provide adornment to the person."

duties. This imperative to “yield to compassion,” a combination of the councilors’ private Catholicism and public sense of prudence, was central to a moral economy in which vendors could expect this benevolence in exchange for deference and obedience.⁷⁷ Moreover, this compassion was supported by the laws in effect during the 1870s, which gave the city council the power to reduce or, if necessary, waive an individual vendor’s fees if his or her pecuniary situation justified it.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ *Memoria 1877*, 89-90. Scholars tend to place this type of relations within the framework presented by E. P. Thompson, in particular, his “moral economy.” E. P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present* 50, (Feb., 1971): 76-136; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, “The Many Faces of Moral Economy: A Contribution to a Debate,” *Past and Present*, no 58 (Feb., 1973): 161-168; E. P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy Reviewed,” in *Customs in Common* (Pontypool, Wales: The Merlin Press, 1991), chapter 5. The general applicability of this idea across time and space has been demonstrated by scores of historians and anthropologists, following James C. Scott’s *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), and *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: The Hidden Transcript of Subordinate Groups* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). But given Mexico’s deeply Catholic past, any specific moral economy in place in Mexico City in the 1860s and 1870s would necessarily have been constructed around Catholic ethics and doctrine. After all, Mexicans were still a Catholic people, and the Liberal “triumph” of 1867 would have done little to transform their long-held world views. Compassion, intimately related to charity (*caritas*) and mercy (*miserericordia*) remained a central duty for Catholics, shaping the attitudes of rich and poor alike. Paul the Apostle even called charity, or brotherly, sisterly, Christian love, a virtue greater than faith and hope. I Corinthians 13:13. In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas affirmed that “the merit of eternal life rests chiefly with charity.” *Summa Theologica*, I-II, Question 114, “Merit”, art. 4. More broadly, see: *Summa*, II-II, Questions 23-122, “Charity,” “Prudence,” and “Justice.” These were not distant references, alien to Mexican sensibilities. In 1875, to counteract the limitations that the Restored Republic imposed on the Church, the archbishops of México, Michoacán and Guadalajara had admonished the faithful to prove that they were good Christians through “the sweet perfume of their true piety, and the pure gold of their multiplied acts of mercy toward the sick, the poor, and the helpless orphan.” *Instrucción pastoral que los Illmos. Sres. Arzobispos de México, Michoacán y Guadalajara dirigen a su venerable clero y a sus fieles con ocasión de la Ley Orgánica expedida por el Soberano Congreso Nacional en 10 de diciembre del año próximo pasado [1874] y sancionada por el Supremo Gobierno en 14 del mismo mes* (Mexico City: Imprenta de José Mariano Lara, 1875), 25. Moreover, compassion was not only a duty the Catholic culture of the time imposed on councilors. It also made good political sense both as a demonstration of a virtue-centered morality to a Catholic public, and because, as they might have learned from Burke, a traditional moral order could preserve “natural subordination” among the laboring classes and thus support the rise of capitalism. For this interpretation of Burke see: C. B. Macpherson, *Burke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 51-70.

⁷⁸ *Fiscal Law of 1867*, art. 116, quoted in “Oficio del 21 de octubre,” *Municipio Libre*, November 7, 1878, 1-2. Gamboa finds that during the first half of the nineteenth century paternalistic attitudes were still more important than economic reasons when it came to the Ayuntamiento’s collection of rents over its rural and urban properties, including markets. Gamboa, “Las finanzas,” 35; Andrew Konove claims that the argument presented here, that taxes and compassion framed the relationship between the Ayuntamiento and the city’s vendors, applies to the Baratillos’ vendors of second-hand goods, not only in the nineteenth century but also under Spanish colonial rule. Andrew Konove, “Black Market City: Street Vending and the Challenge of Governance in Mexico City (1692-1903)” (Phd Dissertation, History Department, Yale

Broader-reaching measures like granting general exemptions were beyond the competence of the Ayuntamiento. As it could not make changes to fiscal laws, in late January 1872 it petitioned the president, through the governor of the Federal District, to change the *Ley de Dotación del Fondo Municipal* in order to exempt the *viento* vendors of tortillas, vegetables, and flowers in markets and adjacent streets of all taxes. The president of the Ayuntamiento, Eduardo F. Arteaga, had managed to convince his fellow councilors to do this by appealing to their “enlightened and generous feelings” and by arguing that it was high time they repaired the “iniquity” being committed against the “most unhappy and helpless people” who were paying up to four times their small working capital in fees every month. He explained to them that these vendors were poor women who “almost without exception belonged to the Indian race.” To support his case, Arteaga lamented that the complaints of “*estas infelices hijas del pueblo*” almost never reached the authorities, and that in the few instances they did, they hardly ever received a response. He also confessed that the sight of these women broke his heart, as they were constantly being ill-treated by the fee collectors.⁷⁹

University, 2013). Compassion extended beyond markets. Warren believes that Ayuntamiento members were fully aware of the city’s population’s “real opportunities and obstacles,” and that this is why, despite the criticism it attracted, no more than 10 percent of the people brought in front the Vagrancy Tribunal between 1828 and 1850 were convicted. Warren, *Vagrants and Citizens*, 14; Arrom argues that a customary tolerance of the poor throughout most of the nineteenth century meant that mendicity was a socially acceptable way to earn a living. She also finds that *Reforma* Liberals’ (including Juárez’s) views of welfare had clear Christian connotations, and that Christian charity had not given way to secular beneficence in the early 1870s. Arrom, *Containing the Poor*, 220-222; 284; Ann Blum shows that civic piety remained at the center of elite identity during the Porfiriato. Ann S. Blum, “Conspicuous Benevolence: Liberalism, Public Welfare, and Private Charity in Porfirian Mexico City, 1877-1910,” *The Americas* 58, no. 1 (July 2001): 7-38; for a general treatise on nineteenth century public morality see Fernando Escalante Gonzalbo, *Ciudadanos imaginarios* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1993).

⁷⁹ The presentation of the case in the Ayuntamiento meeting, the letter by Arteaga to the governor of the Federal District and secretary of Gobernación, and the national Executive’s response and decree can be found in: *Recopilación de leyes, decretos y providencias de los poderes legislativo y ejecutivo de la Unión desde que se estableció en la Ciudad de México el Supremo Gobierno en 15 de julio de 1867, formada por la redacción del “Diario oficial,”* vol. 12 (Jan.-Apr. 1872) (Mexico City: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1873): 442-450.

Arteaga knew that municipal revenue would suffer with the exemption, fees from the tortilla vendors alone totaling four thousand pesos per year. But “between this ill and the injustice being committed” he had not “hesitated to accept the former.” To the Ayuntamiento members this notion of justice was not universally applicable. In their view, it was the combination of gender, race, and social standing, which made female *viento* vendors of *tortillas*, vegetables, and flowers deserving of special consideration.

It must have been an unnerving surprise to discover President Benito Juárez’s response to their petition. The attempt at a controlled, selective grant of justice backfired. On February 14, 1872, a presidential decree granted full tax exemptions to “the most destitute” vendors, regardless of their race or gender. This involved not just vendors of tortillas, vegetables, and flowers, but many other small-scale independent producers and sellers of basic consumption goods. The list included prepared meats, palm leaf hats, baskets, feather dusters, brooms, mats, all types of herbs, eggs, butter, cheese, white fish, and poultry. To aggravate the matter, the decree stated that not only were they to be exempt of all municipal taxes, but also that they were not to be restricted to carrying out their trade only in designated areas.⁸⁰

Had the decree been enforced, it would have severely curtailed the Ayuntamiento’s jurisdiction over commercial activities. More abstractly, it would have led to a redefinition of the concept of markets, which would have shrunk to coincide with the market halls and little else, leaving most of their *viento* sections outside of it. Put differently, it would have meant redrawing the boundaries between vending in public

⁸⁰ Juárez’s antagonistic decree might have been a response to the fact that several Ayuntamiento members had supported Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada against the president in his quest for reelection in the summer of 1871. Perry, *Juárez and Díaz*, 153-157.

markets and unregulated peddling, with *viento* vendors having little alternative but to switch from the former to the latter.

Market revenue accruing from *viento* did fall significantly during 1872, with the markets commission calling the decree a “disastrous innovation.” The year 1873 also yielded relatively low *viento* revenues. However, the more dramatic effects did not materialize. By the time the decree was repealed in 1877, revenues had already recovered to a level consistent with the council’s original projected loss from their petition on behalf of the poorest vendors. The Ayuntamiento was able to avoid a radical change in the institution of markets by interpreting the decree in such a way as to maintain its jurisdiction over *viento* sales. Already in 1872, the decree was taken to mean that fixed stalls in streets and plazas would continue to pay for their use of the public space, even if the items sold were exempted.⁸¹ The Ayuntamiento claimed that it was only fair that all vendors were charged for their use of the city’s thoroughfare. By 1877, only itinerant vendors who argued they could not afford to pay fees and therefore were not allowed to stay in the same place for any extended period of time, were not taxed.⁸² This allowed the Ayuntamiento to retain the distinction between *viento* sales and untaxed peddling, together with the control over what it meant to be a market vendor and what constituted a market. It also permitted councilors to continue to profess compassion, and dispense the justice their honorable sense of social superiority required.

⁸¹ *Memoria 1872*, 141.

⁸² *Memoria 1877*, 94.

1.4 Vendor politics: Negotiating at the Fringe of the City's Public Sphere

The city council's policies on markets, developed around fiscal and moral concerns, entailed a pragmatic and cautious management of local socioeconomic conditions, including social inequities. When it came to enforcing their decisions, instead of attempting to impose its will, arguably because the Ayuntamiento would have needed a repressive capacity it did not possess, councilors displayed flexibility and proceeded by arbitrating between often-competing interests. As a result, markets were sites of constant brokering and negotiation.

Flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of different actors could be seen when El Volador burnt down in 1870. Some *comerciantes* from the location were granted commercial spaces in La Merced and Jesús, as the markets commission explained, in order to minimize the fall in the city's revenues.⁸³ That the council had given priority to its own finances and the need for commercial space of El Volador vendors did not go unnoticed by those already in La Merced. Unhappy with the overcrowding and the new competition in their market, soon after the relocation they wrote the following protest:

We beg you to have the kindness to tell us what the law is for those of us who have for so long suffered the inclemency of every season's weather, now that the main market called El Volador has suffered the unfortunate accident of a fire, and the people who were there are occupying our places, which we had earned [acreditado] with so much work and effort.⁸⁴

⁸³ *Memoria 1870*, 190.

⁸⁴ 4/27/1870, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3733, exp. 536. The weather reference probably refers to the fact that all of the *comerciantes* there sold *al viento*.

Complicating matters further, the rainy season then arrived, with its floods, giving many vendors an excuse to move their businesses to other parts of the city.⁸⁵ As expected, the Ayuntamiento did not approve of this behavior, which it believed “produced a noticeable harm to the population due to the scattering of basic essential goods, and a further decline in fee collection.” In response, it decided to give vendors from La Merced priority in the allocation of stalls in the soon-to-be-inaugurated Guerrero Market. When they refused the offer, the Ayuntamiento granted some of them permission to return, albeit provisionally, to El Volador, despite the fact that the fire had left it in ruins.⁸⁶

Given the nature of the sources available, it is much harder to portray vendors’ and merchants’ behavior than it is to decipher the Ayuntamiento’s markets policy. They did not leave diaries, and there are no records of their discussions. The most important documents they generated, at least during this period, were the petitions, complaints, and other missives they wrote to the authorities.⁸⁷ Despite the lack of other materials with which to complement this correspondence, its content conveys the arguments their signatories believed would work for their purposes. The letters suggest how vendors and merchants in public markets positioned themselves with respect to the city council. They show what their expectations were concerning the actions of this body as well as other authorities.

⁸⁵ La Merced was one of the lowest points of the city, and therefore one of the most severely affected by the recurrent floods of the period.

⁸⁶ *Memoria 1870*, 191.

⁸⁷ Some of these documents were produced with the help of a scribe, or “evangelista.” Though the scribes might have added their own opinions and biases to the correspondence, the fact that vendors repeatedly paid for their services indicates that they had confidence their interests were well represented.

As illustrated by a petition from the spring of 1868, vendors counted, for example, on the Ayuntamiento's continued commitment to ensuring that the city was adequately supplied with basic goods, on its protection of their individual fee-paying businesses, and on its role as an arbiter in disputes among them. In this petition, three butchers by the names of José Rosas, José Puerto, and Dolores Aguilera complained that other vendors from La Merced Market were hurting their business by attracting some of their clientele with lower prices. Not only did they ask the Ayuntamiento to remove their competition, but they also appealed to this body's responsibility to monitor trade in foodstuffs. In addition to their economic grievances they stated that the new arrivals were detrimental to the city's poor, the *clases menesterosas*, who bought from them, because they were obviously selling "meat of the lowest quality, which given its color and value was possibly not even cow meat," or if it was, they said "it must surely be harmful."⁸⁸

The exchanges between vendors and the authorities imply that the vendors did not accept passively the terms proposed by the Ayuntamiento. Instead, they appropriated, interpreted, and recast the council's concerns with taxation and the wellbeing of the poor for their own purposes. When the city council, with the support of the government of the Federal District, tried to transfer the burden of infrastructure expenditures on La Merced vendors, and threatened eviction from the market for noncompliance, a group of "*comerciantes* of fruits and vegetables" appealed to the president of the Republic. They claimed that building their precarious stalls had cost them "many days of fasting and sleepless nights" and taken "plenty of work and hardship," and that they could not afford to substitute masonry and metal stalls for their wooden ones as the Ayuntamiento

⁸⁸ 4/29/1868, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3733, exp. 484.

demanded. The reason they gave was that their working capital was so small that it generated only modest profits that “barely allowed [them] to eat and pay taxes.” On both accounts they expected the authorities to care. To make their case more compelling they ended their letter by equating losing their places in La Merced to being “condemned to destitution,” probably driven to join the ranks of hawkers who toiled outside legally sanctioned markets.⁸⁹

In contrast to street peddlers, who contributed nothing to the city’s coffers and therefore could only rely on the authorities’ compassion, public market vendors and merchants—both in covered halls and *al viento*—also derived bargaining power from paying fees and taxes. These *comerciantes* established a constant dialogue with the authorities, and developed the capacity to negotiate the terms under which their particular businesses operated. Out of these exchanges emerged the norms for a social contract to be respected by vendors and authorities alike. In other words, these negotiations bestowed legitimacy on the Ayuntamiento’s policies towards markets and the social and economic relations within them.

To vendors and merchants public markets meant the possibility to sell in relative comfort and safety.⁹⁰ Merchants renting the most expensive stalls could, for example, expect the Ayuntamiento to respond favorably to requests for maintenance and repairs, even when the city council lacked the resources to undertake other works. Public works commissioners continually described works done as “demanded” and “required by

⁸⁹ 9/11/1872, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3734, exp. 576.

⁹⁰ Vendors who were granted the permission to sell without paying fees were relegated, for example, to those parts of the city where there was not public lighting; “Oficio del 21 de octubre,” *Municipio Libre*, November 7, 1878, 1-2.

market tenants,” even in years when they claimed that little else was done.⁹¹ Moreover, vendors could credibly expect to bargain down the level of fees the authorities charged them.⁹² Sometimes they justified their petitions by discussing their personal economic circumstances, typically by comparing the modesty of their working capital with the fees they were expected to pay. On other occasions they disputed the logic behind the Ayuntamiento’s fees, as did one Adolfo Fernández. He appealed what he thought was an “excessive” rent by drawing what he described as “a very judicious comparison” between La Merced Market, where he had recently established himself, and San Juan Market, which was “notoriously better” and where stalls were “built with all the desirable conditions of good construction and safety.” He argued, in addition, that his wooden stall in La Merced was smaller than those in San Juan. He provided measurements to the centimeter to prove his point.⁹³

Yet there were limits to what public market vendors and merchants could negotiate. The relationship between them and the authorities was based on the premise that they would remain in the private domain of individual self-interest. True, vendors and merchants sometimes pooled together to petition in groups, but these were constructed around personal relations, physical proximity—selling on a given street, plaza, or market—or the shared experience of selling similar wares. Unlike artisans and

⁹¹ *Memoria Corporación Municipal que funcionó de Agosto a Diciembre de 1867* (Mexico City: Imprenta de J. Fuentes y Compañía, 1868), 30; *Memoria 1868*, 149.

⁹² This, of course, did not mean they would always succeed; 1/28/1874, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3735, exp. 643.

⁹³ 11/29/1875, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3735, exp. 689.

workers, they did not, during this period, form civil associations.⁹⁴ Whereas vendors and merchants successfully engaged the authorities in the defense of their businesses, they were excluded from the discussion of matters affecting them as an interest group, or as a class, such as the regulations pertaining to markets.

When, in 1878, the Ayuntamiento passed new regulations for tax collection and raised fees, a group of vendors in El Volador petitioned the city council and the president of the Republic to repeal the modifications to the bylaw. They argued that the higher fees would either hurt consumers or force them to close their businesses and sink into misery or crime; they also disputed the convenience of the new regulations for improving the administration of markets. In a report by the finance commission, the city council responded that not only were their arguments flawed, but that they were stepping outside their competence in making them.⁹⁵ The governor of the Federal District, speaking for the national Executive, supported the Ayuntamiento, and responded that “after examining the matter, I have determined that [the vendors] are wrong, and that they have erred in the channel they chose to avoid the harm they are complaining about.” Instead, he admonished, each of them should have appealed to the Ayuntamiento, which under article 116 of the *Ley de Dotación del Fondo Municipal* could reduce their fees if their

⁹⁴ Under the provisions of art. 9 of the 1857 Constitution and the Civil Code of 1870 artisans and workers, including commercial employees, organized “voluntary associations.” In their struggles with capitalists and bosses, these mutualist societies sometimes worked like trade unions, fighting privately, as did the hatters’ in Mexico City which had a successful strike in 1875. Most often, though, they sought protection and privileges from the authorities by participating in political activities and campaigns. While those belonging to losing factions were repressed, those with successful patrons got access to scarce public funds and some degree of political representation. John Womack, Jr., “Luchas sindicales y liberalismos sociales, 1867-1993,” in Marcello Carmagnani, Alicia Hernández Chavez, and Ruggiero Romano eds., *Para una historia de América: los nudos*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 418-419; David Walker, “Porfirian Labor Politics: Working class organizations in Mexico City and Porfirio Díaz, 1876-1902” *The Americas* 37, no. 3 (1981): 257-289; Carlos Illades, “Organizaciones laborales y discurso asociativo en el siglo XIX,” in Illades and Rodríguez, *Ciudad de México*, 245-274.

⁹⁵ “La Comisión de Hacienda,” *Municipio Libre*, November 1, 1878, 1.

individual circumstances so merited it, as did, successfully, several vendors in El Baratillo.

Beyond that, whether the disputed bylaw is inappropriate for the goals of the Ayuntamiento, which were that fee collection be as exact as possible, and whether the application of this same bylaw entails higher expenses, are matters that in good faith should not be of concern to the *comerciantes*, because they are of the exclusive incumbency of that corporation.⁹⁶

In the minds of the Ayuntamiento members and the federal authorities market vendors and merchants were not entitled to participate in political debates. In their role of *comerciantes*, they were not members of the “public” responsible for “observing,” “evaluating,” and “deciding” whether the councilors were “guilty of negligence” or had “wandered from the rules mandated by justice and reason.”⁹⁷ Instead, discussions of general market policies belonged in a restricted public sphere in which local notables, journalists, and liberal politicians—some of whom could well have had commercial interests—formed the “public” who, “informed of the facts,” “warn[ed] and advise[d] the Ayuntamiento, through the press or private conversations, about matters pertaining to the city’s good.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ “Oficio del 21 de octubre,” *Municipio Libre*, November 7, 1878, 1-2.

⁹⁷ *Memoria de los ramos municipales correspondiente al semestre de Julio a Diciembre de 1866 presentada a S.M. el Emperador por el Alcalde Municipal de la Ciudad de México D. Ignacio Trigueros* (Mexico City: Imprenta Económica, 1867), 8.

⁹⁸ *Memoria que el Ayuntamiento Popular de 1868 presenta a sus comitentes y corresponde al semestre corrido desde el 1 de Enero al 30 de Junio* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1868), 2-3. Following Habermas’ development of the concept, the public sphere is tentatively understood “as a forum in which the private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion.” Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge-England: Polity Press, [1962] 1989), 25. Some caveats apply, however. The construction of a public sphere involved the exclusion of different sectors of society, as many authors have demonstrated. Moreover, there are limitations to the appropriation of the model of the public sphere for understanding Latin American realities. There, not only women, whether literate or not, were excluded from it, but possessing enough cultural capital to access printed material was a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for men. Also, unlike the European cases analyzed by Habermas, in Latin America modern political forms did not emerge out of the needs of any particular social class, but out of the political

On the other hand, between 1867 and 1880 journalists were particularly active in the city's public sphere, discussing and influencing the Ayuntamiento's actions. In fact, according to the council minutes, the changes in the bylaw that were unsuccessfully opposed by El Volador merchants were a response to the fact that,

for quite a while, public opinion had been set in its desire for a sensible organization of all things related to markets; the press, preoccupied with this thought, had prompted the Ayuntamiento, denouncing abuses and calling for an end to them, always repeating its demands on the basis of the general welfare.⁹⁹

These newspaper owners, editors, and writers were not detached observers of reality, but had important liberal political connections, especially with presidential contenders and aspiring governors. They took sides in the political struggles that dominated the period, received subsidies from politicians, and in many cases became elected officials and received government appointments.¹⁰⁰ The responsiveness of the Ayuntamiento to the opinions of the liberal press was partly due to this overlap between the media and politics.

crisis generated by the collapse of the Spanish Empire. Besides, these societies still lacked a local bourgeoisie with the potential to become a dominant class. François-Xavier Guerra and Annick Lempérière, "Introducción," in François-Xavier Guerra, Annick Lempérière, et al., *Los espacios públicos en Iberoamérica: Ambigüedades y problemas, siglos XVIII-XIX* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998); Pablo Piccato, "Introducción: ¿Modelo para armar? Hacia un acercamiento crítico a la teoría de la esfera pública," in eds. Cristina Sacristán and Pablo Piccato, *Actores, espacios y debates en la historia de la esfera pública en la ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005).

⁹⁹ "La Comisión de Hacienda," *Municipio Libre*, November 1, 1878, 1.

¹⁰⁰ For example, in the late 1870's, *La Patria* was directed by old-time liberal Ireneo Paz. Vicente García Torres, the owner of *El Monitor Republicano*, was a member of the Ayuntamiento in 1872. Between 1878 and 1880 José María Vigil was an active writer in *El Monitor*. Moisés González Navarro, *Porfiriato: Vida social*, vol. 4, *Historia moderna*, Cosío (1957), 675-682; Perry, *Juárez and Díaz*, 184-185; Hale, *Transformation of Liberalism*, 64-69, 92; Pablo Piccato, "Honor y opinión pública: La moral de los periodistas durante el porfiriato temprano," in Sacristán and Piccato, *Actores, espacios y debates*, 145-178, esp. 151-155.

In a context of liberal factionalism and relative freedom of the press, opinions were hardly uniform.¹⁰¹ However, a small group of men used the press as a forum in which to discuss policy and reach consensus over local administrative issues. Debate, which was at some times more rational than at others, delivered a public opinion that legitimated the Ayuntamiento's actions. Unlike the shared norms stemming from the negotiations discussed above, this source of legitimacy belonged in a narrower political space defined by the confines of liberal power networks. This restricted public sphere, however, intersected with the popular political arena inhabited by merchants and vendors every time the latter reached out to journalists as their social superiors to seek their backing. And just as the Ayuntamiento was obliged to dispense justice to poor vendors, journalists acted in accordance to the same duty of compassion.

In July 1878, for example, the Ayuntamiento received a proposal to contract out the administration of markets by a former employee, one Mr. Castañares and one Mr. Portilla. While two liberal newspapers, *El Monitor Republicano* and *La Patria*, opposed the measure, *El Foro*, *El Federalista*, and *La Colonia Española* supported it, calling it “an extremely advantageous proposal that would save the city council the twelve thousand pesos per year that running markets now cost.”¹⁰² *La Patria* strongly disagreed:

We expect and are positive that the Ayuntamiento would decline the offer after taking into account what is being said about it, especially that the subcontractors would ruthlessly tax the miserable small-scale vendors, with the sole goal of enriching themselves at the expense of the poor. Or does the Ayuntamiento

¹⁰¹ Perry, *Júarez and Díaz*, 184, nn15-16.

¹⁰² Quoted in “Una pregunta,” *Monitor Republicano*, July 11, 1878, 3; “Más sobre el arrendamiento de los mercados,” *La Colonia Española*, July 26, 1878, 3.

suppose that the subcontractors only want to do a good deed and help commerce while augmenting municipal income?¹⁰³

El Monitor went as far as to refer to the project as “the ruin of poor vendors.”¹⁰⁴ *La Patria* explained, “At present the Ayuntamiento, due to its sense of equity and justice, taking into account the poverty of the people as well as their pressing needs, does not charge...the rates allowed [by fiscal laws] but only two thirds to some, one third to others.”¹⁰⁵

El Monitor's opposition rested not only on the above arguments, but was also a defense of the role of the press in the construction of what passed for the city's common good.

That proposals have been made to contract out markets is not enough reason to force the issue and carry them out all at once. Instead it is necessary to take time to act correctly, and to make these proposals known to the public so that they can be discussed by the press, before they are accepted.¹⁰⁶

In their demand for debate, and their attempt to influence the Ayuntamiento's decision, journalists claimed to represent the interests of vendors, who addressed them in search of support:

The poor market vendors neither eat nor sleep with ease since the contracting out of markets started to be discussed ... They have just sent us a document urging us to take on the matter, because, it is rumored that, they say, an onerous contract is about to be finalized ... We believe they are right, and for that reason we repeat what we have already said on previous occasions.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Quoted in “También La Patria,” *Monitor Republicano*, July 19, 1878, 3.

¹⁰⁴ “Es la ruina,” *Monitor Republicano*, July 18, 1878, 3.

¹⁰⁵ “Las rentas de los mercados públibos,” *La Patria*, June 13, 1878, 2.

¹⁰⁶ “Mercados,” *Monitor Republicano*, August 3, 1878, 3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

So, unable to participate openly and directly in policy debates, merchants and vendors could appeal to the “tribunal of public opinion,” which would judge whether or not they had a fair claim worth publicizing.¹⁰⁸ To position itself as the rightful generator of public opinion, the liberal press became an interlocutor for popular groups that, otherwise, were excluded from the public sphere.

In the end, journalists managed to make the Ayuntamiento abort the idea to contract out the administration of markets not only by building consensus but also by publicly threatening individual council members’ reputations. Pablo Piccato has shown that city’s public sphere of the 1870s was defined by frequent juxtapositions between the public and private realms in which honor and public opinion were intimately related.¹⁰⁹ In the local political sphere where ambitious politicians operated, the press made the Ayuntamiento discard the proposal to contract out the administration of markets precisely because their defendants within the Ayuntamiento were sensitive to how they were portrayed in the media. As the Ayuntamiento conceded,

We could not but accept the claim [that the contracting out of markets would be detrimental to the city], because all of its conclusions are based on purely rational hypotheses, as demonstrated by the fact that this opinion became so generalized that, while the resolution by the markets commission was still pending, the recurrent attacks of the press forced Mr. Segura and Mr. Monteverde, both members of that commission, to withdraw their proposal and to resign, a notable occurrence, given that these two men are persons of great integrity and civic courage.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion of the idea of public opinion as a tribunal see: Elías J. Palti, “La transformación del liberalismo mexicano en el siglo XIX. Del modelo jurídico de la opinión pública al modelo estratégico de la sociedad civil,” in Sacristán and Piccato, *Actores, espacios y debates*, 67-95; on journalists as an honor group dictaminating on vital issues, Piccato, “Honor,” 146.

¹⁰⁹ Pablo Piccato, *The Tyranny of Opinion. Honor in the Construction of the Mexican Public Sphere* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

¹¹⁰ “La Comisión de Hacienda,” *Municipio Libre*, November 1, 1878, 1.

Councilors Segura and Monteverde must have known all too well that only those perceived as honorable could claim to represent the common good. As Piccato demonstrates, “without honor there could be no patriotism.”¹¹¹ And in Mexico City in the late 1870’s displaying concern for the wellbeing of the poor was still central to the construction of the elite’s public personae. That is, without compassion there could be no honor.

1.5 Conclusion

Notwithstanding the attacks and criticisms, the demands on the Ayuntamiento during this period were modest. Due to the dearth of resources the capital’s cityscape was not substantially altered before 1880. Public monies were scarce, and substantial private investment was still to come. The capitalist boom associated with the Porfiriato had not yet materialized. In this context, no one was demanding or proposing massive public works, but only what seemed like attainable improvements. When in early 1875 a journalist voiced the concerns about the “sad and terrible” state of the Jesús Market, which he described as a “heterogeneous and repulsive *totum revolutum* [sic]” that completely obstructed all adjacent streets and generated “deleterious miasmas in the city center,” all he asked was that the Ayuntamiento limit trade to the center of the streets so that transit would flow more easily, and that it make sure that its employees cleaned the area every night.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Piccato, *The Tyranny of Opinion*, 3.

¹¹² “Falta de higiene,” *Monitor Republicano*, January 17, 1875, 3.

With so little at stake, the city's public sphere remained parochial, and experienced only modest pressure from those excluded from it. City council members and their liberal peers could discuss what to do with the few resources at hand without significant interference. Merchants and vendors did not need to claim a voice in this political arena in order to defend their social and economic position. At the very least they could count on the authorities' duty of compassion to allow them to seek their livelihoods by peddling or selling *al viento*. More often than not, they also negotiated the possibility to do business with the backing of the Ayuntamiento in exchange for supporting the local government with the fees and taxes they paid. Together, taxes and compassion defined rights and responsibilities whose public discussion, including in the press, shaped the realm of popular politics. Combined with scarcity, which prevented major changes in the built environment and kept the authorities weak and tolerant, this implied, in turn, few open urban conflicts.

Chapter Two:

The Business of Modernity, 1880 to 1903

During the *pax porfiriana*, Mexico City experienced sustained economic growth and political stability under a stronger National Executive. This chapter explores the effects of this prosperity on the city's markets, especially as it transformed the way the markets were governed, the relationship between the elite and vendors, and those among vendors themselves. New business opportunities, as well as ideas of progress and modernity, dramatically increased the demands on the municipal government. In particular, I argue that the Ayuntamiento's expansion of public infrastructure and the concomitant redefinition of what amounted to acceptable commercial practices undermined its own claim to modernize the city. The Ayuntamiento's failure to overhaul the city's markets then emboldened both the state and federal governments to encroach further upon its authority and faculties. What is more, the disappointment with the capabilities of the city council to manage markets and the emergence of a repressive consensus to deal with street vendors were two sides of the same coin. These changes, in turn, weakened the paternalistic bonds between the elite and vendors and deepened social distinctions among vendors themselves. The abolition of the Ayuntamiento in 1903 marked the end of an era for Mexico City and its markets, with its implicit rejection of customs and traditions as the glue holding the urban community together.

2.1 Mexico in Peace and in Business

Between 1880 and 1903 Mexico managed to make US, British, French, and German imperialism look like a positive-sum game. Through apt diplomacy, shrewd domestic politicking, and allocation of economic favors, the two presidents of this period—Manuel González (1880-1884) and Porfirio Díaz (from 1884)—and their cronies channeled the forces of international commerce and finance into what at the time seemed a virtuous circle of peace and economic growth. With flourishing foreign direct investment, mostly but not exclusively in railroads and mining, and international lending, ambassadors from imperialist powers and other representatives of US, British, French, and German businesses replaced military threats with diplomatic pressure and deal making. While US influence in Mexico was growing faster than that of European powers, competition among them still gave national authorities confidence in the sustainability of their strategy.¹¹³

The end of Liberal infighting allowed for resources to be diverted from the armed forces into infrastructure and repayment of debts. Concessions to railroad promoters from abroad now turned into reality, with the number of kilometers of track increasing rapidly after 1880. Railroads, in turn, helped to integrate Mexico's different economic regions into profitable consumer markets for agriculturalists and industrialists. International

¹¹³ Paolo Riguzzi, "México, Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña, 1867-1910: Una difícil relación triangular," *Historia Mexicana* 41 (1992): 365-436; John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Paolo Riguzzi, *¿La reciprocidad imposible? La política del comercio entre México y Estados Unidos 1877-1938* (Mexico City: Colegio de México/Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 2003); David M. Pletcher, *Rails, Mines, and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1958); Alfred Tischendorf, *Great Britain and Mexico in the Era of Porfirio Díaz* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1961); William Schell, Jr., *Integral Outsiders: The America Colony in Mexico City, 1876-1911* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2001).

demand for silver, sisal, coffee, cochineal, sugar, and, since the mid-1890s, industrial metals such as copper, zinc, and lead generated a more than decent flow of foreign currency, which paid for imports of luxury goods, industrial inputs, and machinery. Import duties did their part for federal revenue. Also contributing to the country's coffers and business were the massive sales of lands deemed vacant and public. If revenue and profits from these sales did not suffice to cover expenditures there were abundant funds in international financial markets to supply the needed cash. Renegotiation of foreign debts was not uncommon. In the period covered in this chapter real GDP grew two and a half times. Yet, because of the fluctuating and declining price of silver in international markets, which affected Mexico's terms of trade and the value of the silver based-Mexican peso, the fulfillment of foreign obligations was burdensome. The situation was most critical between 1890 and 1894 when, with conditions aggravated by a global recession, the federal government was on the verge of bankruptcy and default.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ A summary of the economic trends in this period can be found in Enrique Cárdenas, *Cuando se originó el atraso económico de México. La economía mexicana en el largo siglo XIX, 1720-1920* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Fundación Ortega y Gasset, 2003), chapter 5. A new price index can be found in: Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato Freer, and Aldo Musacchio, "Un Nuevo Índice de Precios para México, 1886-1929," *El Trimestre Económico* 67, (Jan-Mar., 2000): 45-91. On the social savings produced by railroads, see the classic John H. Coatsworth, *Growth Against Development. The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981); on their contribution to the development of a national market, Sandra Kuntz Ficker, "Los ferrocarriles y la formación del espacio económico en México," in eds. Sandra Kuntz Ficker and Priscilla Connolly, *Ferrocarriles y obras públicas* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/El Colegio de Michoacán/El Colegio de México/IIH-UNAM, 1999), 105-137; on the effects of railroads on the textile industry, Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato Freer, *Industry and Revolution*

Social and Economic Change in the Orizaba Valley, Mexico (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013). On foreign trade and federal finances, Sandra Kuntz Ficker, "Las nuevas series del comercio exterior de México," *Revista de Historia Económica* 20, no.2 (2002): 213-270; Marcello Carmagnani, *Estado y Mercado: La economía pública del liberalismo mexicano, 1850-1911* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica/Colegio de México, 1994). On land sales, Robert Holden, *Mexico and the Survey of Public Lands: the Management of Modernization* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987). On institutions and debt, Carlos Marichal, "The Construction of Credibility: Financial Market Reform and Renegotiation of Mexico's External Debt in the 1880's," in eds. Jeffrey Bortz and Stephen Haber, *The Mexican Economy, 1879-1930. Essays on the Economic History of Institutions, Revolution, and Growth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 93-119; Jaime Zabudovsky, "La deuda externa pública," in eds. Ludlow and Carlos Marichal, *Un siglo de deuda pública en México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de

Once achieved, peace became, as Mauricio Tenorio puts it, the first real political consensus since independence.¹¹⁵ Economic growth then helped maintain the hard-won and much praised political stability. As capitalism boomed in Mexico, the national government became the guarantor of suitable conditions. Laws clarifying and securing private property rights were passed or, where they already existed, better enforced. The civil code, mining code, and banking regulations were updated. When other institutions failed, the president himself mediated conflicts emerging from rivalries among capitalists. He also arbitrated between them and their workers, and between landowners and peasants. Where a potential opposition existed, it could be coaxed into compliance with the government's designs by an effective use of patronage, which took the form of public employment, public works contracts, or profitable intermediation for foreign capital.¹¹⁶ But there were limits to this consensus. Repression of rural uprisings and workers' protests, as well as suppression of the freedom of the press were equally important in sustaining the Pax Porfiriana.

México/Instituto Mora/El Colegio de Michoacán/IIH-UNAM, 1998), 152-189. On the price of silver and terms of trade in general, David M. Pletcher, "The Fall of Silver in Mexico, 1870-1910, and Its Effect on American Investments," *The Journal of Economic History* 18, no. 1 (Mar., 1958): 33-55; Edward Beatty, "The Impact of Foreign Trade on the Mexican Economy: Terms of Trade and the Rise of Industry 1880-1923," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 2 (May, 2000): 399-433.

¹¹⁵ Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, *Artifugio de la nación moderna. México en las exposiciones universales, 1880-1930* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998), 56.

¹¹⁶ José C. Valadés, *El Porfiriismo, historia de un régimen*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977); Friedrich Katz, "The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato," in ed. Leslie Bethell, *Mexico since Independence* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-124.

2.2 “Manto de Magnificencia ... Harapos de Mendigo”

Mexico City, capital of the republic, played a central role in the consolidation of the modern Mexican state. Even if it was neither a port nor an industrial center, and was relatively far from the mining and export-orientated agricultural areas, Mexico City was at the center of the country’s growth, as its commercial, financial, and administrative hub. Most importantly, as the national political core it appropriated a significant portion of the country’s growing wealth.

Under the auspices of the country’s peace and prosperity the city embarked on a process of change that, if we are to trust foreign visitors, amounted to a transmutation from a backward provincial city into a bustling modern metropolis.¹¹⁷ Whereas the city changed most rapidly during the first decade of the twentieth century, by the end of the period covered in this chapter there was much that was new. A city of a quarter of a million people in 1880, in 1902 there were over 350,000 residents. By then numerous roads and avenues had been opened, widened, or paved; several new *colonias*, or neighborhoods, had sprung up. The city also boasted luxurious department stores and hotels, modern factories, grand public buildings, and busy railroad stations; it also had a new sewer system that solved, albeit temporarily, the centuries-old problem of chronic flooding.¹¹⁸ Still, as John Lear reminds us, by no means did these improvements reach all

¹¹⁷ John Lear, “Mexico City, Space and Class in the Porfirian Capital, 1884-1910,” *Journal of Urban History* 22, no. 4 (May 1996): 454-492; Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, “1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario,” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (Feb. 1996): 75-104.

¹¹⁸ On the territorial expansion of the city see: María Dolores Morales, “La expansión de la ciudad de México (1858-1910),” in ed. Gustavo Garza, *Atlas de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal/Colegio de México, 1987), 64-68; Morales, “La expansión de la ciudad de México en el siglo XIX: el caso de los fraccionamientos,” in ed. Alejandra Moreno Toscano, *Ciudad de México: Ensayo de la construcción de una historia* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1978), 189-200. On population: *Estadísticas históricas de México* (Aguascalientes: Instituto Nacional de

parts of the city equally, or at all. Public and private works concentrated in the most visited and visible central areas and in new affluent neighborhoods, leaving the majority of the population behind in overcrowded tenements and shacks. In fact, in the last decades of the nineteenth century the city became increasingly socially segregated as upper and middle class residents started to abandon the traditional city center. The old urban setting where residences mixed with commercial establishments and trade shops, and the rich lived side-by-side with the poor was beginning to perish.¹¹⁹

Political and economic forces stimulated the transformation of the capital. After decades of scarcity, from the early 1880s the council had more funds to tend to the city's infrastructure. In this decade nominal municipal revenue doubled, with expenditure per capita growing by 96 percent between 1885 and 1890.¹²⁰ City councilors praised the "firm but prudent" government in the National Palace for preserving a domestic peace that permitted industrial and commercial activities to develop, with the resulting increase in tax receipts.¹²¹ Population growth was also celebrated as it implied an enlarged fiscal

Estadística, Geografía e Informática, 1990), 1:24; Keith Davies, "Tendencias demográficas urbanas durante el siglo XIX en México," *Historia Mexicana* 21 (July 1971-June 1972): 481-524. On colonias and their developers, Jorge H. Jiménez Muñoz, *La traza del poder: Historia de la política y los negocios urbanos en el Distrito Federal, de sus orígenes a la desaparición del Ayuntamiento (1824-1928)* (Mexico City: Dedalo, 1993), chapters 1-5. On public works, Kuntz and Connolly, *Ferrocarriles y obras públicas*, part 2.

¹¹⁹ John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors and Citizens, The Revolution in Mexico City* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 21, 27.

¹²⁰ Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *La experiencia olvidada, El Ayuntamiento de México: política y gobierno, 1876-1912* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Azcapotzalco, 1996), 118. Real figures are lower. Deflating nominal revenue figures with Aurora Gómez-Galvarriato and Aldo Musacchio's inflation estimates show that real municipal revenue grew by only one third between 1880 and 1890.

¹²¹ *Discurso pronunciado por el Dr. Manuel Domínguez, Regidor 1º del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de México en 1880 al separarse de su puesto el 1º de Enero de 1881, y contestación del C. Pablo de Lascurain, Regidor 2º del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de 1881* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1881), 3-5, 9, 39-40; *Discurso pronunciado por el Sr. Pedro Rincón Gallardo, Regidor primero del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de México en 1881 al alejarse del puesto conforme a la ley, el 1º de Enero de 1882* (Mexico City: Imprenta del Comercio de Dublán y Cía., 1882), 5.

base.¹²² But local politicians should have been more careful of what they wished for; with greater resources and more residents came growing demands and increased tensions.

Politicians in control of the national executive, journalists, and businessmen, acting separately and in unison, put mounting pressure on the city council, shaping its actions over the built environment and the social practices of the local population. As managers of the economic boom, the president and his cabinet members required the capital of the republic to showcase prosperity. This need grew proportionally with the development of transportation services, to become an obsession by the time of the inauguration of the railroad linking the capital with the United States. In response to the resulting flow of visitors, Mexico City had to be overhauled to woo investors foreign and domestic, and to keep interest rates in check by reassuring lenders of the safety of their assets. Moreover, as the national executive consolidated and concentrated its power in the capital, the changes in the city were supposed to remind state governors, other powerful men, and the population in general where power resided.

The published *Discursos* of the Ayuntamiento's incumbent and its president elect, the yearly account of the projects completed or under way, and of the challenges ahead, show that the representative of the National Executive in the city, the governor of the Federal District, interfered with the Ayuntamiento not just through bureaucratic channels but also openly in the public domain. Indeed, starting in 1882 the *Discursos* began to include the address given by the governor, changing its title accordingly. Increasingly, he gave speeches in which he "indicated" to councilmen what he thought were the needs of

¹²² Ibid., 7.

the city, and what he expected them to accomplish in that year.¹²³ By the end of 1883, he had come to believe that this was his “duty.”¹²⁴ Rodríguez Kuri proposes that from the mid-1880s onwards the Ayuntamiento was “domesticated” through the emergence of a political machine operated from the National Palace, which, perfected by 1890, was applied to the manipulation of elections for council members.

Beyond pragmatic reasons, the transformation of the city represented a cultural mandate for the emerging political and economic elites. As men of newly acquired or augmented power and fortune consolidated their position and developed their identity, they projected it onto the city. In their plans, the Porfirian dominant classes expressed their self-confidence as a group capable of leading the city, and the nation, into modernity. As the bearers of progress, their intense desire to be modern translated into a drive to perform “the works that the state of culture of the first city of the republic demanded.”¹²⁵ Although the results of their actions often benefited their small social

¹²³ *Reseña leída por el Presidente Municipal en nombre de la corporación que funcionó en 1882, contestación del Segundo Regidor Lic. Guillermo Valle y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar el Ayuntamiento de 1883* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1883), 48.

¹²⁴ *Discurso leído el 1º de Enero de 1884 por el C. Pedro Rincón Gallardo como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1883 dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del C. Lic. Guillermo Valle Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1884 y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León 1884), 38. When I quote one of these publications more than once I refer to it by the administrative year that ends at the time of the addresses, so for the present case, subsequent quotes will read *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1883*. The documents describe works that took place that year, as well as expectations for the following one.

¹²⁵ *Discurso 1884*, 5. Blum finds that massive public symbols of charity and social control such as correctional schools and insane asylums were central to the construction and consolidation of the civic identity of the social and political classes loyal to Díaz. Ann S. Blum, “Conspicuous Benevolence: Liberalism, Public Welfare, and Private Charity in Porfirian Mexico City, 1877-1910,” *The Americas* 58, no. 1 (July 2001): 7-38. According to Perló, Porfirio Díaz’ personal word, honor and prestige were invested in the city’s drainage project, an enterprise that embodied his quest for modernity and civilization. Manuel Perló Cohen, *El paradigma porfiriano: Historia del desagüe del Valle de México* (Mexico City: Porrúa Grupo Editorial, 1999), 296-297. Tenorio argues that the attempt to construct a modern and cosmopolitan image of Mexico at the World Fairs gave the Porfirian elite a sense of identity and unity. Tenorio, *Artilugio*, 38.

group the most, their rhetoric presented their projects as a response to “our city’s exigencies” in terms of “beauty, comfort, and elegance.”¹²⁶ Without a coherent plan, but inspired by contact with European, and in particular French, urbanism and the transformations taking place in US cities at the time, the Mexican elite supported a reorganization of urban spaces and social practices. Following mid- and late-nineteenth century trends, the roads, parks, markets and other public works of this period were designed to improve the aesthetics of the city, ease circulation, and raise the standard of hygiene.¹²⁷

Perhaps nobody indulged as freely in the fantasy of the city as the repository of the promises of progress as did the writers and editors of local newspapers. Certainly, journalists were the another group pressuring the Ayuntamiento, and therefore responsible for undermining it. The press complained constantly about the slow pace of improvements. While their engagement in debates over the city’s situation was not new, and to a certain extent the advice of the press was welcomed, two features of the period made their diatribes particularly piercing.¹²⁸ On the one hand, starting in the early 1880s, the acceleration of economic growth and the fact that the Ayuntamiento managed to collect higher revenues raised the expectations about its capacity to deliver public works and services. On the other hand, by means of coercion and subsidies, during this period the press was under progressively tighter control of the Executive, which helped align journalists with the position of the federal authorities. By 1888 the government was

¹²⁶ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1880*, 10-11.

¹²⁷ Rodríguez, *La experiencia*, 104-113; Mario Barbosa Cruz, *El trabajo en las calles: Subsistencia y negociación política en la Ciudad de México a comienzos del siglo XX* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa, 2008), 31-47.

¹²⁸ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1883*, 29.

subsidizing thirty publications in the city alone, but not proving enough, it also jailed journalists chronically. In August 1893, there were twenty-nine journalists from nine different newspapers in prison.¹²⁹

Local and foreign capitalists also exerted remarkable influence on the Ayuntamiento. As they built *colonias*, and established new factories and shops, they tried to persuade the government to provide the infrastructure to support their investments. Also, more and more, ambitious bankers, developers, merchants and industrialists sought contracts for public works, and the private provision of public services. Once they gained the backing of the Executive, and as some individuals in government grew richer through these deals either as brokers or partners, the combined actions of politicians and businessmen forced the Ayuntamiento to outsource many activities it had until then performed by means of inner cadres of professionals and workers. Furthermore, this pressure led to an expansion of the scope of works beyond the institutional capacity of the council to control, encouraging the transfer of responsibility over the city's built environment from the Ayuntamiento to the national government.¹³⁰

Directly responsible for the management of the works in the city, both the council and the governorship soon grew aware of their financial limitations. While revenues increased, they failed to keep up with projected expenditures. Many times during this period the council expressed the hope that the Executive and Congress, which had control

¹²⁹ Pablo Piccato, "Honor y opinión pública: La moral de los periodistas durante el porfiriato temprano," in eds. Cristina Sacristán and Pablo Piccato, *Actores, espacios y debates en la historia de la esfera pública en la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 160-169.

¹³⁰ Priscilla Connolly, *El contratista de don Porfirio: obras públicas, deuda y desarrollo desigual* (Mexico City: El Colegio de Michoacán/UAM-Azcapotzalco/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997); Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Gobierno local y empresas de servicios: La experiencia de la Ciudad de México en el Porfiriato," in Kuntz and Connolly, *Ferrocarriles y obras públicas*, 165-190.

over the fiscal structure of the city, would pass new laws increasing the council's revenues and fiscal powers. But each time, these hopes were unfulfilled, in part due to competing claims over available resources between the federal and the local governments. More importantly, it became ever more evident that raising taxes was not going to bring the pecuniary support required for drainage, public lighting, and other such large-scale works. Ramón Fernández, governor of the Federal District, estimated that in comparison with "the great cities of the world," Mexico City had less than half their municipal budget per inhabitant.¹³¹ While this figure was in all probability an exaggeration—he put the population of the city in 1882 at 350,000—his worry does not seem to have been out of place.¹³² With almost 70 percent of residents earning less than the income required to support a small family of four, the levels of poverty of the great majority of the local population put a check on the amount that could be collected through the existing fees for markets and abattoirs, water rights, and the taxes on alcohol sales, the largest sources of municipal revenue.¹³³ Moreover, taxing the upper and middle classes could generate resistance and jeopardize the existing political consensus. While taxes on production and real estate transactions rose in the following decade, they would

¹³¹ *Reseña Ayuntamiento 1882*, 46-48.

¹³² The best figures we have for the early 1880's are Charles W. Zaremba's estimate of 338,000 for 1882 and Antonio García Cubas' 300,000 for 1884. *Estadísticas históricas*, 1:24; Davies, "Tendencias."

¹³³ Thompson maintains that a common laborer needed between two and two and a half times his or her customary wage to support a family of four, while skilled artisans, factory mechanics and other better paid workers needed up to one and a half times their wage. Lanny Thompson, "Artisans, Marginals, and Proletarians: The Households of the Popular Classes in Mexico City, 1876-1950," in eds. Virginia Guedea and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *5 Centuries of Mexican History/5 Siglos de Historia Mexicana* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/University of California Irvine, 1992), 1:308. While the dearth of social statistics demands caution, scattered information on high mortality rates, incidence of disease, and overcrowded housing conditions support this view. Claudia Agostoni, *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico City, 1876-1910* (Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press/University of Colorado Press/UNAM, 2003), 26-27, 65-76. For the different categories contributing to the city's coffers see: Rodríguez, *La experiencia*, 279-283.

nevertheless not generate enough resources to pay for the works that all men in office had come to judge essential.

Instead, the council increasingly relied on private initiative and capital. In acknowledgment of fiscal constraints, President Pedro Rincón Gallardo complained that “unless residents start contributing at least small quantities from their own resources, it would take a long time for Mexico to reach the stature it merits given its importance and its numerous population.” Thus, from 1883, the Ayuntamiento encouraged the cooperation of residents’ assemblies, which would be organized under what was founded that year as an association of former members of the council concerned with promoting the “public health and beauty of Mexico City.” Originally called the Junta de Mejoras Materiales, this association intended to oversee the residents’ assemblies, and together provide for the embellishment of the city.¹³⁴ Its first accomplishment was to get property owners on the valuable Cinco de Mayo Street to help pay for a luxurious pavement.¹³⁵ While the Junta received some publicity, its initiatives would not be sufficient to satisfy the councils’ wishes, and it disappeared from the records within a few years.¹³⁶

More controversial were proposals to let businesses supply what the council could not, and these led to a heated debate about the desirability of either outsourcing works, through arrangements known as *contratas*, or privatizing the provision of public services,

¹³⁴ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1883*, 27-28.

¹³⁵ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1883*, 18.

¹³⁶ *Discurso leído el 1º de Enero de 1885 por el C. Guillermo Valle, como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1884 dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del Lic. Pedro Rincón Gallardo, Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1885, y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva Corporación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1885), 34-35; *Discurso leído el 1º de Enero de 1886 por el C. Pedro Rincón Gallardo como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1885, dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del C. Manuel González Cosío y Discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito al instalar la nueva Corporación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1886), 32.

such as in the case of the *concesiones* to tramway companies. The question that framed the discussions was whether or not the adequate provision of municipal public services was compatible with private profit. The attempt by the Ayuntamiento of 1884 to privatize water supply services, supported by the governor and President González, unleashed massive criticism in the press and opposition from some members of the political establishment, leading to the annulment of the contract. The Ayuntamiento in partnership with the Executive resorted instead to outsourcing the works, forming *contratas* with private investors under which the Ayuntamiento remained in charge of and responsible for the supply of “life’s most necessary element.”¹³⁷ In general, *contratas* would come to dominate most public works such as road construction and paving, construction of public buildings, drainage and water provision, with the exception of innovative large-scale projects, such as the introduction of electricity, which took the form of *concesiones*.¹³⁸

The council and the executive believed loans were the most advantageous solution to the obligations generated by the myriad *contratas* entered into during this period. Borrowed money promised to allow the Ayuntamiento to keep a semblance of control over the infrastructural developments of the city, while giving it more leverage in negotiations with private capital. After a failed attempt to get half a million pesos locally to finance the purchase of pipes for water distribution in the early 1880s, followed by a succession of short term loans by Monte de Piedad and Banco Nacional Mexicano to cover working deficits, councilors placed their hopes on a large long-term foreign loan.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Rodríguez, “Gobierno”; *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1884*, 34.

¹³⁸ Diego G. López Rosado, *Los servicios públicos de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1976); Connolly, *El contratista*.

¹³⁹ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1881*, 5-6; Rodríguez, *Experiencia olvidada*, 134-137; *Reseña 1882*, 50-51; *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1883*, 5-10, 15.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Ayuntamiento of 1884, the year when the Ferrocarril Central connecting Mexico City with the United States at El Paso started operating, Governor Fernández urged the council to embrace the possibilities offered by international credit markets and private initiative. Were the councilors to follow his advice, he anticipated the beginning of a new era for the Ayuntamiento, which until then “had sustained a cruel and permanent struggle to cover with a cloak of magnificence the city’s beggars’ rags.”¹⁴⁰ Had the loan materialized, it would have been used to pay for “most necessary, and mainly productive, works such as water distribution, markets, and an abattoir.”¹⁴¹ The following year Fernández was no longer governor but minister in Paris with legal representation of the Ayuntamiento in the negotiations. But despite his best efforts, it took until 1889 for the city to earn the privilege of owing millions of pesos to foreign creditors.

2.3 New Halls, New Troubles

As the city expanded and grew more populous, the strategic public service of supplying residents with daily necessities required the authorities’ constant attention. What is more, markets were an integral part of the period’s attempts to modernize the city’s built environment and social interactions. In this context, between 1880 and 1903, in tune with the demands of the national government and in response to the pressures of businessmen and the press, the Ayuntamiento discussed, approved, and executed projects to renovate and reorganize the city’s markets and to modify its long-standing commercial

¹⁴⁰ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1883*, 55.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 15.

practices. As contested public spaces in what Elías Palti calls the “positivist project of a ‘pedagogic republic’,” markets were the target of a cultural crusade to shape collective and individual public behaviors.¹⁴²

It would be wrong to assume a linear development. At least through the 1880s, tension, if not conflict, existed between the Ayuntamiento and the National Executive, as the debates over the future of El Volador and the acceptability of *viento* sales will demonstrate below. While the president and the governor favored a clearer separation of street and market and the suppression of all street sales, the Ayuntamiento tried to protect commercial activities under its jurisdiction. During these years both national and local authorities shared certain optimism about their capacity to alter the city’s commercial landscape. This is also a period when old institutional arrangements remained strong, with the Ayuntamiento trying, usually successfully, to balance the interests of the different players involved in the city’s markets. The years between 1890 and 1903, however, presented a different picture. A more accommodating council completed the construction six market halls. When newly inaugurated markets did not bring the expected results, optimism gave way to anxiety. As the failure to eradicate certain practices now deemed unacceptable became obvious, a more repressive consensus emerged, especially pertaining to *viento* sales. In the new context, the Ayuntamiento found it increasingly difficult to satisfy the needs and demands of competing groups and individuals.

¹⁴² Elías J. Palti, “La transformación del liberalismo mexicano en el siglo XIX. Del modelo jurídico de la opinión pública al modelo estratégico de la sociedad civil,” in Sacristán and Piccato, *Actores, espacios y debates* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005), 87.

In 1880 the council sold the Guerrero Market, to which merchants and vendors had refused to relocate despite repeated resolutions giving away stalls for free. The Ayuntamiento then devoted the proceeds of the sale to building a hall for La Merced, one of the city's "customary markets," which was little more than an "agglomeration of people busy in transactions under the only shelter of imperfect and disgusting sunshades." Instead, councilors hoped for "a proper market," complete with shops, a covered *viento* section, warehouses, an office for the administrator, and a wharf to load and unload the produce brought in through the canals that still crossed the city.¹⁴³ The council's primary motivation was to increase revenue collection by enticing merchants dealing in relatively large quantities to rent commercial space in the new, more expensive, La Merced, and by facilitating the fiscal control of *viento* sales, which would be concentrated there. Beyond fiscal goals, the council's stated aims included smoothing the supply of basic goods, embellishing that part of the city, and improving hygiene and public health. As works progressed *El Monitor Republicano*, one of the most influential newspapers of the time, was delighted, declaring it simple, but elegant and in good taste.¹⁴⁴

The city council was especially pleased with the boost in fees generated by La Merced, so pleased, in fact, that the president of the Ayuntamiento publicly maintained that he wished Markets Commissioner Agustín Róvalo could be made perpetual councilor.¹⁴⁵ Encouraged by the praise, and expecting to be able to replicate the results,

¹⁴³ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1880*, 7-9, 11-13.

¹⁴⁴ "Nuevo Mercado de La Merced," *Monitor Republicano*, September 2, 1880, 2.

¹⁴⁵ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1880*, 7.

during his three year tenure Róvalo proposed the construction of several new markets halls, and the extension and complete refurbishment of the existing ones.¹⁴⁶

Sharing the council's motivations concerning revenue, aesthetics, and public health, the president of the Republic approved of the plans, with Governor Fernández soon taking the lead. Impatient with the pace of change, he wrote to the Ayuntamiento on several occasions with detailed proposals, and suggested that outsourcing the works was preferable to relying on the council's personnel.¹⁴⁷ In return for compliance, he committed to assisting the Ayuntamiento, guaranteeing modifications to fiscal laws that would more than treble the maximum market fees, and aiding in the negotiation of affordable purchases or executive donation of necessary real estate.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, after developer Francisco R. Blanco secured contracts to renovate La Merced, expand San Juan, and build a hall on the plazuela Loreto in 1888, the Ayuntamiento successfully engaged the help of President Díaz, who waived all import duties for the construction materials for the market.¹⁴⁹

But the Executive's agenda went beyond supporting the Ayuntamiento's public works initiatives, generating disagreements that strained the relationship between the two parties. The earliest conflict concerned El Volador, the city's oldest market. The governor thought that this market, with its active foodstuffs trading, was an unsuitable neighbor for the National Palace. He expected that the new halls located at a distance from the city's

¹⁴⁶ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1881*, 13-14, 20.

¹⁴⁷ 3/17/1882, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3737, exp. 898; *Reseña Ayuntamiento 1882*, 72.

¹⁴⁸ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1885*, 26; 10/5/1886, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1101, exp. 28.

¹⁴⁹ 6/8/1888, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1102, exp. 31; Yoma and Martos, *Dos mercados*, 166-167. Blanco's letterhead read: Contractor, Developer and Importer, General Representative for the Mexican Republic of the Electric Lighting System "Without Dynamo." 5/1/1888, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1102, exp. 31.

main square would make El Volador redundant, enabling it to be closed down soon after the new markets were completed.¹⁵⁰ He counted on the backing of the media, which frequently disparaged the city's main market. As early as 1882 even the opposition *El Monitor* read: "This market is in an incredible state of complete abandonment, the garbage and mud make it impassable. What is this Ayuntamiento thinking?"¹⁵¹ The governor asked for the site to be turned into a department store specializing in luxury products.

While the Ayuntamiento agreed that El Volador had to change, it could not concur with the plan to close it down. First, the Ayuntamiento opposed the governor's department store project by arguing that according to the laws of the *Reforma* a council could not, as a corporation, own such a property.¹⁵² Then, in an attempt to preserve the market, in 1886 councilor and Markets Commissioner José María Rego presented a project to improve its infrastructure, complete with a budget and a plan produced by the engineer Roberto Gayol. They anticipated that if the works they proposed were carried out, "we will have a market which, if not equal to the cultured capitals of Europe and the United States, will at least not do injustice to the good name of the Ayuntamiento of Mexico."¹⁵³ But almost immediately President Díaz intervened. He made it clear that his preference was for more drastic modifications, causing the council to quickly withdraw its proposition.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ 3/17/1882, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3737, exp. 898.

¹⁵¹ "El Mercado del Volador," *Monitor Republicano*, October 22, 1882, 3.

¹⁵² 5/9/1882, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3737, exp. 898.

¹⁵³ 5/25/1886, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1101, exp. 28.

¹⁵⁴ 10/5/1886, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1101, exp. 28.

The Ayuntamiento subsequently held discussions about parceling it and selling the pieces to the highest bidder.¹⁵⁵ In turn, private interests had an eye on the property. In 1888 Francisco R. Blanco negotiated the inclusion of the land and the building as collaterals in the contracts he signed for market construction.¹⁵⁶ After the council fulfilled contractual obligations with Blanco, thus lifting the mortgage on El Volador, one Ignacio F. Alfaro proposed to buy it to turn it into a ten story “model building” for offices for the government and the private sector.¹⁵⁷ *El Tiempo* insisted, “it’s a scandal that when foreigners visit us and want to learn about our customs they go to our main market... to find a filthy pigsty deserving the most severe censure.”¹⁵⁸ The only voice left against the suppression of El Volador was Juvenal (editorialist Enrique Chávarri’s pseudonym) from *El Monitor Republicano*, who despite abhorring the state of this market, defended its continued existence in terms of custom and convenience for nearby residents who did not want to send their servants to shop too far from their homes.¹⁵⁹

An even more problematic source of friction between local and national authorities was the definition of the boundaries between streets and markets. Until this period municipal markets had been held not primarily under covered halls but mostly *al viento*—out on the streets, by the canals, and in plazas, mostly in the immediate

¹⁵⁵ *Idem*; *Discurso leído el 4 de enero de 1887 por el C. Gral. Manuel G. Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1886 dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del ciudadano Francisco Mejía, segundo regidor del Ayuntamiento de 1887* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1887), 31-32.

¹⁵⁶ 5/17/1888, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol.1102, exp. 31.

¹⁵⁷ 3/24/1890, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1102, exp. 33.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in “Mercado de Loreto,” *El Universal*, September 27, 1889, 2.

¹⁵⁹ “Mal andamos,” *Monitor Republicano*, August 1, 1890, 1. This newspaper maintained the same position for years: “El Bazar Porfirio Díaz,” *Monitor Republicano*, May 7, 1885, 1; “El Mercado del Volador,” *Monitor Republicano*, December 12, 1889, 3.

surroundings of market halls, but also wherever the council allowed them. As shown in the previous chapter, this approach to markets reflected the Ayuntamiento's fiscal needs, and its awareness and prudent management of the city's social dynamics.¹⁶⁰ Yet, in the new context, many among the aspiring Porfirian elite had different ideas about what constituted acceptable commercial spaces and practices; what is more, they believed they possessed the capacity to act upon these ideas. Now Ayuntamiento members found themselves in a dilemma. Although they belonged to the same elite, their position in the urban polity gave them distinct priorities and led them to oppose some of the proposed changes. Thus, the decade of the 1880's witnessed disputes between the Ayuntamiento and the governorship over a redefinition of what qualified as proper use of the city streets and markets, with the president and his ministers, the police, as well as the press and property owners, supporting the governorship in most instances.

As far as the executive, journalists, and wealthy property owners and residents were concerned, all vendors outside of the few existing market halls were *vendedores ambulantes*, a phrase that became widely used in the 1880s both in official documents and in the press, and which initially encompassed both regulated *viento* sales and untaxed peddlers. To those who opposed them, these two groups were indistinguishable. In the designs of Governor Fernández, the halls he demanded in 1882 would permit, in a not so distant future, to conveniently house the *vendedores ambulantes* that impeded pedestrian and carriages' circulation in the city center. He was not alone: the press unanimously clamored for action against their perceived effect on the cleanliness and culture of the city; and property owners and residents complained frequently and harshly about their

¹⁶⁰ "Modificaciones al reglamento vigente para el cobro del impuesto sobre mercados," in *Memoria Ayuntamiento 1879*, 221-223.

supposed immorality.¹⁶¹ Not surprisingly, beginning in the early 1880s the local police, which responded to the orders of the secretary of Gobernación, was under instructions to prevent vendors from setting their stalls on several streets and plazas, even in places where they had been carrying out their trade for years.¹⁶²

The council agreed on the need to improve hygiene in markets, thus making an effort to keep the streets occupied by vendors as tidy as possible. Administrators also often blamed the poorest vendors, who sold from mats on the ground, for the lack of cleanliness and order. Moreover, the Ayuntamiento shared the executive and the press' opinions about the immorality of street vendors. Its official voice, *El Municipio Libre*, reproduced a report by a market administrator where he criticized the long standing agglomeration of stalls formed as an outflow of vendors from El Volador Market on Universidad Street, "against the rules of morality ... especially because this street is frequented by the ladies of the National Music Conservatory, who have to tolerate the unseemly language of the vendors."¹⁶³ Later, in 1887, the council prided itself in passing strong measures to prevent vendors from ill-treating customers, allowing women and their families to visit markets without fear of being offended.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ 3/17/1882, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3737, exp. 898; "El mercado de La Merced," *Monitor Republicano*, October 1, 1880, 2; "Comisión de mercados," *Municipio Libre*, August 28, 1884, 1-2; "Comisión de mercados," *Municipio Libre*, April 21, 1887, 1.

¹⁶² "Comisión de mercados," *Municipio Libre*, August 28, 1884, 1-2.

¹⁶³ "Informe que rinde el intendente de mercados a la comisión del ramo," *Municipio Libre*, August 24, 1884, 2.

¹⁶⁴ *Discurso leído el 1º de Enero de 1888 por el C. Gral. Manuel G. Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1887, dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del Ciudadano Manuel Gargollo Segundo Regidor del Ayuntamiento de 1887 y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalarse la nueva corporación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1888), 30.

But while the council shared these elitist cultural prejudices and opposed the activities of untaxed hawkers, it accommodated and sought to protect regulated *viento* sales. In the 1880s the Ayuntamiento adamantly defended its rights to create markets, collect *viento* fees without police interference, and perform moral duties towards the poorest among market vendors: “While we agree that stalls should not obstruct traffic, we will never agree to the prohibition of sales in hallways and plazas, where we [city councilors] are entitled to allow them according to the fiscal laws currently in force.”¹⁶⁵ A new set of regulations from 1885 restated the Ayuntamiento’s jurisdiction over markets, in particular its right to authorize the formation of new ones, whether they be in halls, plazas, or other public spaces.¹⁶⁶ As late as 1887 the council responded to the attacks of the press regarding sales on Universidad, Bajos de Portacoeli, and Rejas de Balvanera Streets by arguing they were a source of significant municipal revenue that, in addition, provided subsistence to a great many families.¹⁶⁷

During this decade markets commissioners were sanguine, expecting that the construction of the new halls they proposed would generate more than enough room to house those vendors who blocked traffic, so that they could be “contained” in accordance with the exigencies of “culture and civilization.”¹⁶⁸ In the meantime, they had to be relocated to plazas and alleys where they could be more easily taxed and controlled. By

¹⁶⁵ “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, August 24, 1884, 1-2; 6/14/1884, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1101, exp. 26.

¹⁶⁶ *Reglamento para el servicio y recaudación del ramo de mercados* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1885). Hereafter, *Reglamento mercados 1885*.

¹⁶⁷ “El mercado del Volador,” *Municipio Libre*, April 30, 1887, 1. See Appendix, Figure 3.

¹⁶⁸ 5/9/1882, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3737, exp. 898; *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1886*, 32.

1887 relocations amounted to a “campaign” against street sales.¹⁶⁹ As they awaited more permanent structures, these relocations had the side benefit of bringing basic provisions to parts of the city where the arm of the council had yet to reach.¹⁷⁰

The expectation was that the development of modern infrastructure and stringent controls would change vendors’ behavior, and teach them to act in accordance with the authorities’ modern urban mores:

In effect, the dominant habits of our populace mean that trade in foodstuffs taking place in markets has so far lacked favorable hygienic conditions; this will no longer be the case since they will place their wares in special booths, in the spaces designated for them, benefiting consumers and improving public hygiene, owing to the vigilance that we will exert in the premises, where, according to the common expression, there will be a place for everything, and everything will be in its place.¹⁷¹

However authoritarian the desire to mold vendors’ conduct might have been, there remained also a paternalistic element of care and protection in the council’s discourse, if not designs. The Ayuntamiento often claimed it acted in the vendors’ best interests. Councilors maintained that markets had to be refurbished because they were dangerous as they stood; improved stalls would avoid the frequent and risky collapses suffered by the existing precarious structures. If they accepted change, vendors would no longer have to endure exposure to the wind and weather, and, in general, carry out their trade more comfortably; they would also benefit from enhanced hygienic conditions.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1887*, 46; “Comisión de Mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, October 1, 1888, 1.

¹⁷⁰ “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, April 21, 1987, 1; *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1887*, 29-30.

¹⁷¹ *Idem*.

¹⁷² *Reseña Ayuntamiento 1882*, 31; “Informe que rinde el Intendente de mercados a la Comisión del ramo,” *Municipio Libre*, August 28, 1884, 2; *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1885*, 26; *Discurso leído el 1º de enero de 1889 por el Lic. Gral. Manuel González Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1888 dando cuenta de su administración y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación*

City authorities envisioned the integration of certain members of the local commercial classes into the modern city. The requisite was not necessarily social or economic standing but acquiescence to the rules of conduct they considered appropriate for the public of the capital of the republic. In fact, having substantial capital or dealing in large quantities was not necessary in order to be part of the acceptable world of markets. To the contrary, the Ayuntamiento repeatedly made efforts to accommodate small-scale vendors. As pressures mounted against street sales, merchants who occupied large amounts of space in the existing halls started to receive the attention of markets commissioners. In 1886 the council denounced the fact that “he who first rented three or four meters now occupies eight or ten, paying only for the original concession. It is time we ended this abuse, so we can make space for more vendors while increasing revenue collection.”¹⁷³ The following year, newly appointed Markets Commissioner F. Mejía visited the city’s markets in order to make provisions for order and cleanliness. He noticed that El Volador and San Juan Markets housed some extremely large shops. In El Volador he found twelve grocery stores of up to forty square meters each, and in San Juan, butchers’ and food stalls comprising up to twenty square meters. Since none of them paid appropriate fees, he decided to raise their charges accordingly, expecting that the financial disincentive would make them give up space that could be then allocated to some of the small-scale vendors who were carrying out their business in *viento* stalls on the adjacent streets owing to the lack of alternatives.¹⁷⁴ In this manner the Ayuntamiento

(Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1889), 29; 67/1901, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3740, exp. 1203.

¹⁷³ 5/25/1886, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1101, exp. 28.

¹⁷⁴ “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, April 21, 1887, 1.

attempted to balance the interests of different groups while trying to fulfill its larger goal of reorganizing the city's streets and markets.

Then, in close succession, the Ayuntamiento opened five new market halls between 1888 and 1890. First was San Cosme, in September 1888. In June 1889, the Ayuntamiento still reported with optimism: "The works in markets arranged by the council are progressing apace... Surely in a month or two we will be able to see these important constructions completed, and then we will feel the beneficial results, not only in terms of aspect and adornment, but equally in terms of hygiene."¹⁷⁵ Soon afterwards the council inaugurated San Lucas Market. By early 1890 Blanco's glass and iron halls in Loreto, San Juan, and La Merced were finished and in operation.¹⁷⁶ The inauguration of markets had become conspicuous celebrations of governmental achievements. When the Mercado Martínez de la Torre was officially opened in 1895, attending the ceremony were the secretary of Gobernación and Díaz's father-in-law Manuel Romero Rubio, the recently appointed Governor Pedro Rincón Gallardo, all of the members of the Ayuntamiento, and a "great number of notable persons."¹⁷⁷ Yet the previous decade's optimism would not last.

¹⁷⁵ "Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, June 4, 1889, 1.

¹⁷⁶ *Discurso leído al 1º de enero de 1890 por el C. Gral Manuel González Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1889, y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1890), 29; "Mercados," *Municipio Libre*, February 7, 1890, 1. San Cosme was inaugurated on September 15, 1888; San Lucas on September 16, 1889; Loreto on September 18; San Juan on November 27; La Merced on February 5, 1890.

¹⁷⁷ *Discurso del C. Ingeniero Sebastián Camacho, Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1895, al instalarse el de 1896, contestación del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal Gral. Pedro Rincón Gallardo y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1895* (Mexico City: Imp. y Lit. "La Europea" de Fernando Camacho, 1896), 127-129.

Shortly after inaugurating La Merced the council transferred merchants dealing in foodstuffs in El Volador to La Merced and other markets.¹⁷⁸ However, despite the widely supported view about the desirability of closing down El Volador, the Ayuntamiento hesitated. On the one hand, the council was still reluctant to let go of valuable rents which were “stable and neither onerous nor objectionable to anyone.”¹⁷⁹ Referred to as the “ex-Mercado del Volador,” or “antiguo Mercado del Volador,” and no longer the city’s main market, in the 1890s it still housed ironmongers, and toy, shoe, and clothes vendors.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, the Ayuntamiento repeatedly resorted to El Volador when it needed to relocate vendors no longer tolerated in other areas. During the holiday seasons of November and December 1891, the markets commission decided to allow street vendors, “extremely poor people who seem to subsist all year from what they make in those months,” to use it for their trade.¹⁸¹ On another occasion, in 1897 the council hoped to concentrate those vendors who sold clothes outside of other markets in El Volador.¹⁸²

Eventually the new market halls made evident the Ayuntamiento’s incapability to bring about the desired change. Once they were open, the council passed a resolution ordering wholesalers to move their business to the underutilized Loreto Market, and forbidding them from unloading produce in La Merced. They were offered a six-month rent waiver, and the permission to sell retail there as well. Councilors hoped this measure

¹⁷⁸ 1/24/1890, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1102, exp. 31; “Mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, February 7, 1890, 1.

¹⁷⁹ 4/7/1890, AHDF, ACM, FM, vol. 1102, exp. 33.

¹⁸⁰ *Discurso leído el 1 de enero de 1891 por el C. Gral. Manuel González Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1890 dando cuenta de su administración y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación* (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León), 42.

¹⁸¹ “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, January 17, 1891, 1.

¹⁸² 7/27/1897, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1136.

would rationalize wholesale trade and, again, free space in the remaining markets for those carrying out their business on the streets and plazas.¹⁸³ However, within a year, the markets commission reported that their attempts had failed despite their best efforts, for which they blamed merchants opposition as well as “old and deeply-rooted customs.” He promised not to rest until these were eradicated. “We hope to...soon bring the day when the press and neighbors stop complaining.”¹⁸⁴

The persistence of street sales brought the Ayuntamiento the harshest criticisms. In the early 1890s, when “despite the comforts offered by a locale that provides shelter against the sun, that is clean and equipped with convenient booths, vendors introduced disorder, emigrating to the sidewalks and nearby hallways,” a more coercive consensus emerged.¹⁸⁵ After wondering, not without sarcasm, what the purpose of the new expensive halls was given that the city streets remained a “ridiculous village *tianguis*,” influential journalists asserted: “Reduce market fees if necessary, but *force, force, force* vendors to disappear from the streets. If their trade is productive, they will necessarily move into any of the existing markets.”¹⁸⁶ In 1892, *El Universal* still wondered:

In that galley called La Merced Market ... there is not enough room for all the vendors, so they have scattered on to the streets, forming a labyrinth of stalls, fruits, vegetables, pushing and shoving ... In this sea swim the *vendedores ambulantes*, object of the rage of the police. What is this? Should we declare them vagrants? Should we classify them among the microbes? Should we

¹⁸³ “De la comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, July 26, 1890, 3.

¹⁸⁴ “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, January 17, 1891, 1.

¹⁸⁵ “Obstruyen las aceras,” *El Universal*, October 12, 1888, 7; “Los mercados,” *El Nacional*, January 5, 1892, 2; “El mercado de La Merced,” *Monitor Republicano*, December 17, 1896, 2.

¹⁸⁶ “¿Para qué?” *El Universal*, March 18, 1890, 2. My emphasis. A village *tianguis* is a market, which in general gathers on specific days in specific locations. The expression has a negative connotation, village as opposed to city, *tianguis* as opposed to modern market.

pursue them as criminals? ... Are their labors legal or not? Should we lock them up? Should we hang them on a coat rack so they don't get in the way?¹⁸⁷

As if these were not mere rhetorical questions, less than a month after these remarks were published, the Ayuntamiento requested that the governor order the police to compel *viento* vendors outside of La Merced to enter the market.¹⁸⁸ Similar actions took place in other city markets. What is more, *ambulantes* then started to be required to carry licenses that spelled out and limited what their holders could legally do: subject to police control, these licenses did not grant the right to sell in stationary stalls, and forbade entry into the city center.¹⁸⁹ In 1900 the council issued one thousand such licenses but, both because they rejected the *ambulantes*' presence in the streets and because they knew they would not be able to tax them, they granted the permits only provisionally.¹⁹⁰ The more local authorities were forced to acknowledge that they could not significantly alter the city's commercial practices, the more they were willing to repress those who escaped their control, even to the council's fiscal detriment, and at the cost of giving up jurisdiction over street sales to the governor and the police.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ "Vendedores ambulantes," *El Universal*, October 22, 1892, 3.

¹⁸⁸ "Comisión de mercados," *Municipio Libre*, November 13, 1892, 2.

¹⁸⁹ 11/29/1902, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 64; *Discursos del Sr. D. Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga, Presidente interino del Ayuntamiento en 1902, del Sr. D. Ramón Corral, gobernador del Distrito Federal, y del Sr. D. Guillermo de Landa y Escandón* (Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1903), 428.

¹⁹⁰ *Discurso del S. Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandón, Presidente del Ayuntamiento de México en 1900, discurso del S. Don Ramón Corral, gobernador del Distrito Federal y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1900* (Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1901), 369; 4/9/1901, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 8. In 1902, there were 1333 licensed *ambulantes*. *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1902*, 429.

¹⁹¹ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1888*, 29; "Comisión de mercados," *Municipio Libre*, January 17, 1891, 1; "Nuestro colega," *Municipio Libre*, December 18, 1896, 2; *Discurso del C. Lic. Miguel S. Macedo, Presidente del Ayuntamiento, contestación del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal C. Lic. Rafael Rebollar y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1898, formada por el Secretario Lic. Juan Bribiesca* (Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1899), 221.

El Universal remained unimpressed with the Ayuntamiento's efforts, going so far as to blame the councilors' timidity and ignorance for the inadequacy of the city's narrow and disorganized markets.¹⁹² Perhaps as a response, when the French-trained engineer Miguel Angel de Quevedo, today considered Mexico's first urbanist, joined the council in 1901, he was put in charge of a newly created commission for market improvements. After a careful survey he concluded, in contrast to complaints made in the press, that existing market structures were sufficient and appropriate. He agreed, however, that all markets needed more order and lacked cleanliness.¹⁹³ As a result, he proposed to expel from markets all vendors and merchants, regardless of their scale, who sold goods other than foodstuffs and flowers, which decomposed easily and thus needed the rapid turnover markets could guarantee. In 1903, merchants and vendors with shops in La Merced exclusively sold these basic perishable goods.¹⁹⁴ This strategy was increasingly appealing in the early 1900s, when the authorities faced the tensions generated by mounting inflation and falling real wages.¹⁹⁵

Still, all the transformations of the previous two decades notwithstanding, by the turn of the century *viento* sales continued. In the streets and plazas around La Merced and San Juan, the two busiest markets, there were respectively four hundred stalls and two hundred stalls on a weekday—i.e. when there was less trade—and that, after the council

¹⁹² "El Municipio y las necesidades de la capital," *El Universal*, March 12, 1900, 1.

¹⁹³ "Las mejoras en los mercados de la Ciudad," *Boletín Municipal*, March 15, 1901, 1; 3/22/1901, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3740, exp. 1206.

¹⁹⁴ 9/25/1903, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 5; Appendix, Figure 4.

¹⁹⁵ 1/29/1901, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 1; "Las mejoras en los mercados de la ciudad," *Boletín Municipal*, March 15, 1901, 1; "Las mejoras en los mercados de la ciudad II," *Boletín Municipal*, March 19, 1901, 1. David Walker, "Porfirian Labor Politics: Working class organizations in Mexico City and Porfirio Díaz, 1876-1902" *The Americas* 37, no. 3 (1981): 278-280.

banished products deemed unsuitable for markets. In the city at large there remained 2,197 licensed *viento* vendors, compared to the 1,175 active shops in the nine existing halls.¹⁹⁶ When it came to street sales, Porfirian authorities had to content themselves with a linguistic victory: while the stalls remained, the term *viento* would disappear from the archives.

Perhaps the most important change was that the Ayuntamiento no longer accepted *viento* vendors as an integral part of the city's markets. Instead, those who sold *al viento* were increasingly marginalized, with their commercial practices considered a transitory ill awaiting suppression.¹⁹⁷ The Ayuntamiento had by then come to share the view of all commercial activities taking place on the streets held by the National Executive, the press, and many wealthy residents. They all projected on to both *ambulantes* and *viento* vendors a "horrified gaze," a sense of anguish in part motivated by the hygienic and circulation concerns of the period and by the disarticulation of previous paternalistic attitudes towards the poor.¹⁹⁸ But in addition, this perception was also a product of the elite's dissatisfaction with the outcome of the council's market policies. Put differently, street vendors were not the only victims of this gaze; the consciousness of the failure to eradicate what became unacceptable vending practices contributed to the erosion of the

¹⁹⁶ 6/7/1901, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3740, exp. 1203; "Los mercados," *Boletín Municipal*, July 11, 1902, 4.

¹⁹⁷ Discurso del C. Ingeniero Sebastián Camacho, presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1897 al instalarse el de 1898, discurso del C. Lic. Miguel S. Macedo, presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1898, contestación del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal C. Lic. Rafael Rebollar, y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1897, formada por el Secretario C. Lic. Juan Bribiesca (Mexico City: La Europea de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1898), 192.

¹⁹⁸ Barbosa, *El Trabajo*, 16. He borrows the phrase from Luis Alberto Romero, *¿Qué hacer con los pobres? Elite y sectores populares en Santiago de Chile, 1840-1895* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1997), 165-174.

Ayuntamiento's jurisdiction over urban spaces and of its role in the lives of Mexico City's residents.

2.4 Locatarios in the Making: Compliance and Resistance

Merchants and vendors were not passive observers of the changes taking place in their markets and the official attempts to modify their commercial practices. Many responded to the new context by opting out. Some relatively rich merchants left municipal markets in favor of private accommodations. Already in 1881, within months of the inauguration of La Merced Market, “butchers who had opened the most luxurious shops closed them down...among others the honorable and intelligent Ignacio Malo, who had opened an extremely elegant *tocinería*.”¹⁹⁹ There were also those who could not, or would not, be incorporated in the new markets. As the legal standing of *viento* sales deteriorated, many vendors found they could not afford to rent a stall in the new markets, or that they could not secure a stall in the location they knew would make the best sales. Some among them reacted to these constraints by requesting *ambulante* licenses. A group of female shoe vendors, for example, appealed to the governor's “humanitarian sentiments,” “imploring, for the sake of our poor children you would grant us permission to sell our merchandise, without lingering [sin estacionarnos], so not to interrupt pedestrian circulation.”²⁰⁰ In general they confronted the authorities' project with petitions invoking tradition and the rights they insisted stemmed from long-standing customary practices; when they were denied, most of them resisted, as historian Susie

¹⁹⁹ 2/12/1881, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3736, exp. 873.

²⁰⁰ 3/28/1901, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 8.

Porter puts it, by “the elegantly simple and powerful act of ignoring new municipal regulations.”²⁰¹ They became or continued to be peddlers who in most cases evaded taxes and, under orders of the governor and the instructions of the Ayuntamiento, would be chronically harassed by the police.²⁰²

Yet at least 1,175 vendors and merchants remained in or joined the Ayuntamiento’s newly modernized public markets as *locatarios*, or stall holders within the new halls.²⁰³ Undoubtedly some of these vendors had been coerced into the markets, while others might have stayed only because they did not have the means to move to private premises. Also among them, however, were many *comerciantes* who actively chose to base their businesses in the city’s public markets because they saw them as a means to better their economic prospects and to secure their position in the city’s commercial structure. These market vendors and merchants both adapted to the new environment and contested specific changes that they considered harmful to their economic interests. As shown below, they too marginalized *viento* vendors and *ambulantes*. Thus they participated in the transformation of their markets.

In the early 1880s their disputes over fees still appealed to custom, invoking the fiscal interests of the Ayuntamiento and the compassion that councilors and wealthier merchants were obliged to demonstrate to the poorest vendors. Merchants who chose to

²⁰¹ Susie S. Porter, “And That It Is Custom Makes It Law. Class conflict and Gender Ideology in the Public Sphere, Mexico City 1880-1910,” *Social Science History* 24, no 1 (Spring 2000): 134.

²⁰² “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, August 28, 1884, 1-2; “Comisión de mercados,” *Municipio Libre*, October 1, 1880, 1; “Los Mercados,” *El Nacional*, February 27, 1892. Porter, “And That It Is Custom,” 128-129. She argues that women were particularly affected, and among them, sellers of prepared foods.

²⁰³ *Locatarios* are those who rent a locale in a public market from the relevant authorities. An approximate though archaic translation is stallholder.

establish themselves in the refurbished La Merced “with the illusion that the profit of their trade would suffice to cover all expenses,” for example, soon felt that the rents the council was charging were too high, with the press backing their claim.²⁰⁴ When they petitioned that rents be slashed by a quarter, they addressed the council’s financial concerns: the Ayuntamiento could not remain indifferent to the fact that half of the new shops were empty, “thus losing not just the rents of these empty premises, but even the product of the *viento* section because, owing to the lack of commercial life in this market ... in this [section] there are only a few very poor sellers of fruit and three or four grain stalls with the smallest stocks.”

They finished their letter exclaiming that a favorable response would be received as a “grace” [*gracia*], which, in addition to preventing their economic ruin, would “indirectly benefit many poor persons who by honest work manage to provide their families with the necessary sustenance.” The missive is suffused with a sense of community for which they felt responsible.²⁰⁵ The Ayuntamiento too still believed this was its duty. Nine weeks later, the council, after examination by the Hacienda and markets commissions, decided their claim was fair, and responded that each individual merchant could write with details of his or her specific circumstances to renegotiate their rents in accordance.²⁰⁶

Increasingly, though, *locatarios* started weaving the language of custom with the official modernizing rhetoric, especially, but not exclusively, preoccupations with public

²⁰⁴ 2/12/1881, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3736, exp. 873; “Nuevo mercado de La Merced,” *Monitor Republicano*, September 26, 1880, 3.

²⁰⁵ 2/12/1881, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3736, exp. 873.

²⁰⁶ 4/19/1881, AHDF, *idem*.

health. While they continued to equate obtaining justice with receiving a grace or favor imparted from above, they began to use the authorities' concerns to their own benefit.²⁰⁷ In 1888, the Ayuntamiento decided to close markets at three in the afternoon to permit cleaning by municipal employees. Vendor Maclovio Herrera appealed to President Porfirio Díaz' "notorious generosity," on the day of the "lucky coincidence of his birth anniversary and the commemoration of the motherland's political independence." In his letter he challenged the convenience of this resolution, both because it did not respect "ancient customs," and because it was disadvantageous for consumers. What is more, he protested that from the point of view of "public health" it did not make sense either, because sanitary conditions were suffering as perishable foodstuffs were kept in storage between the new closing time and five in the morning, when markets were reopened.²⁰⁸ During the following months many others wrote similar petitions, and they worked. By the end of the year the council had modified its resolution, permitting markets to remain open until four in the afternoon during winter months and five in the afternoon in the summer.²⁰⁹

On another occasion *locatarios* from La Merced demanded that the council remove the fountain located at the center of this market on grounds of hygiene and proper

²⁰⁷ Christina Jiménez has shown how in this period in Morelia, Michoacán, local residents from the popular classes co-opted certain elements of the government's modernizing agenda as well as its rhetoric about liberal rights and responsibilities to advance their own interests and demand that the authorities fulfill their self-imposed responsibilities over the urban built environment. Christina M. Jiménez, "Popular Organizing for Public Services: Residents Modernize Morelia, Mexico, 1880-1920," *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 4 (May 2004), 495-518. In another article, this author demonstrates how in their correspondence to municipal authorities Morelia's vendors "performed" their commitment to the city's aesthetic and hygiene, and their contribution to local commerce and taxation in a way that legitimized them as members of the community, that is, as *vecinos*, and citizens. Jiménez, "Performing their Right to the City: Political Uses of Public Space in a Mexican City, 1880-1910s," *Urban History* 33, no.3 (2006), 435-456.

²⁰⁸ 9/15/1888, APD, CDP, leg. 13, caja 18, d. 008807-08.

²⁰⁹ *Discursos Ayuntamiento 1888*, 29.

circulation. Some vendors, they reported, had turned the area into a washing place, contaminating the water and the ground around the fountain with trash and grease, and causing traffic congestion and disgust among all those who passed by.²¹⁰ While they might have been truly concerned with circulation and sanitary conditions, by appropriating the discourse of the elite many *locatarios* also sought to differentiate themselves from those who were being excluded from the city's markets. Most explicitly, vendors who accepted a place in the new halls turned their compliance to the authorities' designs into an instrument for the removal of unwanted competitors. In 1884 the council faced demands from those who rented stalls inside San Juan Market to expand this hall. Their argument was that those who placed themselves in adjacent streets and plazas needed to be incorporated into the covered market, because they were in a better position to attract clientele, and could undersell those inside the market owing to the lower *viento* fees they paid for their stands.²¹¹ The same reason was given by butchers from La Merced who asked the council to expel meat vendors from the *viento* section of their market because they constituted "unjust competition."²¹² As they pursued their material interests market *locatarios* participated in the marginalization of *viento* vendors, and in general contributed to the redefinition of the boundaries between streets and markets that took place in this period.

Whereas until 1880 different social groups had coexisted in shared commercial spaces, the following two decades witnessed a gradual disintegration of the bonds that

²¹⁰ 7/30/1890, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1198.

²¹¹ "Informe Intendente mercados," *Municipio Libre*, August 28, 1884, 2.

²¹² 3/26/1901, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3740, exp. 1223.

tied them together. By the end of 1902 “merchants and neighbors of La Merced” were accusing *vendedores ambulantes* of not just unfair, but “illegal competition.” The list of their charges was impressive: they claimed that *ambulantes* evaded all taxes and fees; sold their wares at random prices; cheated their consumers with short measures; circulated fake currency; and purposefully covered up for pickpockets. They called them “a serious nuisance for passersby” who have to endure their “cries, obscenities, altercations, and unspeakable behaviors.”²¹³ Thus, a *locatario* identity was constructed not only in terms of everyday negotiations with the authorities, but also by competition with *viento* vendors and *ambulantes*, and by attempts at differentiating themselves from them.

Participation in the elite’s modernizing project did not mean the absence of conflict with the authorities. Contributing to the formation of a *locatario* identity were also specific moments of resistance. When confronted with tighter and more impersonal controls vendors began to see themselves as part of larger social groups. Maclovio Herrera, when he petitioned against changes in market hours, claimed he spoke on behalf of the city’s vendors, the “the most humble class in [our] society... more than three thousand families [who] would be brought to the most complete ruin” were the changes to become permanent.²¹⁴ The case of Eduardo Salazar is telling. On December 5, 1896 he wrote the president of the Ayuntamiento requesting to rent a stall in La Merced that he knew to be empty so that he could establish his trade in clothes.²¹⁵ Ten days later, on the

²¹³ 11/17/1902, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 64.

²¹⁴ 9/15/1888, APD, CDP, leg. 13, caja 18, d. 008807-08.

²¹⁵ 12/05/1896, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1110.

recommendation of the markets commission the council granted his petition.²¹⁶ Within a year he moved from petitioning as an individual to writing on behalf of a group of *locatarios* who successfully opposed the council's proposal to relocate them to the old Volador Market, on the grounds that having always paid their fees in time and already established themselves in La Merced, it would harm their interests to move.²¹⁷ By the turn of the century, when the authorities attempted to rid markets of all items but foodstuffs and flowers, he belonged to a group that claimed the right to question the decision on the basis of their status as law-abiding market vendors and city residents.²¹⁸

Still, in discussions about how to run the city's markets authorities dismissed vendors' early attempts at collective action. In the spring of 1898 Plácido Rivera and other *comerciantes* from La Merced complained about mistreatment by a market watchman called José de la Barrera, who "caused scandals" and abused them physically and verbally.²¹⁹ After hearing the results of an investigation, the council not only concluded that their claims were inaccurate, but also emphasized that "the individual who instigated and pursued the action...constantly gives reason for sanctions...because he never subjects himself to [municipal] resolutions."²²⁰ Councilors disqualified the joint claim by attacking the vendor who promoted it on personal grounds.

²¹⁶ 12/15/1896, *idem*.

²¹⁷ 7/22/1897, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1136; "Comisión de mercados," *Municipio Libre*, August 5, 1897, 1.

²¹⁸ 1/24/1901, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3740, exp. 1249; 1/29/1901, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 1.

²¹⁹ 6/1/1898, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1147.

²²⁰ 6/10/1898, *idem*.

The Ayuntamiento tried to avoid dealing with *locatarios* as a group. In 1901, Requisio Anda and other vendors from the external stalls of La Merced Market signed a petition to renegotiate rents, expand market working-hours, and enlarge the space their stalls occupied. The council sought to ignore it, reassuring the governor that “with the exception of Anda and two of his friends, all other *locatarios* without exception were taken by surprise by those who collected the signatures, because none of them had the will to make such a petition, since they are all satisfied with the hours and spaces assigned to their stalls.”²²¹ It seems that compliance with modern mores and regulations was not enough to make vendors heard. But the seed was already planted. Anda, Rivera, and the groups they belonged to were only two examples of a multiplicity of collective actors that based on issues of class came together as a product of the changes taking place in the city, and increasingly demanded that the city council acknowledge them.

Even if excluded from the city’s public sphere, vendors actions were not politically irrelevant. In their search for short-term gains and a secure position in the world of markets, merchants and vendors inadvertently contributed to the demise of the Ayuntamiento. While the governor encroached upon the council’s jurisdiction, *locatarios* legitimized the process of transference of responsibility by increasingly directing their petitions and complaints to the governor. In 1897 the Ayuntamiento limited small-scale fruit vendors to the occupation of the space specifically designated for their stalls, thus leaving market aisles clear for improved circulation. In response, vendors turned to the governor, asking him to order that they be allowed to occupy up to one meter beyond

²²¹ 4/2/1901, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3740, exp. 1233.

their stalls, as it was customary.²²² Within ten days the governor demanded that the Ayuntamiento clarify the situation.²²³ By helping the governor put the Ayuntamiento in the position of having to justify itself, vendors were turning municipal institutions redundant.

More directly undermining still was the behavior of merchants dealing in cereals in La Merced, who in 1899 refused to pay municipal taxes despite almost daily attempts by fee collectors to make them. The market administrator himself lamented: “these recalcitrant [merchants] are not only affecting the council’s treasury in their respective contributions...but their bad example and subversion have made other *locatarios* in their line of business refuse to pay what they have been perfectly happy to do until now.”²²⁴ Six months after the council declined their request for an exemption, during which time they contributed nothing to the city’s coffers, these cereal merchants did something unprecedented, and arguably more damaging to the municipal institution. They put forward the argument that having appealed to the governor, his failure to pronounce himself protected them against fiscal laws. Confronted with this outrageous negation of its right to collect market fees, there was nothing the Ayuntamiento could do, but to ask the governor to resolve the matter.²²⁵

²²² 4/14/1897, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1128.

²²³ 4/24/1897, *idem*.

²²⁴ 5/9/1899, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3739, exp. 1166.

²²⁵ *Ibid*.

2.5 Conclusion

In *La experiencia olvidada*, Ariel Rodríguez Kuri traces the Ayuntamiento's gradual political and institutional decline starting in 1880.²²⁶ As the National Executive grew stronger, the city council gradually lost autonomy and executive capacities to federal agencies. Most importantly, as the power of the Ayuntamiento diminished, that of the president's appointed governor increased. By 1900 the governor had real decision-making power over many aspects of city life, even if the council maintained its jurisdiction over areas such as markets, abattoirs, street lighting, and pavements. This created overlapping jurisdictions. In the case of markets, while the council retained the right to build and run them, several intimately related issues were under the direct control of the governor: the canals, used to transport merchandise; municipal employees, including those in charge of running and cleaning markets, and taxing vendors and merchants; the police, which as discussed above increasingly controlled street vendors; the fire department, so necessary as markets stalls frequently caught fire; and the public health bureaucracy, which by then had the right to inspect markets and require its own independent licenses. This process would culminate in July 1903, when the council was stripped of its rents, properties, and all governing functions over the city. By presidential decree the Ayuntamiento would be reduced to a *cuero consultivo*, an advisory board without any executive power.

Changes, however, went deeper than administrative reform. The city council had been the political arena that, to the extent possible, turned the city into a community. Good urban polity had involved, for centuries, an active city council committed to

²²⁶ Rodríguez Kuri, *La experiencia olvidada*, 14, 29-31, 137-145.

manage competing class and group interests. With the end of the Ayuntamiento's command over urban matters the city would lose the traditional arbiter of its social interactions. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Ayuntamiento-run markets, where *la costumbre* had allowed multiple social elements to coexist peacefully "since time immemorial". Custom had delivered municipally-sanctioned informal arrangements negotiated on a case-by-case level, and informed by official paternalism and the elite's Catholic duty of compassion. More generally, custom had meant tolerance of difference and even disorder.

Custom signified a shared understanding of what constituted viable social arrangements, or if nothing else, a common language to decode stable social interactions. In other words, custom had been a set of rules and binding constraints. It guaranteed that, at first, in the new halls "those who were already renting stalls in the location would have priority."²²⁷ Custom adjusted regulations and rents so that they "respected the situation of each stall and the type of trade done" by its holder, because "a general rule would help some, but it would hurt the majority."²²⁸ Even when legal maximum rents were raised to twenty cents per square meter, custom kept fees in El Volador at less than two cents. Custom meant that the council was obliged to pay for commercial infrastructure, and was forced even to refuse funds from merchants who were impatient to introduce water to their markets.²²⁹ It had been customary to accept that the overflow of vendors from any given market would form a plaza in adjacent streets. Custom was behind the inclusion as

²²⁷ 9/30/1880, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3736, exp. 870.

²²⁸ 4/19/1881, AHDF, ACM, RyM, vol. 3736, exp. 873.

²²⁹ "Dice *La Patria*," *Monitor Republicano*, September 1, 1882, 2.

late as 1885 of an article in the market bylaw requiring ambulantes to deal directly with fees collectors instead of carrying a license.²³⁰ It also allowed market employees to turn a blind eye to situations increasingly considered infractions. It obliged the markets commissioner in 1891, despite his conviction that “the Ayuntamiento does not have the duty to provide vending sites,” to accept the presence of the “ridiculous and nauseating stalls” vendors set up during religious holidays because “these extremely poor people seem to survive all year from the sales they make those days,” contenting himself to relocate them to the old Volador Market.²³¹ Custom was what made consumers visit El Volador in spite of the harsh criticisms it received, and initially refuse to attend other markets.²³² Custom, finally, was paramount in vendors’ defense of their rights to make a living in the city.

Increasingly, though, custom became contested from above and, most importantly, from beyond. As shown in this chapter, the president, his ministers, the press, and businessmen who had little at stake in traditional market arrangements took the lead. At first, the market modernization drive of the late nineteenth century pitted them against councilors and vendors. While it did not take long for the Ayuntamiento to be brought over, many vendors, slowly but surely, also found ways of adjusting to the new setting. *Locatarios* then joined the press, the Ayuntamiento, politicians, and rich merchants in their belief that deep-rooted customs needed to be eradicated from markets, and participated in their attempts to so eliminate them. Yet while they all distanced

²³⁰ *Reglamento mercados 1885*, art. 4.

²³¹ “Sección Oficial,” *Municipio Libre*, January 17, 1891, 1.

²³² “El Bazar Porfirio Díaz,” *Monitor Republicano*, May 7, 1885, 1.

themselves from custom in abstract, they all selected the bits and pieces they thought ought to remain, albeit transformed.²³³ On the other hand many vendors fell behind. Susie Porter's compelling story of female sellers of prepared foods bears witness to their struggles, and in particular, to the construction of their identity around invocations of tradition in the face of mounting repression and marginalization. But custom as a discursive weapon was losing force. Though it remained latent among *locatarios* and the elite, and active among marginalized peddlers, custom dissolved in the new belief in progress, and in the quest for profit, cleanliness, and a modern city. While custom did not disappear, by the turn of the century it was simply no longer law.

²³³ William H. Beezley, *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico* (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 89-132. In the last essay of the book Beezley analyzes the bifurcation of universally accepted traditional practices of Judas burnings at the end of Lent into clashing elitist and popular cultural phenomena.

Chapter Three:

From Plea to Grievance, 1903 to 1928

This chapter traces vendors' experiences as they became willing and able to advance their collective interests, forming groups the authorities were increasingly forced to reckon with. It begins in 1903, a turning point in the history of Mexico City's markets. Whereas they had been a social and infrastructural priority for the Ayuntamiento, after its abolition that year market concerns became diluted across multiple offices. The resulting jurisdictional and power vacuum generated uncertainty among both vendors and local officials. In the administrative chaos that ensued the role of the police in the everyday management of markets grew. At the same time, as communications with authorities broke down, vendors were forced to expand their political vocabulary: in an attempt to reestablish a working dialogue, *locatarios* began to rely less on requests for favors and more on the enunciation of their rights. Building upon these developments of the late Porfiriato, the success of the Maderista uprising in 1911 then instilled new attitudes and expectations in vendors. These were influenced not only by the lexicon of this revolution, but also by the struggles of the unions. The failure of the state to respond coherently to the needs of the city's laboring classes prompted them to organize to better express their grievances. After the Ayuntamiento was reinstated in 1917, in association with workers' confederations, *locatarios* were ready to demand a place in the local public sphere. As vocal participants, they contributed to its transformation, a not altogether peaceful

process. By the 1920's vendors' growing group consciousness contrasted starkly with authorities' unchanged approach to markets.

3.1 Imperialist Threats and Domestic Turmoil

The last decade of the Porfiriato must have been one of mounting anxiety for the Mexican political elite. Their increasingly powerful northern neighbor was encroaching upon the country's economy and politics. US companies and banks, which were investing in the Mexican economy more than ever before, were growing significantly larger and more resourceful. At the same time, the US government was claiming for itself the right to intervene in the domestic affairs of Latin American nations to quell disorder and guarantee favorable conditions for production and trade for US businesses.²³⁴ The US threat of intervention in response to any display of internal instability exacerbated the Mexican elite's fear of public contest over presidential succession, leading to the reelection of the ageing Porfirio Díaz in 1900 and 1904. Keeping the house in order, however, was not perceived as sufficient to contain the United States. Porfirian political and economic elites sought counterweights in European powers, namely France, Germany, and most importantly, Great Britain. Unfortunately, these attempts at diversifying economic and diplomatic ties coincided with the intensification of Euro-American imperialist rivalries. The business conflict between US and British oil interests and US government dissatisfaction with Mexico played no small part in the crisis that

²³⁴ The forceful determination to broaden US influence in the American hemisphere was demonstrated in the annexation of Puerto Rico in 1900; the incorporation of the Platt Amendment into the Cuban constitution in 1902; the secession of Panama from Colombia in 1903 and the securing of the Canal Zone in 1904; the control assumed by US bankers over customs and national debt in the Dominican Republic in 1905; and the deployment of troops in Nicaragua from 1909 onwards.

ended the Díaz regime.²³⁵

The same dependent capitalist development that threatened Mexico from without created turmoil from within.²³⁶ By the turn of the century a portion of the upper classes had managed to monopolize political power and the most lucrative business opportunities, including profitable deals and connections with foreign capitalists. In the face of these arrangements, the less well-connected sectors of the upper and middle classes grew ripe with resentment for the business and the government positions that eluded them. From 1907, when droughts and floods combined with a recession in the United States to sour economic conditions in Mexico, resentment prompted action. After failing to install a vice-president who could represent their interests, opposition movements developed. Behind Francisco Madero, a young member of one of the richest landowning and business families in Mexico, a party emerged, one that stood for electoral democracy and the end of boss rule. When fraud and repression ensured that Díaz would be inaugurated again in December 1910, the Maderista reformers revolted under the Plan de San Luis Potosí, inadvertently unleashing civil war and revolution.

In just six months, armed civilians and a US deployment of military force on the border managed to drive Díaz into exile. By late 1911 Madero was in office after winning a free election, respectful of Porfirian politicians, bureaucrats and the military at the

²³⁵ Friedrich Katz, "The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato," in ed. Leslie Bethell, *Mexico since Independence* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-124; Daniel Cosío Villegas, *El Porfiriato: Vida política, Política exterior, parte segunda, Historia moderna de México* vols. 5-6., ed. Daniel Cosío Villegas (Mexico City: Hermes, 1960-1963); Richard Weiner, "Battle for Survival: Porfirian Views of the International Marketplace," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 3 (Oct., 2000): 645-670; Friedrich Katz, *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, The United States, and the Mexican Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 21-27.

²³⁶ The subsequent paragraphs draw extensively on John Womack, Jr., "The Mexican Revolution," in ed. Leslie Bethell, *Mexico since Independence* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 125-200.

national level, and readily recognized by US and European governments. Had the revolt been limited to the northern states of Sonora and Coahuila where reformist landlords took control without much trouble, it might have ended there. But the previous decades of capitalist expansion had created other cleavages that could not be dismissed. In Chihuahua, where land and capital had become concentrated in the hands of the rich Terrazas family and foreign firms, small businessmen, workers, peasants, and peons had good reasons to fight for more.²³⁷ The same was true in Morelos, where capitalist agriculture had encroached upon peasant villages' land and resources.²³⁸ In urban centers, and in strategic industries, workers mobilized to demand better pay and conditions.²³⁹ Lacking the support of these groups, the Madero government was easily toppled by General Victoriano Huerta, who had the backing of elements of the Díaz regime, its army, the Catholic Church and US and European diplomats.

The civil war that followed would destroy the remainders of the old Porfirian regime. Huerta was attacked from several fronts. The former Maderistas and new Northern rebels temporarily united against Huerta to form the Constitutionalist Army under Venustiano Carranza. Peasants from Morelos, led by Emiliano Zapata, fought Huerta independently, expanding their operations into neighboring states. Workers in Mexico City and elsewhere continued to organize, increasingly a force to be reckoned with. Finally, US oil interests, fearful that Huerta was supporting the rival British company El Águila, lobbied hard for US government intervention, leading to the military

²³⁷ Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

²³⁸ John Womack, Jr., *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969).

²³⁹ Rodney D. Anderson, *Outcasts in Their Own Land* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976).

occupation of the port of Veracruz. By July 1914, not unpredictably, Huerta was gone, along the institutions of the Porfiriato: the federal army, the police, the judiciary, and most of its bureaucracy.

The defeat of Huerta did not, however, bring stability to Mexico. The victorious armies failed to negotiate peace at the Convention of Aguascalientes. Former Constitutionalists from Chihuahua, then led by Francisco Villa, allied with the Zapatistas for a program of agrarian reform and defense of regional and local political autonomy. In the revolutionary struggles that followed, Villistas and Zapatistas fought Carranza's Constitutionalists and were defeated militarily. By October 1915 the Constitutionalists had destroyed the possibility of radical, peasant-driven, redistribution of land.²⁴⁰

At the end of 1915 foreign powers recognized Carranza as head of state. Yet at the time the Mexican state barely merited the label. Across the country, generals were regionally strong and divided. Armed struggles for land continued, forcing the Constitutionalists to address the agrarian question. Increasingly militant labor organizations forced the new authorities to take a position on the relationship between capitalists and workers. What is more, Mexican businessmen's aspirations had to be acknowledged, their interests promoted. Connections between foreign companies and domestic interests had to be revised. In 1916, in search of legitimacy, and hoping to restore order, Carranza called a constitutional convention. His proposed constitution provided for a stronger presidency with a single four-year term, and the establishment of a central bank. Social reform was not his priority. But in the face of opposition from

²⁴⁰ Adolfo Gilly, *The Mexican Revolution* (London: Verso Editions, 1983). Zapatistas and Villistas remained in arms for the rest of the decade, but were by then reduced to mostly defensive guerilla operations.

General Álvaro Obregón, changes went further. The Obregonistas in the convention believed that social and economic reforms were necessary for peace and successfully imposed their own vision on the constitution. They managed to get a constitution that recognized labor rights to be arbitrated by government-led boards, allowed for expropriation of privately owned land and mandated agrarian reform, and, while foreign powers were busy with World War I, nationalized subsoil resources, so that mining and oil exploitation could take place only through government concessions. In other words, the national project embodied in the new constitution was premised upon the construction of a strong state with the faculty to intervene in the economy and to mediate class conflicts.²⁴¹

Unfortunately, constitutions alone do not make states. Carranza was sworn into office in May 1917. An Obregonista faction overthrew him three years later, in what proved to be the last successful revolt of the period. Obregón and then Plutarco Elías Calles would finish their presidential terms—1920-1924 and 1924-1928 respectively. In cooperation with parts of the labor and agrarian movements, the new political elite effectively promoted capitalist development for the benefit of business both domestic and foreign. But under serious pressures the stability of the regime was precarious. The United States, even more powerful after World War I, faced no foreign counterweights. US oil interests lobbied so hard against the application of the constitution that the threat of intervention remained credible.²⁴² Presidential successions were particularly difficult

²⁴¹ Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, vol.2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 469-476; Enrique Florescano, *El nuevo pasado mexicano* (Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1999), 87.

²⁴² Obregón was eventually recognized in 1923, as US oil companies lost ground to US bankers, who favored a functioning Mexican government with the capacity to collect taxes and thus with the revenue to repay its foreign debts. Financial sovereignty was another matter, the opening of the Banco de México in 1925 notwithstanding. Robert Freeman Smith, *The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico*,

times: Generals revolted in 1923-1924 and allegedly plotted in 1927 and were, in both instances, violently crushed. Groups of workers and peasants pursued their class interests independently of the state, despite official repression. Railroad workers declared a general strike in early 1927.²⁴³ Catholic peasants went to war against the state in 1926, and fought to the death to keep their religion at the center of their way of life.²⁴⁴ That year an economic crisis hit Mexico, as if in preparation for the coming world depression. Thus, under external imperialist threats and confronted with domestic turmoil, the new state faltered, yet, ultimately, along the way the men in charge of it learned to negotiate its survival.

3.2 Fragmented Markets, Orphaned Vendors

In January 1903 the governor of the Federal District, Ramón Corral, boasted, “Mexico City has fully entered the path of great material improvement, and needs to remain on that path, resolutely and persistently, because as a capital of a prosperous free Republic, it has the right to appear high among the cultured cities of the world.”²⁴⁵ Under

1916-1932 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972); Lorenzo Meyer, *Mexico y Estados Unidos en el conflicto petrolero, 1917-1942* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1972). Emilio Zebadúa, *Banqueros y revolucionarios: La soberanía financiera de México* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994); Emilio Zebadúa, “El Banco de la Revolución,” *Historia Mexicana* 45, no. 1 (Jul.-Sep. 1995): 67-98.

²⁴³ Marcelo N. Rodea, *Historia del movimiento obrero ferrocarrilero en México, 1890-1943* (Mexico City: Ex-Libris M. Rodea, 1944), 468-491. Miles Vincent Rodríguez, “The Beginnings of a Movement: Leagues of Agrarian Communities, Unions of Industrial Workers, and Their Struggles in Mexico, 1920-1929” (Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 2010), chapter 3.

²⁴⁴ Jean A. Meyer, *The Cristero Rebellion, The Mexican People between Church and State, 1926-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

²⁴⁵ *Discursos del Sr. D. Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga, Presidente interino del Ayuntamiento en 1902, del Sr. D. Ramón Corral, gobernador del Distrito Federal, y del Sr. D. Guillermo de Landa y Escandón* (Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1903), 38.

such auspices the capital acquired tramways, wide paved streets, public lighting, extravagant public buildings, and elegant residential areas for the upper classes. The transformation of Mexico City gained urgency in the last years of the decade, as the crème of the Díaz regime planned the centennial celebrations of the country's independence movement. During September 1910 the capital was showcased as proof of the government's economic and political success. Mauricio Tenorio argues that the city of the centennial celebrations—with its parades and inaugurations of monuments, official buildings, and public institutions—was the embodiment of a set of interrelated ideals of modernity, the nation state, and cosmopolitanism.²⁴⁶ As the political and economic elites in Mexico City probably understood too well, in the international context of Roosevelt's "big stick" policy, peace and material progress were not mere cultural axioms, but necessary conditions for a viable republic.

The ideal city of the Porfiriato had to be hygienic, comfortable, beautiful, and orderly. By 1910, many affluent families were moving west, away from the old city center, into new exclusive neighborhoods along the Paseo de la Reforma. The center, in turn, was increasingly dominated by financial institutions and high end-commerce as well as by public buildings. It was in these new neighborhoods and in the city center that the city of the centennial was constructed. It was there where modernity could be toyed with. On the other hand, for the most part, workers, artisans, and small-scale traders lived in their own separate neighborhoods to the east and south of the old center, in overcrowded

²⁴⁶ Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (Feb. 1996): 75-77.

tenements and improvised shacks.²⁴⁷ With a population growth of 36 percent between 1900 and 1910, housing problems could only have been exacerbated.²⁴⁸ At the same time during this decade living conditions worsened, real incomes declining significantly due to inflation and, after 1906, also because of rising unemployment.

Precisely because of the poor conditions of their dwellings, the lower classes made use of the city's public spaces to meet their most basic needs. Without sewers or running water, they relied on public baths and fountains for personal hygiene and laundry. Insufficient or outright lack of toilets meant that urinating and defecating in the streets was far from uncommon. For the many, eating and quenching their thirst where they slept was simply not an option. For social calls, including sharing a drink with friends and even having sexual intercourse, public places must have offered more privacy than the home. Less intimate but equally vital pursuits, many among the urban poor peddled, begged, or stole.²⁴⁹ While all of these behaviors clashed with the privileged classes' ideas of what a modern city ought to be, when these acts took place in poor neighborhoods they could be overlooked. But when they happened in the city center or in the areas frequented by the upper and middle classes, or, even worse, by foreigners, they elicited disgust and indignation. In response city authorities sought to control and modify the public habits of the lower classes. As they built the city of the *centenario*, countless rules and regulations concerning the proper use of public spaces were passed, their

²⁴⁷ John Lear, *Workers, Neighbors and Citizens, The Revolution in Mexico City* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), chapter 1.

²⁴⁸ Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects. Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 21-22.

²⁴⁹ Pablo Piccato, "Urbanistas, Ambulantes, and Mendigos: The Dispute for Urban Space in Mexico City, 1890-1930," in Carlos Aguirre and Robert Buffington, eds., *Reconstructing Criminality in Latin America* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000).

enforcement falling on the police. Pablo Piccato demonstrates that the concomitant criminalization of everyday life created a “city of suspects.”²⁵⁰

In the city’s markets the emergence of the police as an instrument of social control and reform mirrored the disintegration of traditional bonds. As described in the previous chapter, the modernizing drive that took hold of the city in the late Porfiriato weakened the social norms that governed markets, a trend that continued into the early years of the new century. As the authorities failed to reform markets, and as old social loyalties and responsibilities no longer guaranteed social cohesion, a repressive consensus developed. Neighbors came to share the authorities’ view that to shape market practices meant to suppress activities deemed undesirable. In a typical letter, residents of the neighborhood in which San Juan Market was located wrote to the governor to report that on the market’s southern edge, vendors of “rotting fruit and vegetables, and decomposing meats” had created an “infectious focus.” They complained that the debris generated attracted “extremely dirty, almost naked people,” who together with the vendors had transformed the street into “an open air urinal.” They requested that the authorities build a proper garbage dump, and that the interior of the market be kept clean. Ultimately, they wanted the stalls in question suppressed.²⁵¹

Moreover, the changes operating in the city undermined customary relations not only between the local elite and the vendors, but also between different groups of *comerciantes*. Merchants with property in the vicinity of the same market, speaking for themselves as well as for the *locatarios* in San Juan, repeatedly addressed the governor to

²⁵⁰ Piccato, *City of Suspects*, chapters 1 and 2.

²⁵¹ 9/3/1903, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1727, exp. 99.

accuse vendors with stalls on adjacent streets of blocking traffic, rendering the area insalubrious, and undermining their attempts to contribute to the neighborhood's improvement. In addition, because these vendors did not pay rents and either evaded taxes, or paid significantly less than they did, established merchants protested the lack of equity and unfair competition. They expected the governor to send the police to remove the vendors.²⁵² By the early 1900s merchants and *locatarios* agreed on the need for such repression, as the streets surrounding San Juan Market bore witness.

At the same time that modernizing forces were transforming social relations, the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, which had been a key interlocutor of, and the arbiter between, the different groups that came together in the city's markets, entered a period of accelerated decline. Then, on July 1, 1903, the Ayuntamiento lost all executive power and became an advisory board with no clear functions. Under the new politico-administrative layout the city would be run by a Consejo Superior de Gobierno composed of three presidential appointees answerable to the secretary of Gobernación: the governor of the Federal District, the general director of Public Works, and the president of the Superior Council of Public Health. Moreover, municipal properties and taxes passed to the secretary de Hacienda, while local railroads, telegraphs and telephones became matters for the secretary de Comunicaciones. That day, in an address to the council, Municipal President Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga declared, "Until yesterday the Ayuntamiento had control over municipal public services, and intervened directly in the functioning and progress of the city. Today, a new era begins."²⁵³

²⁵² 1/11/1905, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1728, exp. 140.

²⁵³ Congress had authorized the National Executive to reform the political organization of the Federal District in December 14, 1900; the *Ley de Organización Política y Municipal del Distrito Federal* was then

Markets became administratively fragmented as a result of the new distribution of responsibilities. In the old setting, a Comisión de Mercados composed by three councilors had discussed and approved for submission to the council at large all measures related to markets and street sales. Regardless of how dominant capitalist interests might have been, discussions on the construction of new halls and improvements or repairs of existing ones took into account the evolution of market revenues, preoccupations with hygiene and public health, and merchants' and vendors' needs and demands. The same applied to discussions about the use of other public spaces for commercial purposes. Now, among the areas of competence of the Ayuntamiento that were transferred to the governor were *festividades* and municipal policing. The former meant that the city's commercial calendar, heavily organized around expanded vending activities during religious and civic holidays, was now under his jurisdiction; the latter gave him the capacity to use force to implement any official decisions or policies pertaining to the use of public spaces. The general director of Public Works was put in charge of market construction and repairs, as well as of their provision with such key services as lighting and water. The Consejo de Salubridad had to watch over markets and stalls' sanitary conditions. Complicating things further, simultaneously, the allocation of stalls and the daily operation of markets fell outside the scope of the Consejo Superior de Gobierno: as markets became properties of the federal government and fees and taxes became federal revenue, the secretary de Hacienda took over the market administration. Finally, at least initially, the secretary de Comunicaciones demanded the right to pre-approve the emission of permits for all stands

passed in March 26, 1903, going into effect on July 1 of that same year. *Discurso del Sr. D. Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga, Presidente del Ayuntamiento en 1903 y Memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales en el primer semestre de 1903* (Mexico City: La Europea, 1903), 5.

on the city's sidewalks.²⁵⁴ Whereas markets had been a priority of urban polity for the Ayuntamiento, after the reorganization of the Federal District market concerns became diluted across the different offices then in charge.

Everyday working of markets was, as before, organized by administrators and fee collectors, though now they had to contend with the growing assertiveness of the Public Health Council which, in July 1904, created a Sanitary Inspection Service, with an agent stationed in each of city's eight largest markets.²⁵⁵ Hacienda and Salubridad employees often carried contradictory instructions, corresponding to the opposing mandates of the bodies they represented. While financial concerns dictated that as many vendors as possible be accommodated in the city's markets and commercial areas, preoccupations with hygiene demanded the opposite. When the Jefe del Servicio Sanitario requested that fruit and vegetable vendors in Santa Ana and San Lucas markets be forbidden to sell their merchandise unless they rented a stall or a place in a table provided by the authorities, Francisco Monteverde, general market administrator, declared that due to the fact that most days the number of *comerciantes* in those markets exceeded the available spots, this was "absolutely impracticable."²⁵⁶ They agreed, however, on the need to provide for better infrastructure, for example in the case of the twenty-year-old provisional markets of Tepito and La Candelaria. But whereas Hacienda employees reported on the deficiencies and suggested improvements, Salubridad took it further: it resolved "to ask

²⁵⁴ Idem, 48-55.

²⁵⁵ *Memoria del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal correspondiente al período transcurrido del 1 de Julio de 1903 al 31 de Diciembre de 1904*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Talleres de Pablo Rodríguez, 1906): 2: 9. The markets in question were: La Merced, San Juan, Santa Catarina, Martínez de la Torre, San Cosme, Dos de Abril, Santa Ana, and San Lucas.

²⁵⁶ 8/29/1905, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1728, exp. 162; 9/2/1905, idem.

Public Works to provide these provisional markets with appropriate constructions,” and if this was not possible, “that they be suppressed due to their inadequacy regarding matters of public health.”²⁵⁷

Incapable of shaping market practices by negotiating with vendors, both Hacienda employees and Salubridad officials repeatedly turned to the police for assistance.

Administrator Monteverde acknowledged, “countless *ambulantes* invade our markets,” so “without the aid of the police, it is impossible to keep them in order.”²⁵⁸ When in 1904 Salubridad passed new regulations making the requirements to sell meat in the city’s markets more exacting, the president of the council reported that with the help of the police fifteen insalubrious butchers’ stalls in the Martínez de la Torre Market had been destroyed.²⁵⁹ The same fate befell some improvised shops in Tepito, which vendors had been using as dormitories “against all hygienic considerations.”²⁶⁰

More generally, in this period police presence became a permanent feature of the city’s markets. Each market was then allocated a number of policemen who, unlike the public health inspectors, were not fixed but rotated periodically. Originally meant to assist in fee collection, and prevent unlicensed peddlers from operating in the markets under their watch, the scope of their duties grew to encompass overseeing porters [cargadores], impeding “people from the poorest classes” from scavenging for edible

²⁵⁷ 9/25/1903, AHDF, CSG, vol 608, exp. 5; 10/19/1903, idem, exp.1.

²⁵⁸ 11/14/1904, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1728, exp. 117.

²⁵⁹ *Memoria del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal correspondiente al período transcurrido del 1 de Julio de 1903 al 31 de Diciembre de 1904*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Talleres de Pablo Rodríguez, 1906): 2: 9.

²⁶⁰ 9/21/1906, AHSSA, Salubridad Pública, Higiene Pública, Inspección de Alimentos y Bebidas, caja 1, exp. 21.

waste, enforcing rules mandating that vendors kept their stalls clean, and compelling customers not to dispose of garbage on the pavement.²⁶¹ The press took notice; denouncing the “notable disorder and lack of cleanliness in La Merced,” *La Patria* complained that the *gendarmes* posted there were not doing their jobs properly.²⁶²

By his control of the local police force the governor of the Federal District often intervened in the management of markets, sometimes on his own initiative, sometimes by supporting or opposing the decisions of Hacienda and Salubridad. While the governor tended to agree with Salubridad, the relationship with Hacienda was not always smooth. In February 1907, General Markets Administrator Miguel A. León felt compelled to write a confidential letter to Governor Guillermo Landa y Escandón. He confessed to being puzzled by policemen withdrawing permits he had issued to vendors in the Plaza de la Constitución. He declared that while he understood that only the governor—in charge of *festividades*—could extend temporary licenses during Lent, he had issued the permits following all existing regulations. On this occasion the governor decided to order the police to refrain from interfering with the activities of these vendors.²⁶³ On the other hand, in January 1909, for instance, the governor backed the general police inspector in his complaint against market employees who were allowing vendors to continue to operate stalls to the south and west of Iturbide Market after Agent Ramón Flores had removed them. The governor rebuked the market administrator on the grounds that these

²⁶¹ 9/25/1903, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 5.

²⁶² “Notas Locales,” *La Patria*, September 26, 1906, 2.

²⁶³ 2/21/1907, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1729, exp. 190.

vendors blocked traffic and, owing to their proximity to pack trains and electric trams, were prone to cause accidents.²⁶⁴

At times, the overlap of authorities created a jurisdictional vacuum. When Ramón Molina together with other *rebocería* vendors requested licenses to set up stalls in the streets of Portacoeli, Rejas de Balvanera, and La Merced, the market administrator declined their petition, referring them to the governor. In turn, the governor refused to state a position, declaring that in matters of street sales, both *ambulantes* and fixed stalls, it was the market administration that needed to decide.²⁶⁵ Other times, it led to contradictory orders. In August 1908, a group of clothing vendors were given permission by the governor to establish themselves around the Martínez de la Torre Market, only to be told a few days later by the market administrator that they had to move to La Camelia Street. Within a week, they were allowed to return to the market, only to be ordered by the governor, who visited the area in the company of the local police inspector, to move to La Camelia Street once more.²⁶⁶

In the administrative chaos that markets had become, communication between authorities and vendors broke down. From the point of view of the *locatarios*, after the abolition of the Ayuntamiento in 1903, it was no longer clear who was a valid interlocutor. When long established butchers were expelled from La Merced by order of Salubridad in 1904 “for being considered harmful to the hygiene and wellbeing of the market,” they failed to find a broker who could vouch for them. They “suppliated” the

²⁶⁴ 1/16/1909, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1733, exp. 594; 1/19/1909, *idem*.

²⁶⁵ 5/27/1905, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1728, exp. 151; 5/30/1905, *idem*.

²⁶⁶ 8/15/1908, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 18.

administrator, who they claimed was well acquainted with their predicament, to “mediate with his valuable, honest and powerful influence;”²⁶⁷ they requested that Public Works build shops to the south of the market according to Salubridad regulations or, if that were not possible, that the governor grant them permission to provide them themselves;²⁶⁸ and they appealed to the secretary of Gobernación to get the Salubridad resolutions revoked.²⁶⁹ Nothing worked. On the basis of market inspectors’ claims that meat sales in markets were incompatible with Salubridad standards, María Martínez Viuda de Zamora, Refugio Carranza, Antonio González and other *locatarios* were informed that, by presidential agreement, their motions had been dismissed.²⁷⁰

Locatarios reacted creatively to the government’s detachment. As they tried to recreate their dialogue with the authorities they expanded their discursive resources: to engage a reluctant audience vendors’ appeals spoke less of traditional bonds and more of constitutional rights of freedom of enterprise and labor; less of expectations of personal favors imparted by compassionate men in office and more of what they started to believe were the government’s universal responsibilities. A group of vendors who desired stalls in San Juan Market addressed Landa y Escandón as “your lordship [su señoría], father of the poor,” but when it came to justifying their petition, they invoked “the Constitution, and the duty of the authorities to impart protection to those who seek their sustenance by

²⁶⁷ 2/18/1905, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 7.

²⁶⁸ 3/24/1905, idem.

²⁶⁹ *Memoria del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal correspondiente al período transcurrido del 1 de enero al 31 de diciembre de 1905 presentada al Señor Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Gobernación* (Mexico City: Talleres de Pablo Rodríguez, 1907), 200.

²⁷⁰ 3/24/1905, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 7.

honest work.”²⁷¹ Simultaneously, *locatarios* transcended arguments based on their individual circumstances to include denunciations of the difficult general economic conditions endured by the laboring classes during the late Porfiriato, especially inflation, and of the particular conditions experienced by market vendors as the result of official actions. When meat vendors were forced to leave markets, they complained that rents for private accommodation had trebled, while the costs of setting up a shop had increased due to more stringent regulations.²⁷²

It did not work. In late 1910 when *locatarios* from La Lagunilla Market saw their fees raised after they refused to pay for new stalls, they also appealed to Landa y Escandón:

We know you are the Protector, the father of those who toil honestly ... You know well that we are poor, and that the situation today in Mexico is such that we pay too much for foodstuffs and housing given our incomes, and you, as the genuine representative of our Paternal Government, would not allow us to be

²⁷¹ 7/3/1904, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1728, exp. 111. As class tensions mounted in this period, and as both workers and capitalists sought governmental protection and support in their struggles, former Ayuntamiento president, then governor of the Federal District Guillermo Landa y Escandón became the center of what John Womack calls an informal institution of conciliation and arbitration. Landa y Escandón toured factories and workshops, giving speeches and listening to the concerns of industrialists, shop owners, and workers. When a strike or lockout could not be avoided, he personally intervened in its resolution. Subsidized newspapers and plays publicized his role as a negotiator of social harmony. As the culmination of these efforts, in late 1909, he began organizing the Mutualist and Moralizing Society of Workers of the Federal District, which sought to bring together all workers and artisans, persuade them that material progress would stem only from personal improvement, and steer mutual aid societies away from militant activities and confrontation. So encouraged, workers and artisans in the Mutualist and Moralizing Society joined capitalists and the Porfirian political elite in the centennial celebrations of September 1910. John Womack, Jr., “Luchas sindicales y liberalismos sociales, 1867-1993,” in Marcello Carmagnani, Alicia Hernández Chavez, and Ruggiero Romano eds., *Para una historia de América: los nudos*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 426-428. On workers grievances and labor conflicts in the Federal District in the late Porfiriato see Anderson, *Outcasts*, 194-201; 224-229; 334-338; on how the authorities responded to these conflicts following well-established precedents see Walker, “Porfirian Labor Politics;” on the particular efforts made by Landa y Escandón see John Lear “Del mutualismo a la resistencia: organizaciones laborales en la Ciudad de México de fines del Porfiriato a la Revolución” in eds. Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931* (Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán/UAM, 1996), 275-285.

²⁷² 2/18/1905, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 7.

extorted and expelled [from this market] because we cannot pay [the fees] or buy elegant stalls.²⁷³

The governor's response was laconic; in what had become a formulaic retort, he notified them that it was beyond his competency to resolve the matter.²⁷⁴ By the end of the Porfiriato vendors had to face more than administratively fragmented markets. As far as the authorities were concerned they had been orphaned.

3.3 No Island is an Island

Few monographs have been written on the history of Mexico City during the civil wars that have come to be known as the Mexican Revolution. In *Historia del Desasosiego*, Ariel Rodríguez Kuri addresses this lacuna.²⁷⁵ In the same line as John Lear's study of workers' mobilization during this period, Rodríguez Kuri recovers the Revolution as a historical process that transformed residents' moral sensibilities and political expectations and generated new behaviors and demands, which in turn translated into new ways of interpellating the authorities. As we shall see, a similar narrative of change from below fits the experience of market vendors. However, like the protracted social and institutional change described in Pablo Piccato's study of Mexico City's crime

²⁷³ 10/1/1910, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1737, exp. 896.

²⁷⁴ 10/19/1910, idem.

²⁷⁵ Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *Historia del desasosiego. La revolución en la ciudad de México, 1911-1922* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010), 11-28. By emphasizing ruptures over continuities without denying the latter, Rodríguez Kuri engages with what Alan Knight and others have called a revisionist position. David C. Bailey, "Revisionism and the Recent Historiography of the Mexican Revolution" *Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (Feb. 1978): 62-79; Alan Knight, "Interpretaciones recientes de la Revolución mexicana" *Secuencia* 13 (1989): 23-43; Alan Knight, "Revisionism and Revolution: Mexico Compared to England and France" *Past and Present* 134 (Feb. 1992): 159-199; Álvaro Matute Aguirre, "Orígenes del revisionismo historiográfico de la Revolución mexicana" *Signos Históricos* 2, no. 3 (Jun., 2000): 29-48.

and punishment,²⁷⁶ transformations in markets took longer than the decade of political and military upheaval.

Nothing changed in the formal management of the city's markets with Díaz's fall; they remained administratively dysfunctional. If anything, the departure of the old president and his ministers exacerbated the trends of the previous decade. When a "cholera invasion" threatened the city in the summer of 1911, Salubridad indicated that one of the most urgent measures to prevent the spread of the disease was to improve markets' cleanliness and the control over the quality of foodstuffs. The head of the Sanitary Inspection Service protested, however, that the police did not support his inspectors' actions, the *locatarios* did not comply with the regulations that required them to sweep and clean their stalls, and the market administration refused to remove vendors who placed their merchandise on the floor. Incapable of dealing with the issues raised, the governor decided to allocate extraordinary funds to Public Works, so that it could pay for extra janitors.²⁷⁷ Judging from the repeated complaints of Salubridad officials, the results were unsatisfactory. Over a year later, one of those complaints prompted the general market administrator to visit San Cosme Market, where Salubridad had denounced the disorder and lack of cleanliness. Disagreements between the different offices in charge of markets remained the norm. In this instance, the administrator determined that the "efforts of the sanitary inspector are exaggerated," and against

²⁷⁶ Piccato, *City of Suspects*.

²⁷⁷ 7/27/1911, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 24; 8/2/1911, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1739, exp.1000; 8/9/1911, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 24.

Salubridad decided there was no need to forbid vendors from keeping foodstuffs on the floor.²⁷⁸

The new authorities' lack of experience or knowledge of the functioning of markets probably added a new layer of complications. In October 1911, for example, unaware of the conditions under which markets operated, Hacienda ordered the delay of closing times from three to six in the afternoon. Several market administrators quickly responded that this would be materially impossible, even if they could hire extra employees, because after doors closed *locatarios* and employees needed at least two hours to leave the premises ready for the next day, something they could hardly do after dark given the “absolute lack of lighting” in all of the halls.²⁷⁹

Vendors continued to reach out for support, now in the face of the commercial crisis that engulfed the city as a result of the ongoing political turmoil. As before, their petitions usually entailed requests for help against competitors. In July 1911, clothing vendors with permits to sell outside of La Merced pleaded with the governor for “justice” when they asked for a reduction in the fees of forty cents per day they paid for their stalls. They explained they only sold a fourth of what they used to sell, and that at lower prices.²⁸⁰ The same week, Zenón Gómez and other small-scale fruit vendors from the same plaza took the argument further. They insisted that “there was little or no fiscal justice” in what they were being charged compared to the *locatarios* with better and larger stalls within the market who paid 50 percent less. What is more, they protested

²⁷⁸ 6/29/1912, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 25; 7/11/1912, *idem*.

²⁷⁹ 10/19/1911, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1738, exp. 961.

²⁸⁰ 7/18/1911, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1741, exp. 1030.

unequal police protection, because whereas inspectors made sure unlicensed peddlers did not intercept customers within the market hall and around its doors, in their location *ambulantes* carried out their business unhindered.²⁸¹ The response they got from the Maderista governor was no more satisfactory than the one they would have received from late Porfirian officials.²⁸²

Yet national politics found its way into the city's markets. In their negotiations for publicly provided commercial spaces, *locatarios* soon adopted the new political vocabulary of the times. Some wove this vocabulary with attacks on specific officials who disrupted their businesses, as when a group of vendors from La Merced invoked patriotism and democracy to denounce their administrator for "arbitrary and abusive behavior," ranging from unjustified detentions and merchandise confiscations to "lifting women's petticoats to see if they were hiding goods" for which they were not paying taxes. "Being as you are, a patriot and a democrat, [you should] safeguard our poor interests, so we request that you change the administrator for one that is friend of the people and not its tyrant."²⁸³

Others were more sophisticated. Manuel Rojas, Mariano Madrigal, Simón Rodríguez and other meat vendors wrote to President Madero shortly after his inauguration in December 1911, to solicit permission to return to the city's public markets on the grounds of the promises made in the Plan of San Luis Potosí. They had already attempted to advance their case during the interim government of Francisco León

²⁸¹ 7/10/1911, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1740, exp. 1024.

²⁸² 7/15/1911, idem.

²⁸³ 8/28/1912, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1743, exp. 1161.

de la Barra, but his secretary of Gobernación had responded that given the existing meat sales bylaw dated from August 14, 1904, it would be illegal to grant such a petition.²⁸⁴

They then proceeded to request of Madero that he order the necessary modifications, because “while it is true that those regulations exist, it is not less true where their origins lie.” They certainly believed they had a strong case:

It is notorious that when the *Compañía de Carnes Refrigeradas El Popo* was established, a decree was promulgated forbidding meat sales in markets, with the intention of protecting its monopoly by apparent legal formulas ... Being an irrefutable fact that meat sales are subject to a monopoly that hurts not only small-scale vendors but the public itself, it should be combated until it disappears; and being a real fact that in the Plan San Luis a pledge was made to end all monopolies, it results an irrefutable consequence as clear as the noonday sun that the current government has the duty to combat by all available means a monopoly that is the tyranny of the strong over the weak, of capital over labor.²⁸⁵

In this particularly creative missive, while expressing their expectations about by the ongoing political transition, vendors produced an interpretation of Plan of San Luis Potosí that transformed the limited political goals of the Maderista call to arms—which mentioned neither economic monopolies nor the relationship between capital and labor but rather denounced the concentration of political power in the hands of the Porfirian political elite—into a social document that gave meaning to their grievances. In other

²⁸⁴ In fact, the meat sales bylaw had been issued in April 14, 1904; August 14, 1904 was the date when it went into effect.

²⁸⁵ 1/23/1912, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1739, exp. 999. The vendors in question simplified or misremembered the history of the city’s meat supply. They conflated the Terrazas clan’s *Compañía Empacadora La Internacional*, which had attempted to seize control of the city’s meat distribution system in the early 1900s, and John Wesley DeKay’s Anglo-American *Compañía Empacadora Nacional Mexicana*, whose products bore the label “El Popo,” and which bought El Peralvillo’s slaughterhouse from *La Internacional* in 1908 after the operation went bankrupt. On how these companies had tried to gain market power in Mexico City in the late Porfiriato see: Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *The Sausage Rebellion. Public Health, Private Enterprise, and Meat in Mexico City, 1890-1917* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2006), chapters 3 and 4.

words, as early as 1911, vendors started to construe the political changes operating in the country in ways that allowed them to defend their standing in the local economy.

Denunciations of El Popo's monopolistic practices were not a novelty. Livestock importers and wholesale merchants had voiced them in the press and in official correspondence from the moment the company initiated operations in the city. Because vendors bought from these merchants and depended on their credit, it is not surprising that they reproduced their grievances.²⁸⁶ Vendors' reference to the "tyranny of capital over labor," however, points in another, original direction. Despite the fact that vendors did not sell their labor power to capitalists in return for a wage, soon after the beginning of what came to be known as the Revolution vendors began to identify themselves as "labor" in opposition to "capital." While these terms did not reflect their place in the city's production structures, their use by vendors may have alluded to their sense of community and, in particular, to cultural, spatial, and income affinities. After all, if they did not belong to the same families or alternated between industrial work and small-scale trading themselves, vendors socialized with workers, lived in the same neighborhoods and, just like them, struggled to make a living.

Most importantly, vendors adoption of these categories responded to the changes taking place in the city's industrial relations. After Díaz's government collapsed, social tensions escalated as workers turned militant. In July 1911 over two thousand streetcar workers went on strike after the Mexico Tramways Company responded to their demands for a wage increase, better contractual terms regarding fines and firings, and compensation for injuries, by firing the workers who had organized the petition. In

²⁸⁶ According to Pilchner from 1908 El Popo came under attack from an cross-class alliance of livestock importers, slaughterhouse workers and butchers. Pilcher, *The Sausage Rebellion*, 143-170.

December of the same year textile workers walked off their jobs over issues of pay and hours, with the conflict spreading to several mills in the Federal District and other textile centers across the country. Under pressure from the companies, politicians stepped in to mediate. That same month, President Madero decreed the creation of a Labor Department, with the stated purpose of harmonizing relationships between capital and labor.²⁸⁷ Vendors tried to seize the opportunity to renew their own relationship with the authorities. From vendors' point of view, an association with workers promised the opening of new channels of communication with the Maderista government.

Despite vendors' efforts, these channels of communication did not materialize in this period. The district governor agreed with General Markets Administrator M. Romero Ibáñez, who dismissed the meat vendors' petition on the grounds that "it was made to the exclusive benefit of one group of vendors, to the detriment of another, and to the disadvantage of the public, which would be harmed by being sold in worse hygienic conditions, and without any discount in price, the same meats that it now purchases in the currently authorized shops."²⁸⁸ If under Madero these vendors did not achieve the desired results, their situation, and that of *comerciantes* in general, deteriorated after his assassination.

Under Huerta, Mexico City saw a militarization of every day life. As Huerta tried to enlarge his army, for example, the National Preparatory School was turned into a

²⁸⁷ On workers' militancy and its consequences see: Juan Felipe Leal and José Villaseñor, *La clase obrera en las historia de México: en la Revolución 1910-1917* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1988); Lear, *Workers*, chapters 5-7; Barry Carr, *El movimiento obrero y la política en México, 1910-1929*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Dirección General de Divulgación, 1976) 1: 55-120; Womack, Jr., "Luchas sindicales," 432-436. Womack emphasizes that with all the new authorities that the Revolution brought, conciliation increasingly became a legal matter, and government arbitration obligatory.

²⁸⁸ 2/14/1912, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1739, exp. 999.

military academy, and forced conscription, the infamous *leva*, made roaming the city dangerous for the lower classes, especially after dark.²⁸⁹ In this context it is not surprising that attempts were made to tighten control over markets. In July 1913, the secretary of Gobernación summoned the members of the Consejo Superior de Gobierno of the Federal District—the district governor, the director of public works, and the president of the Salubridad council—and the Hacienda official responsible for local taxation to discuss the state of the city’s two main markets, La Merced and San Juan. After expressing horror at the conditions in which fish, offal, and game were displayed and sold, the secretary concluded that that “in both markets the most repugnant thing is the extraordinary lack of cleanliness and the notable amounts of excrement, trash, dirty waters, decomposing matters, all of which are in horrible promiscuity with elements used as foods.” Conditions were such that “it seems that no sanitary authorities exist, nor people concerned for public wellbeing.”²⁹⁰

Within a matter of weeks of the meeting, in August 1913, a presidential decree forbade the sale in public markets of all goods sold by private shops, particularly those offered by *tiendas de abarrotes* and butchers’.²⁹¹ Meat vendors would have to wait for better times to return to the city’s markets. The same decree, moreover, put the governor in charge of supervising that access to market stalls was restricted to small-scale traders of foodstuffs, and gave him the power to decide which goods could be sold in each

²⁸⁹ Michael C. Meyer, “The Militarization of Mexico, 1913-1914,” *The Americas* 27, no. 3 (Jan.1971), 299-300; Michael J. Gonzales, *The Mexican Revolution 1910-1940* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 93, 101.

²⁹⁰ 7/14/1913, AHDF, SG, RyM, vol. 1238, exp. 64.

²⁹¹ *Boletín Oficial del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal*, vol. 21, July-December 1913 (Mexico City: Talleres de la Tipografía Mexicana, 1913), 274.

individual market.²⁹² As a result of this last stipulation, the governor decided to remove from La Merced “all stalls dealing in prepared foods, because of the inconvenience they cause for transit and for the market’s cleanliness, the awful conditions in which foodstuffs are seasoned, and because they present a miserable aspect that is absolutely incompatible with the culture of this capital.”²⁹³ He also expelled from Martínez de la Torre the vendors who sold vegetables in the market’s central tables, as well as those who sold flavored ices, prepared foods, blankets, embroideries, and flowers in the streets surrounding San Juan Market.

Complaints did not come from the vendors’ camp only. To the chagrin of the market administrator, this time, unlike on previous occasions, no efforts were made to relocate the removed vendors.²⁹⁴ When in January 1914 the secretary of Gobernación demanded to know the measures taken by Hacienda to compensate for the loss of revenue suffered due to the removal of “additional stalls” in Martínez de la Torre and San Juan Markets, the secretary of Hacienda acknowledged that “such measures consisted in allowing the aforementioned stalls to remain, leaving without effect the order to remove them.”²⁹⁵ However unsuccessful this attempt at centralization might have been, it further distanced vendors from the authorities.

In these years workers formed or joined organizations that increasingly represented them in conflicts with employers. While market vendors do not appear to have participated in these conflicts, the social and political changes brought about by

²⁹² *Idem.*

²⁹³ 9/22/1913, AHDF, GD, M, vol. 1744, exp.1208.

²⁹⁴ 8/26/1913, AHDF, SG, RyM, vol. 1283, exp. 63.

²⁹⁵ 1/27/1914, *idem*; 1/30/1914, *idem*.

workers' mobilization would shape the *locatarios*' entrance to a reconfigured public sphere. In Mexico City the anarcho-syndicalist Casa del Obrero functioned as a catalyst for this unionization drive. Founded in September 1912, by May 1914, when Huerta closed it down, the Casa included among its members teachers, carpenters, shoemakers, printers, textile workers, and streetcar workers. Then the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas was created in December 1914, soon becoming the most powerful union in the city.²⁹⁶ Though vendors had already started to refer to workers' struggles against capitalists in their correspondence with the authorities, and even began to form unions, it was only after the reinstatement of the Ayuntamiento, discussed below, that they would take active participation in the city's labor politics.

The war between Constitucionalista and Convencionista forces hit the city the hardest. Mexico City was occupied and evacuated six times between the fall of Huerta in August 1914 and the final Carrancista recovery of the capital in August 1915. During this year the material conditions endured by the city's population were dismal. With little to no metallic backing, the multiple paper currencies issued by the parties at war depreciated rapidly, leading to high inflation. Recurrent banning of enemy currency by the alternating occupying forces, compounded by currency speculation by private individuals and military men, aggravated the monetary crisis. In addition the disruption of transportation systems and, to some unknown extent, production, led to shortages of raw materials and foodstuffs, hobbling industry and feeding the inflationary spiral. Finally, hoarding of available foodstuffs and, in general, unprecedented levels of monopolistic practices by

²⁹⁶ The electricians importance derived from their strategic position, in particular, from their capacity to turn off the electric supply in the country's central grid and thus bring all production there to a halt. Womack, "Luchas sindicales," 433-334. Unless otherwise stated, references to the labor movement in this period are based on my reading of this article.

local merchants only worsened matters.²⁹⁷ Inflation estimates are unreliable for this year, but they go up to a fifteen-fold price increase for basic goods.²⁹⁸

Rodríguez Kuri has reconstructed the political responses to the economic and social crisis. He distinguishes five actors involved in the creation of an emergency food supply system: the occupying armies' provosts, the city council, the existing institutions of public welfare, private charities, and organized merchants. After August 1915, when Constitutionalist forces managed to maintain control of the capital, the efforts to normalize the provision of basic goods fell on the Ayuntamiento. Public markets, the city's most visible retail outlets, were conspicuous for their absence in this emergency system. This was perhaps the result of the earlier disarticulation of the dialogue between vendors and authorities, and the ongoing crisis in the management of markets. Instead, by June 1916, the city council directly administered at least twenty-seven "semillas" outlets which sold beans, sugar, rice, salt, butter, flour, soap, and charcoal, as well as twenty-nine distributing meat, ten dealing in fish, and seven selling clothes and footwear.²⁹⁹ Regardless of these efforts, inflation continued unabated, and with it, conflicts over real wages.

The combination of ineffective transitory authorities, inflation, and the threat of unemployment and hunger elicited two distinct reactions among the city's poorer

²⁹⁷ Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Desabasto, hambre y respuesta política, 1915," in eds. Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *Instituciones y Ciudad. Ocho estudios históricos sobre la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Unidad Obrera y Socialista, 2000), 133-161. On the commercial practices of the city's flour mill and bakery owners during this period, Robert G. Weis, *Basques and Bakers: A Social History of Bread in Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012), chapter 5.

²⁹⁸ Alan Knight, *The Mexican Revolution*, 2:413; Enrique C. Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico. The Political Uses of Food since 1910* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002), 28.

²⁹⁹ Rodríguez Kuri, "Desabasto, hambre y respuesta política," 155-159. Note that in the newly revised version of this essay, the author eliminated the only reference to public markets. Rodríguez Kuri, *Historia del desasociado*, 169.

residents. On the one hand, consumer protest marches, supplications to the authorities and merchants, and, when everything else failed, food riots became facts of the city's everyday life. According to witnesses and contemporary journalists these were mostly desperate female affairs; according to historian John Lear they were a gendered response to the political crisis and the breakdown of the local moral economy, a defense of family and community under what were perceived as unusually unjust circumstances.³⁰⁰ On the other hand, tailors, leather tanners, teachers, bakery workers, streetcar workers, printers, drivers of rental coaches, textile workers, restaurant workers, electricians, and sales clerks reacted by going on strikes in defense of the purchasing power of their wages and to protest against layoffs and reductions in hours. In every case the authorities sought collaboration with those individuals and groups in the labor movement who could restrain workers' collective demands, a continuation of the trend to sanction official channels for containment of class conflict. Eventually even the Casa del Obrero chose to negotiate to protect their affiliates' jobs, forming a pact with Carrancistas to recruit the Red Battalions in January 1915. Electrical workers, on the other hand, rejected any such alliance and went on strike three times in 1915.

Class struggle reached a peak in the spring and summer of 1916. In May, Secretary of Finance Luis Cabrera announced the issue of the *infalsificables*, a paper currency meant to replace all previous Constitutionalist bills. When later that month the newly formed Federation of Workers' Unions of the Federal District shut down the city

³⁰⁰ Francisco Ramírez Plancarte, *La Ciudad de México durante la revolución constitucionalista* (Mexico City: Botas, 1941), 250, 252, 254, 299, 314-17, 324, 366, 397, 424-427, 509, 525-26, 533; on June 25, 1915, for example, groups of poor women and children stormed 30 stores and five markets; a store employee shot at the menacing crowd, killing a woman; that day, 200 women were arrested. "30 tiendas y 5 mercados fueron saqueados ayer," *Mexican Herald*, June 26, 1915, 1,4; Lear, *Workers*, 301-315.

in demand that wages be pegged to a gold standard, General Benjamín Hill, Obregón's ally and military commander of the plaza, mediated a settlement between labor and business representatives that forced workers to accept pay in infalsificables instead. Tensions mounted as the bills depreciated, leading to a general strike supported by eighty-six thousand workers on July 31. The government did not hesitate: on the third day the city was declared under martial law, and the strike committee was arrested and court-martialed.

Workers' militancy and the responses it elicited changed Mexican politics for good. While the failure of the general strike and the repression that followed were a setback for the labor movement, soon struggles over pay, hours, and conditions resumed. The state that emerged in 1917 could not ignore workers' assertiveness and strength, resulting in the constitutional rights to a minimum wage, an eight hour day, and weekly day of rest, together with the freedom to unionize and the right to strike in order to renegotiate terms of employment. By the same token, however, capitalists' pressure on the authorities to generate profitable conditions for their operations led to a set of constitutional constraints to these newly acquired rights. Unions would require governmental recognition; strikes would be legal or illegal, depending on official rulings; strikes' outcomes would be determined by mandatory arbitration by tripartite boards composed of labor, capital, and government representatives. The Federal District was among the first jurisdictions to pass labor laws and resolutions to implement the constitution's mandates. The authorities' role as mediators of conflicts between workers and capitalists was thus institutionalized.

3.4 Vendors, Workers, or “Pueblo Ametrallado por Intereses Políticos”?

Fourteen years after Porfirio Díaz stripped the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México of all executive power, the 1917 Constitution gave it back the control of certain urban properties, economic activities, and fiscal resources. But while in the late-Porfiriato the city council had been dominated by men loyal to the president and who tended to agree on major issues, in the new context the city council became the battlefield of disparate, intersecting political struggles. During the eleven years it lasted, the resurrected Ayuntamiento was rife with factional disputes. Under Carranza, different factions of the president’s supporters improvised political parties to compete against each other for seats on the council. The same was true during Obregón’s and Calles’ terms. Particularly tumultuous were times of presidential succession, as groups behind opposing aspirants measured their forces in the capital: in late-1919 and early-1920 Carrancistas, Obregonistas, and the supporters of General Pablo González fought hard for control of the Ayuntamiento; conflicts between Callistas and those who backed General de la Huerta shaped municipal life in 1923; and as Obregón pursued his reelection in 1927, his allies in the city did all they could to constrain his opponents on the council.³⁰¹

³⁰¹ Discussions about the desirability and viability of reinstating the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México began as early as 1911. On the failure of municipal reform under Madero see: Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *La experiencia olvidada, El Ayuntamiento de México: política y gobierno, 1876-1912* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco, 1996), chapters 7 and 8. On how the wars between Constitucionalistas, Zapatistas, and Villistas informed the reappearance of the Ayuntamiento in the capital, see Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, “El año cero: El Ayuntamiento de México y las facciones revolucionarias (agosto 1914-agosto 1915)” in eds. Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931* (Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán/UAM, 1996), 191-220. The constitutional reintroduction of the Ayuntamiento and the political conflicts that shaped its evolution between 1917 and 1928 are chronicled in: Juan Hoffmann Calo, *Crónica Política del Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, 1917-1928, Los partidos, las elecciones, los gobernantes* (Mexico City: Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, 2000); Sergio Miranda Pacheco, *Historia de la desaparición del Municipio en el Distrito Federal* (Mexico City: Unidad Obrera y Socialista, 1998), 127-159.

In this period the Ayuntamiento was also the epicenter of local labor politics. As political incentives changed and power began to concentrate again in Mexico City, the labor movement divided. In the capital, the most important division was between the unions that combined social struggles with the pursuit of positions of power within the government and those who chose to fight capitalists as independently from the state as possible. Founded in May 1918, the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana (CROM) espoused the first strategy, which its leaders called *acción múltiple*.³⁰² In contrast, the Confederación General de Trabajadores (CGT), formed in February 1921 by anarcho-syndicalist unions, favored direct action.³⁰³ The CROM's political arm, the Partido Laborista Mexicano (PLM) supported Obregón against Carranza in 1920. In return, one of its leaders, Red Battalion veteran General Celestino Gasca, was appointed district governor, a position he kept until 1923. In 1924 the PLM held the majority of seats in the Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México. In alliance with President Calles, from January 1925 to July 1928, its dominance of Mexico City's council was absolute. Though at no time did the CROM control both the council and the governorship—Governors Ramón Ross (October 1923-June 1926, intermittently) and General Francisco Serrano (June 1926-June 1927) consistently supported groups that openly opposed it—from these posts it fought not only employers, but also other unions and federations, to control the representation of workers and to defend its affiliates' jobs against claims by

³⁰² Rocío Guadarrama, *Los sindicatos y la política en México: La CROM, 1918-1928* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1981); José Rivera Castro, *La clase obrera en la historia de México: en la presidencia del Plutarco Elías Calles, 1924-1928* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores/Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la UNAM, 1983), 17-34.

³⁰³ John Mason Hart, *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931* (Austin/London: The University of Texas Press, 1978), 159-174.

competitors.³⁰⁴ As we shall see, all of these political disputes bore heavily on market vendors' attempts to develop bonds with the new authorities.

With the Ayuntamiento converted into a contested arena, the provision of municipal public services became highly politicized. Markets became a locus of chronic conflict, even during years of relative political peace. For example, two rival Obregonista factions claimed to have won the December 1920 Ayuntamiento elections, and proceeded to establish their own separate councils, one under the Partido Cooperativista banner, and the other under the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista's (PLC). Physical clashes ensued when both councils tried to charge fees and taxes to market vendors in January 1921, forcing then Secretary of Gobernación Plutarco Elías Calles to intervene and close down the Cooperativista council.³⁰⁵ From outside the Ayuntamiento, the Cooperativistas continued to undermine their opponents by complaining about their handling of markets. In May 1922, Ramón Medina addressed Secretary Calles to denounce the ineptitude of market officials, delays in issuing licenses, and bribing of vendors. He explicitly held the council's secretary, Abraham González, and its president, Miguel Alonzo Romero, responsible for "materially strangling" vendors. "There is no *Municipio Libre*, this is free theft, free plundering by the so called *Peleceanos* [the members of the PLC], and for this they so craved President Obregon's support."³⁰⁶ Alonzo Romero was quick to respond.

³⁰⁴ Whoever controlled the governorship of the Federal District held sway over the local *Junta de Conciliación y Arbitraje*, as well as the local police. Control of the Ayuntamiento entailed influence over municipal jobs and contracts. On Ross see: 12/5/1929, AGN, DGIPS, c. 47, exp. 7; on Serrano's role in keeping the laboristas in check see: Hoffman, *Cronica*, 109-110. On how the CROM made use of public office see: Womack, "Luchas sindicales," 438; Diane Davis, *Urban Leviathan. Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 52-59.

³⁰⁵ Hoffman, *Crónica*, 61.

³⁰⁶ FAPECFT, PEC, serie Ramón Medina, exp. 30, legajo 2, fojas 6, inventario 3604.

Later that month, he wrote to President Obregón to assert that the accusations against him were due to his attempts to purge the council's market administration of corrupt elements.³⁰⁷

Perceiving the permeability of the city's politics and responding to the overtures of labor federations, vendors organized unions through which to participate in local debates.³⁰⁸ In a letter that Romero Alonzo forwarded to Obregón, the secretary general of the Federación de Sindicatos de Comerciantes del Exterior de los Mercados del Distrito Federal (FSC) commended the municipal president's decision to remove corrupt market employees. Moreover, following an agreement reached in a "general assembly," representatives of the unions in this federation asked Romero Alonzo for an interview to discuss how they could best contribute to the cleanliness and improvement of their markets because,

In spite of the scores of unjustified criticisms we receive in the press, which Machiavellianly claim that we are the enemies of progress ... we want the satisfaction to be first to point out the eyesore that markets have become; ... in

³⁰⁷ 5/24/1922, AGN, O-C, caja 114, 242-M1-M-1. Other public services were equally affected by political rivalries. When in November 1922 the mismanagement of a technical malfunction led to the interruption of the city's water supply, President Alonzo Romero and PLC councilors came under attack again. The CROM organized a demonstration for November 30, which ended in a violent confrontation between the municipal guard and the protestors. The day after the riots, Cooperativista Jorge Prieto Laurens, who expected his party to win the following months' Ayuntamiento elections, and aspired to its presidency, blamed the lack of water on the corruption in the PLC and the lack of maintenance of the pumps by the previous year's PLC dominated council. Both the PLM and the Cooperativistas demanded the resignation of the *Peleceanos*. Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Desabasto de agua y violencia política. El motín del 30 de noviembre de 1922 en la ciudad de México: economía moral y cultura política" in eds. José Ronzón and Carmen Valdez, *Formas de descontento y movimientos sociales, siglos XIX y XX* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Azcapotzalco, 2005), 167-201; Rosendo Salazar and José G. Escobedo, *Las pugnas de la Gleba, 1907-1922*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Avante, 1923), 1: 210-212. Hoffman, *Crónica*, 72-74. Alonzo Romero left his testimony of the political pressures he endured as president of the Ayuntamiento in: Miguel Alonzo Romero, *Un año de sitio a la presidencia municipal. Crónica y comentarios de una labor accidentada* (Mexico City: Hispano Mexicana, 1923).

³⁰⁸ Until the passing of the Federal Labor Law in 1931 there was no formal or legal definition of what amounted to being a worker, or what groups could form unions. Thus in this period vendors could form unions. Even prisoners in Galley 3 of Belem jail formed a union in 1922. Piccato, *City of Suspects*, 206-207.

the past the Ayuntamiento would not deign to listen to us ... and always considered us mere pack animals, only acceptable for the yields of our labors, without seeing us as an integral part of Society, and hence with the right to take part in the concert of free men.³⁰⁹

In a similar vein, in June 1923 the Sindicato de Comerciantes del Exterior del Mercado de San Juan wrote to Obregón to express its members' support for the decision to close down gambling dens in markets and other parts of the city. "Mr. President, we beg you to accept our sincere vote of gratitude ... We also beg you to use the information we are providing here to do everything in your power so these establishments never reopen."³¹⁰ Thus, while political competition brought instability and violence, it also permitted vendors, who hitherto had been excluded, to participate in the city's public sphere.

Through their unions, vendors articulated a defense of the interests of their group, and placed specific material demands on the government. One of the points the FSC raised in the meeting with Romero Alonzo was the situation of their *compañeros* in San Lucas Market whom the Ayuntamiento was trying to relocate. In the absence of municipally provided stalls they had had to improvise their own, leading to complaints against their disparity and lack of hygiene, and to police attempts to remove them. Instead, the FSC proposed the Ayuntamiento build a new set of booths in the same market. A month later, they repeated their concerns in a letter to Obregón. They "estimated" that their suggestions were "reasonable" because they "strictly followed public health regulations," would generate revenue for the council and, given their requested location, "would not hinder traffic."³¹¹

³⁰⁹ 5/24/1922, AGN, O-C, c. 114, 242-M1-M-1.

³¹⁰ 6/30/1923, AGN, O-C, c. 167, 425-J-2.

³¹¹ 6/28/1922, AGN, O-C, caja 246, 802-5-11.

More controversial were disputes over taxation levels.³¹² Because taxes affected the entire vendor population, fiscal concerns mobilized *locatarios* across different markets, and thus created the conditions for new forms of collective action. When submitting petitions in writing did not achieved the results they expected, their organizations could threaten to take over the city's streets in demand for "justice." On August 1, 1924, they did just that. That afternoon, after markets closed, a group of *locatarios* and their families, 2,500 strong, gathered to march towards the municipal palace to protest a resolution due to go into effect, which would double the amount they paid in fees and taxes.

Unfortunately, 1924 was a particularly difficult year for municipal politicking. The previous December's municipal elections had taken place in the midst of the delahuertista rebellion, which had the support of several Cooperativista Ayuntamiento members, including former municipal president Jorge Prieto Laurens. Fearing arrest or worse, the Cooperativista councilors who were supposed to return for the second year of their two-year terms had gone into hiding. Still, the composition of the 1924 Ayuntamiento remained heterogeneous, with at least two groups at odds with each other. The PLM was in the majority, holding fifteen out of the twenty-five seats, while the PLC had only three and the Partido Cívico Progresista (PCP), in addition to controlling the presidency, had the remaining six.³¹³ In August 1924, vendors found themselves in the middle of an ongoing political dispute between the PLM and President Marcos E. Raya's party, the PCP. Already in March that year the Laboristas had presented an initiative to

³¹² 7/12/1922, AGN, O-C, caja 114, 242-M1.

³¹³ Hoffman, *Crónica*, 94.

remove President Raya. Now, in the context of the aftermath of the national elections that brought Calles to the Presidency, the PLM and the CROM seized the initiative while the outgoing authority was ineffective and the incoming one had not yet established its own order.

On Saturday August 2, 1924, the city's major newspapers reported on the previous day's events.³¹⁴ After three in the afternoon, the reports explained, groups of vendors had gathered on Palacio Legislativo Avenue near the statue of Carlos IV and marched together through the city center in defiance of the authorities' refusal to grant them permission to hold a rally. Displaying banners proclaiming "We are hungry and thirsty for justice" and "La Lagunilla vendors protest against the injustice of the council," they demanded that the amounts they paid for their stalls not be increased.³¹⁵ After the fire department and the police had failed to dissolve the demonstration, vendors reached the proximity of the municipal palace shortly after five in the afternoon, at the cry of "We don't want more taxes! Down with the onerous fees!"³¹⁶ Confronted with the crowd, President Raya agreed to meet with a group of *locatarios*' representatives but promptly excused himself, leaving them to discuss the situation with councilor Ramón Velarde,

³¹⁴ The following narrative has been reconstructed based on: "Corrió la sangre ayer frente al Palacio Municipal," *El Demócrata*, second edition, August 2, 1924, 1, 9, 12, 14; "Small Riot in the Zocalo," *Excélsior*, English section, August 2, 1924, 1; "Sangriento conflicto por una manifestación," *Excélsior*, second edition, August 2, 1924, 1, 5; "El alcalde, Sr. Raya, habla de los sucesos de ayer tarde," *El Universal*, August 2, 1924, 1; "Un muerto y once heridos en la Plaza de Armas," *El Universal*, second edition, August 2, 1924, 1.

³¹⁵ "Corrió la sangre ayer frente al Palacio Municipal," *El Demócrata*, second edition, August 2, 1924, 14. In 1893 Justo Sierra had famously used the biblical phrase "hambre y sed de justicia," quoting the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:6), in arguing for an independent judiciary. In English it is usually translated as "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," but the Spanish, like the Latin, says "justicia". The phrase, and the moral force it carried with it, were now being appropriated by the vendors to bring to the realm of the political their unfulfilled material needs. They publicized their social relations as they sought justice, which they began to interpret as social justice.

³¹⁶ *Idem*; "Sangriento conflicto por una manifestación," *Excélsior*, second edition, August 2, 1924, 1.

chair of the markets commission, and Pedro Galicia Rodríguez, head of markets department. While negotiations were taking place, someone shot a firearm. Confusion ensued, aggravated by the actions of the firemen, who turned hoses on the demonstrators. The demonstration advanced towards the palace doors, where a picket of policemen and the municipal guard opened fire. Panic followed. Once it was over, around six in the afternoon, the Red Cross and the White Cross assisted the wounded. The result was one dead and twelve wounded, one of them subsequently dying in hospital. The journalists covering the story believed that many others had been injured but had fled the Plaza de la Constitución without medical assistance.

The first person to be held responsible for the shootings was Enrique Cota, a former PCP Ayuntamiento employee who had been Raya's *agente confidencial* during the earlier months on the year. Right after the shooting, Laborista Councilor Federico Rocha accused him and got him arrested. In addition, that afternoon, after the Zócalo was vacated, fourteen members of the Ayuntamiento's Laborista block released a statement protesting the course the day's events had taken. They compared the shooting of the *locatarios* with November 1922's water riots, for which they had blamed the then municipal president Alonzo Romero. Implicitly but obviously, they were blaming president Raya. They also asked for punishment for the Municipal Guard and Enrique Cota.³¹⁷ In the days that followed the press publicized crossed-accusations, in which the Laboristas insisted that it was Raya who had ordered the violence against the vendors, while Cota and Raya accused the Laboristas of attempting a coup against the PCP. According to Cota, when the demonstrators approached the municipal palace, it was in

³¹⁷ "Sangriento conflicto por una manifestación," *Excélsior*, second edition, August 2, 1924, 5.

fact Rocha who harangued them, to the shout of “*¡Ahora muchachos! ... ¡Muerte al Cívico Progresista!*”³¹⁸ In Cota’s view, the municipal guard shot at the crowd only after this intervention, when it was forced to defend itself. Raya repeatedly declared that he had not ordered the open fire, and that the shooting was the result of the fabrications of his political enemies who wanted “to create public alarm.”³¹⁹ He had the support of PCP and PLC councilmen who published a letter denying that Raya had any responsibility for the shooting of the *locatarios*, and calling for an investigation of the events.³²⁰

An opinion piece published three days after the demonstration read: “Who provoked the shooting? Who brought the *locatarios* tumultuously to the Municipal Palace’s doors? The mystery begins with the aggressive and violent way a petition becomes a demonstration, which gradually takes the shape of a riot.”³²¹ In a matter of days journalists reached the consensus that opportunistic members of the PLM had caused the confrontations deliberately in order to force Raya to resign. Yet this was not all they concluded. As they blamed local politicians, the media reduced vendors to the nondescript “*pueblo*,” which had been “machine-gunned by political interests.”³²² Vendors became passive victims who, while being exonerated of any responsibility for the deaths and injuries, were thereby simultaneously denied any political agency.

³¹⁸ “Hubo políticos entre los mercaderes que organizaron la protesta del día primero,” *El Demócrata*, second edition, August 6, 1924, 11; “No se hará luz en la tragedia del viernes,” *Excelsior*, second edition, August 6, 1924, 6.

³¹⁹ “El alcalde, Sr. Raya, habla de los sucesos de ayer tarde,” *El Universal*, August 2, 1924, 1.

³²⁰ “Se investiga el asesinato de locatarios,” *Excelsior*, August 5, 1924, 5.

³²¹ “Quién disparó?” *El Demócrata*, 8/4/1924, 3.

³²² “El pueblo ametrallado por intereses políticos,” *El País*, August 3, 1924, 1.

In the opinion of the press vendors did not choose to march to the Zócalo on the afternoon of August 1; instead, their demonstration was interpreted as the product of Laborista manipulations. According to *El País*, “The agents of a sinister gang cheated the humble market vendors with the biggest perfidy ... For all we know and have seen, the rally was not organized by market vendors but by a group of politicians.”³²³ The *Excelsior* reached a similar conclusion: “Low political passions, which in these times of declining social values have reached inconceivable levels, were responsible for last Friday’s bloody incidents in front of the Municipal Palace ... The *locatarios* unconsciously found themselves mixed up in this mess.”³²⁴

Vendors did not remain silent. In the aftermath of the demonstration, as they filled their markets with black paper flags in sign of mourning and organized a public burial for the dead, vendors gave journalists their version of the events. Although their statements did not contradict the view that the PLM was responsible for the violent turn of the demonstration, vendors pointed to a different, but overlapping, set of conflicts. From their hospital beds, Angel Gómez and four other wounded *locatarios* declared they had willingly attended a peaceful demonstration to protest against higher taxes. They recalled, however, that as they were arriving at the Zócalo they had been joined by a group of men who immediately started stoning the municipal guard.³²⁵

Vendor organizations corroborated their claims. According to the FSC, the *locatarios*’ demonstration had been organized by its Secretary General Pedro D. Nájera,

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ “Trágicos sucesos del viernes causados por la baja política,” *Excelsior*, August 3, 1924, 1.

³²⁵ “Se investiga el asesinato de locatarios,” *Excelsior*, August 5, 1924, 3.

following an agreement by the unions of vendors from twelve different public markets.³²⁶ When their demonstration reached the Palacio Municipal however, they found a group with banners of the Unión de Comerciantes del Exterior de los Mercados (UC). At that point, three of the UC leaders, Pascual Paz, Samuel Polanco, and Dámaso F. Díaz, communicated to vendors that they already arranged for a meeting with councilman Velarde, from the markets commission. While they were forced to negotiate together, the members of FSC had no sympathy for the UC's leadership. They insisted that its three bosses were only trying "to give themselves importance and to obtain a representation they do not have." In fact, they claimed that the UC existed only in these men's "atrophied brains."³²⁷ In part, this antipathy was grounded in the clashing approaches of the UC and the FSC. Nájera declared that the leaders of the UC, all employees of the Ayuntamiento's markets department, had incited violence not only with the purpose of discrediting the FSC, but also of undermining President Raya and influencing municipal appointments. This was not a secret. Samuel Polanco, one of the leaders of the UC, wrote to the city's newspapers declaring that his organization bore no responsibility for the violence in the Zócalo, but that its intention was to defend "the people" against the taxes imposed by the head of the department for public markets, Galicia Rodríguez. The UC did not recognize Galicia Rodríguez as capable of negotiating modifications to the

³²⁶ The markets were: La Merced, La Lagunilla, San Cosme, San Juan, El Volador, San Lucas, Juárez, Mixcoac, Tacubaya, Tacuba, La Dalia, and Nonoalco. "Las últimas investigaciones en los sangrientos sucesos del viernes último," *El Demócrata*, second edition, August 4, 1924, 1; "Las siluetas de los verdaderos promotores del motín en el Ayuntamiento comienzan a condensarse," *El Demócrata*, August 3, 1924, 1, 14.

³²⁷ "No se hará luz en la tragedia del viernes," *Excelsior*, second edition, August 6, 1924, 1, 6. According to the *Boletín Municipal*, the "Unión de Comerciantes del Exterior de los Mercados de esta Capital" was formally constituted on October 3, 1912, with Pascual Paz as its secretary general. *Boletín Municipal*, December 30, 1921, 836-837.

taxation scheme, because he “suffers from the grave and unforgivable drawback of not knowing absolutely anything about public markets.”³²⁸ Polanco argued that he should be removed from his position. In an open letter, the FSC rejected the UC’s maneuvers, reminding the public that its statutes forbade it to engage in such political activities.³²⁹

Hostility between the FSC and the UC was to be expected. Whereas the Federación de Sindicatos de Comerciantes del Exterior de los Mercados del Distrito Federal was affiliated to CGT’s Federación Local de Trabajadores del Distrito Federal, the Unión de Comerciantes del Exterior de los Mercados belonged to the CROM’s Federación de Sindicatos Obreros del Distrito Federal.³³⁰ In all probability, in August 1924, vendors had become entangled in the confrontation between the CROM and the CGT, which had been escalating as the CROM fought to expand its power within the labor movement and encroach upon the CGT’s membership.

On August 30, 1924, *El Demócrata* published a short article announcing that the city council had decided to repeal the new taxes on the *locatarios*. It also reported that in return for the good will displayed by the authorities, the members of the FSC had agreed to move hundreds of stalls to the new market halls that the Ayuntamiento was planning to build.³³¹ The article, however, did not dwell on the reasons why vendors got what they had wanted. Was it due to the publicity of the affair and the media coverage of their

³²⁸ 8/6/1924, “Hubo políticos entre los mercaderes que organizaron la protesta del día primero,” *El Demócrata*, second edition, 11.

³²⁹ 8/4/1924, “Las últimas investigaciones en los sangrientos sucesos del viernes último,” *El Demócrata*, second edition, 1.

³³⁰ Rosendo Salazar, *Historia de las luchas proletarias de México, 1923 a 1936*, 2 vols. (Mexico City: Avante, 1938-1956) 1:65; Rocío Guadarrama, *Los sindicatos*, 63.

³³¹ “Fue anulado en nuevo impuesto de piso para los vendedores del exterior de los mercados,” *El Demócrata*, August 30, 1924, 4.

demonstration and the repression they suffered, or had the political upheavals in the Ayuntamiento made it incapable of sustaining the decision to raise taxes? Was it a victory for the apolitical FSC, or had the Laboristas pushed for it to show vendors what the CROM could deliver? The answer probably involved all of the above.

The violent turn of their demonstration showed vendors the risks involved in accepting the mediation of labor confederations in their negotiations with the authorities. In November 1924, the UC's leader Dámaso Díaz "greeted and welcomed" President-elect Calles in the name of the city's *comerciantes del exterior de los mercados*.³³² A month later, the PLM took over the city council. As long as the laboristas dominated the council and enjoyed Calles's support, the FSC had a hard time defending the interests of vendors. In August 1925 the CGT-affiliated FSC denounced the PLM-appointed market department head Fernando Escamilla for taking advantage of his position to force vendors to join CROM-affiliated unions. Calles curtly responded that their "exhaustive document" had been forwarded to PLM municipal President Arturo de Saracho, effectively dismissing this complaint about a PLM member by referring it to the PLM itself.³³³ Confronted with this prospect, several vendor organizations migrated to the CROM.³³⁴

Still, finding the association with the CROM problematic, some vendors tried to detach themselves from their organizations. On May 11, 1926, forty-eight vendors of *gorditas* wrote to the secretary of Gobernación and the district governor to request

³³² 11/11/1924, FAPECFT, PEC, Serie Dámaso F. Díaz, exp. 68, legajo 1, fojas 3, inventario 1533.

³³³ 8/4/1925, AGN, O-C, c. 114, exp. 242-M1-E-1.

³³⁴ Vendors were not the only ones who joined the CROM in this period: Between 1925 and 1928, when the PLM controlled the council more than fifty-five groups joined the CROM. Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, chapter 3, n5.

protection against Benito Arredondo, secretary general of the CROM's Unión de Locatarios del Mercado Hidalgo y Comerciantes en Pequeño, from which they had resigned *en masse*. They declared that they had joined the union in July 1924, to "defend our interests and those of our *compañeros*, which were being harmed by the then current municipal authorities, and to create a means of mutual defense against whoever might try to hurt us." Soon, however, they realized that in the name of "the social struggle" they were participating in political maneuvers to overthrow the local Ayuntamiento. The situation became intolerable when, after a "friend of the laboring classes" took over the council, Arredondo began using his support to "establish preferences and tyrannies...to the point of extorting us and imposing punishments harsher than those of a foreman in times of capitalists' domination ... becoming the scourge of the proletariat of Guadalupe Hidalgo."³³⁵ The vendors declared that, out of revenge and in order to coerce them back into the union, Arredondo, with the assistance of the municipal president and the local police, had forced them to abandon their stalls. In this case the secretary of Gobernación and governor sided with the vendors. The Unión de Locatarios del Mercado Hidalgo did not let the matter lie there: a year later, during the Cristero rebellion, they tried to get the stalls back by accusing several of the plaintiffs of being religious fanatics and enemies of the government.³³⁶

In addition, vendors' interests sometimes clashed with those of workers. In 1923 the constitutional right to a weekly day of rest was implemented in the Federal District, requiring the closing down of markets and commercial houses on Sundays. This placed

³³⁵ 5/11/1926, AGN, SGG, 2-380.1 (5-1)-13.

³³⁶ 30/11/1927, *idem*; 12/9/1927, *idem*.

vendors in a difficult position. Would they side with the owners of commercial establishments, who lobbied hard to have the law changed so that they could open their shops on Sundays and give their employees the day off whenever it best suited their businesses? Or would they, in solidarity with those who belonged to the same confederations as they did, support a measure that workers had fought for but which might hurt vendors' incomes? The Centro Cosmopolita de Dependientes de Comercio, which had been pushing for the decree, feared and believed the former. In November 1923, it warned Governor Ramón Ross that “market *locatarios* had publicly threatened with a protest demonstration against the [Sunday rest] decree.” The Centro Cosmopolita was “prepared if not to prevent it [the demonstration], to organize another one, as numerous or larger.”³³⁷

Instead of an open confrontation vendors chose to petition for exemptions. Their arguments varied. At first, the FSC celebrated the measure in favor of “obreros and dependientes de patronos,” but requested to be allowed to sell on Sundays because as “unemployed workers,” they counted on that day’s trading to support their families’ critical situations. Conflating workers’ grievances with vendors’, they wrote: “If industrialists close down factories or reduce the number of workers or their hours, if workshops cut down on employees, or the government imposes higher municipal contributions, while the ‘agiotistas,’ those insatiable octopuses from whom we obtain our working capital, increase their margins, all of this makes the situation of the proletariat more afflictive, and to make matters worse comes the decree of Sunday rest, which

³³⁷ 11/13/1923, AGN, O-C, c. 241, exp. 802-D-9.

completes our misery.”³³⁸ Soon, however, vendors unions began to enunciate differences instead. In the name of “more than ten thousand families of market vendors,” who “provide workers with their basic needs at lower prices,” the UC requested that public markets remained open on Sundays. Unlike “obreros, jornaleros, and domésticos ... in our business we carry out all functions, and we give ourselves the necessary rest our bodies require.”³³⁹

These tensions made vendors question their identification with workers. Negatively, as when in 1927 small-scale vendors from San Ángel wrote to President Calles to ask him to put a stop to a railroad strike which, having obtained the solidarity of workers in that municipality, was putting them out of business.³⁴⁰ More positively, it encouraged vendors to make their demands more coherent. In February 1928, still under the auspices of the CROM’s Federación de Sindicatos Obreros del D.F. vendors gathered in a second yearly convention of *comerciantes en pequeño* of the Federal District, where they created a Departamento de Protección al Pequeño Comerciante to promote vendors’ interests and to coordinate their relationship with the authorities.³⁴¹ While the Departamento did not seem to have amounted to much, the organizational experience of the previous decade would come in handy as the political map of Mexico City got redrawn, again, later that year.

³³⁸ 4/8/1924, *ibid.*

³³⁹ 7/29/1924, *ibid.*

³⁴⁰ 3/4/1927, AGN, DT, c. 987, exp. 2. I am grateful to Miles Vincent Rodríguez for this reference.

³⁴¹ 2/25/1928, AGN, DT, c. 1588, exp. 1.

3.5 Conclusion

Mexico City's population trebled between 1900 and 1930, when it surpassed one million people.³⁴² Because of the rise in both consumer demand and the number of people seeking a living, the number of small-scale vendors increased. But market hall construction failed to keep up.³⁴³ As a result, the overflow of stalls had to be accommodated in surrounding areas, with the number of *locatarios* selling in adjacent streets and plazas far surpassing those within the existing purpose-built halls.³⁴⁴ As a Public Works official would put it, public markets had expanded by "invading the surrounding streets with stalls."³⁴⁵

The old Porfirian characterization of these markets, including a visceral reaction to their perceived backwardness, was not abandoned with the departure of President Díaz or the constitutional proclamation of a new state in 1917. In February 1918, cooperatista councilor Prieto Laurens condemned El Volador Market as nothing but a gathering of

³⁴² During the last decade of the Porfiriato, population grew by 36 percent; between 1910 and 1920, by 30.7 percent; and between 1920 and 1930, by 67 percent. Note that in this last period, a third of the increase was due to changes in the city's boundaries.

³⁴³ La Lagunilla, inaugurated in 1904, was the last market of the Porfiriato; between 1911 and 1917 the city council built the Juárez market (1912) and an annex to Santa Catarina (1913); in 1925 the council managed to build the markets of La Dalia and Hidalgo; finally a new flower market was inaugurated in 1927. Diego López Rosado, *Los servicios públicos de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1976), 213, 264-265; *Boletín Municipal*, June 30, 1925, 30; *Idem*, October 31, 1926, 20; *Obras Públicas* 1, no. 4 (April 1930), 238.

³⁴⁴ In March 1919, a member of the council's markets commission, Ernesto Santillana claimed that 70% of revenue stemming from *rastros y mercados* came from fixed stalls outside of market halls. *Boletín Municipal*, March 21, 1919, 297. In June 1924 the council distributed approximately 10,000 licenses, while market hall capacity did not exceed 1,200 stalls. *Idem*, June 3, 1924, 377; Mario Barbosa Cruz, *El trabajo en las calles: Subsistencia y negociación política en la Ciudad de México a comienzos del siglo XX* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa, 2008), 143, 151-155. This trend would only be exacerbated over the next two decades.

³⁴⁵ Francisco Bulman, "La situación actual de la ciudad en lo relativo a mercados," *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 8-9, August-September 1930, 83.

rateros. “Foreigners wonder, how is it possible that Mexican authorities tolerate this, just a few steps away from the elegant National and Municipal Palaces?”³⁴⁶ A year later, another cooperatista, Ramón Riveroll referred to the market formed in the streets surrounding El Volador as “a true flaunting of rags and filth ... a true plague.”³⁴⁷ In March 1925, laborista councilor Vicente Lombardo Toledano claimed that “big markets should tend to disappear ... They do not exist anymore in other parts of the world.” He also denounced that Mexico City’s markets were “nothing but a traditional reminder of the indigenous ‘tianguis’ that present all the most undesirable conditions of unhealthiness and discomfort.”³⁴⁸

As before, these views were not confined to the city council. When Cándido de la Fuente and 106 other vendors of second hand clothes and ironworks protested against their relocation to the Plazuela de Allende, among the reasons they listed was that the new location was unsuitable for a market because it was unhygienic and full of thieves.³⁴⁹ Equally, one J. Wiechers justified his proposal to sell a plot of land to the Ayuntamiento for the construction of a new hall in Santa María de la Ribera on the grounds that the existing improvised markets in that colonia were “not only against rules of hygiene, but ... such agglomerations hinder traffic and present an unpleasant sight, inappropriate for a city such as this capital.”³⁵⁰

³⁴⁶ *Boletín Municipal*, February 16, 1918, 167.

³⁴⁷ *Idem*, March 21, 1919, 296-297.

³⁴⁸ *Idem*, March 31, 1925, 36-37, 12.

³⁴⁹ *Idem*, April 11, 1919, 356.

³⁵⁰ *Idem*, February 24, 1922, 123-124.

While attitudes towards markets remained unaltered, vendors were among those who Rodríguez Kuri, elaborating on Luis González y González, calls the *revolucionados*, common men and women who during the civil wars of the 1910s found new areas of interlocution and ideological justifications to legitimize their demands.³⁵¹ This chapter has shown, however, that the changes in *locatarios*' relationships with the authorities need to be inserted in a longer time frame. In the late Porfiriato, the tensions generated by social transformations and the modification of local political structures—i.e. the disappearance of the Ayuntamiento in 1903—had already driven vendors to move from pleas for favors to the expression of grievances. Because the state failed to respond to their needs, they sharpened their claims to their rights. After 1911, as they learned a new political vocabulary, their grievances began to foster collective action among class-based groups. When the city council was reinstated in 1917 market vendors were ready to organize and to vocalize their needs, which they expressed through association with workers and their struggles. The traces vendors left in newspapers and official archives between 1903 and 1928 reveal that they belonged to a mobilized civil society that slowly but surely transformed the city's public sphere.

³⁵¹ Rodríguez Kuri, *Historia del desasosiego*, 16-20; Luis González y González, "La Revolución Mexicana desde el punto de vista de los revolucionados," *Historias* 8-9 (1985): 5-13.

Chapter Four:

Crises and Opportunities, 1929 to 1945

This chapter chronicles the government's tortuous attempts to manage the demands of a highly mobilized but also fragmented vendor movement. A period many have viewed as one of state consolidation I interpret here as one of political experimentation. At the city level, the embryonic PNR responded to the crisis that followed Obregón's assassination by eliminating the city council. To replace electoral politics in the city the party organized the proto-corporatist Consejo Consultivo, a move that allowed Calles' camarilla to substitute the CROM as the intermediary between popular groups and the local authorities. However, as I show in the case of conflicts over street stalls, the Consejo failed to contain the multiplicity of actors with claims over the city's built environment, and was thus unable to implement its carefully-constructed compromises. Complicating the negotiations of contradictory class interests was competition among vendors. The factionalism of the previous decade proved difficult to reverse.

Economic recovery starting in the second half of 1932 then brought relative political stability to the capital, and allowed the Departamento del Distrito to pour resources into public markets. Whereas markets had been primordially the target of urban and commercial regulations, political calculations now turned them into the object of social policy. However, despite the government's efforts to make markets the site of progressive policies, relationships between the Departamento and vendors worsened. The

much celebrated Abelardo Rodríguez Market, for example, remained undersubscribed because deals between vendors and the Departamento were only tentative and continually broken. From 1936 the government's commitment to control the prices of basic consumer goods in the face of rising inflation further complicated their interactions. Soon, the prospects of a contested national election made all the more evident the lack of institutional mechanisms for the authorities to negotiate with the vendors. After several timid attempts at the local level, in 1943 the PRM incorporated vendors into national politics, along with other self-employed groups and the middle classes, through the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares. Yet control of market politics remained elusive in this period.

4.1 Mexico between the Big Crash and World War II

In 1929 the world entered its greatest capitalist crisis to date. Certainly crashes had occurred before, but in scope, scale, and persistence, the Great Depression had no precedent. As the globe's most powerful economies collapsed and turned protectionist, international trade and investment dried up. For Mexico the worst years were 1929 to 1932, when real GDP fell by over 17 percent. The external sector was the most heavily affected. Already facing a downturn since 1926, the value of Mexican exports tumbled to a third of their pre-crash level by 1932. The ensuing pressure on the peso forced Mexico to drop the gold standard.³⁵²

³⁵² Enrique Cárdenas, *La hacienda pública y la política económica, 1929-1958* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 23-27; Robert Freeman Smith, *The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico, 1916-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 264.

These years were also a time of political uncertainty. The assassination of President-elect Obregón in July 1928 exacerbated the Cristero rebellion, which had by then spread to thirteen states.³⁵³ Interim President Emilio Portes Gil at once faced a serious electoral crisis. Calles and his allies, desperate for an orderly transition, created the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) in early March 1929.³⁵⁴ Immediately, Obregonista General José Gonzalo Escobar attempted a coup, with a third of Army officers behind him.³⁵⁵ With the urban middle classes supporting an opposition candidate, former Education Minister José Vasconcelos, the PNR resorted to fraud and violence to secure the election of Pascual Ortiz Rubio in 1930.³⁵⁶ Still, it was not enough. Ortiz Rubio resigned in September 1932, and the party had to content itself with governing through a provisional president, Abelardo Rodríguez, for two more years.

Crisis, however, begot opportunities. As the purchasing power of whatever was left of Mexican exports plunged, imports became too expensive, creating incentives for entrepreneurs in Mexico to invest, especially but not exclusively in the production of consumer goods. Businessmen were soon resorting to politics, and in particular to their influence on economic policy, to push for currency controls, differential exchange rates, and specific tariffs that would stifle any remaining foreign competition. These improvised policies of import substitution soon reignited growth and helped the development of

³⁵³ Alicia Hernández Chávez, *Mexico: A Brief History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 245-250.

³⁵⁴ Luis Javier Garrido, *El partido de la revolución institucionalizada. La formación del nuevo estado en México (1928-1945)* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1982), chapter 1.

³⁵⁵ Edwin Lieuwen, *Mexican Militarism: The Political Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Army, 1910-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), 103.

³⁵⁶ John Skirius, *José Vasconcelos y la cruzada de 1929* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1982); José J. Blanco, *Se llamaba Vasconcelos. Una evocación crítica* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977).

domestic industries.³⁵⁷ But that was not all. The government stepped up direct support for business. In 1933, the public financing agency Nacional Financiera was created to help struggling banks, and to channel funds into commercial agriculture and real-estate development. What is more, the federal government invested in new infrastructure, particularly in irrigation and road works. Construction firms with access to public contracts became highly profitable ventures. In this context, real GDP grew by 20 percent between 1934 and 1937, while industrial production grew ever faster.³⁵⁸

The politics of the period were among the most divisive Mexico had seen. Elected in 1934, PNR candidate Lázaro Cárdenas faced serious challenges. In December that year he assumed the Presidency of a country run by Callista military commanders and governors. Until then a loyal Callista himself, he took action immediately, replacing operational commanders with his own men and intervening in state elections.³⁵⁹ In some states this was not enough to displace unwanted governors, forcing him to seek new alliances. In Coahuila political control was achieved only after a massive agrarian reform in the cotton producing area of La Laguna gained him the support of the thirty thousand new *ejidatarios*.³⁶⁰ Land redistribution, however, did not take place in a vacuum. In La Laguna as in other parts of the country, it was the result of both political calculations and

³⁵⁷ Enrique Cárdenas, *La industrialización mexicana durante la Gran Depresión* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1987).

³⁵⁸ Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy: Post-revolutionary Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 81-83; 106-107; 119-124; 184-187; Clark W. Reynolds, *The Mexican Economy. Twentieth-Century Structure and Growth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 284-285; Hernández, *Mexico*, 268.

³⁵⁹ Alicia Hernández Chávez, *La Mecánica Cardenista*, vol. 16 of *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1979), 44-46; 96-104.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 62-64.

continual mobilizations of peasants, rural workers, and peons.³⁶¹ Without their mobilization, the ejido sector would not have grown to represent 41.8 percent of the total population working in agriculture, and 47 percent of all cultivated land.³⁶²

In addition, as the economy began to recover, industrial workers regained militancy. Often under Communist leadership, railroad, mine and metal, and petroleum workers, in conflict with companies and the federal government, formed powerful national unions in 1933, 1934, and 1935 respectively. Across the country the number of strikes grew sharply. Critical of the government's handling of the situation, in June 1935 Calles publicly condemned the new unionism as treason to the national interest, a generator of economic chaos.³⁶³ Under attack by Callistas and capitalists, and in accordance with the COMINTERN's anti-fascist Popular Front strategy, in February 1936 these unions formed the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM), and threw their support behind Cárdenas.³⁶⁴ The president reciprocated, backing their strikes, which again grew in number in 1936 and 1937.³⁶⁵ In Nuevo León Cárdenas managed to

³⁶¹ Alan Knight, "The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo," in ed. Leslie Bethell, *Mexico since Independence* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 256-264; Barry Carr, "The Mexican Communist Party and Agrarian Mobilization in the Laguna, 1920-1940: A Worker-Peasant Alliance?" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, no. 3 (Aug. 1987), 371-404; Heather Fowler-Salamini, *Agrarian Radicalism in Veracruz, 1920-1938* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 49-69.

³⁶² Hernández, *Mexico*, 258.

³⁶³ Hamilton, *Limits*, 125.

³⁶⁴ Daniela Spenser, *Unidad a toda costa: la Tercera Internacional en México durante la presidencia de Lázaro Cárdenas* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 2007); Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), chapter 2.

³⁶⁵ Womack, "Luchas sindicales," 441-442; Kevin J. Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution. Labor, the State and Authoritarianism in Mexico* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 83-92

get a palatable governor elected only after obtaining labor's support by openly defying Monterrey capitalists.³⁶⁶

In March 1938, forced by recalcitrant foreign oil companies and mobilized workers, Cárdenas nationalized the oil industry. It proved the most popular measure of his tenure. Also that month, he created a new party, the Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM), in anticipation of a difficult presidential race in 1940. Through the PRM he painstakingly forged a pact between all major *campesino* and labor confederations, the military, and what began to be referred to as the popular sector, mainly the new Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado.³⁶⁷ The PRM also had the informal backing of segments of the capitalist class with interests in mining, ranching, finance, new industries, and construction, which had expanded thanks to the government's economic policies.

Fears of a right-wing rebellion or coup loomed large. General Saturnino Cedillo's revolt in April 1938 was swiftly crushed, but there was no reason to believe others would not follow. Starting in 1937 disgruntled Catholic middle classes joined the fascist Sinarquista movement, which mushroomed in the Bajío countryside to claim half a million followers early in the next the decade.³⁶⁸ In open antagonism to Cardenista policies, the Partido Acción Nacional was created in September 1939, funding provided

³⁶⁶ Hernández, *Mecánica*, 64-69; Michael Snodgrass, *Deference and Defiance in Monterrey. Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chapter 7.

³⁶⁷ Hamilton, *Limits*, 241-258.

³⁶⁸ Mario Gill, *El Sinarquismo. Su origen, su esencia, su misión* (Mexico City: Olín, 1962); Jean Meyer, *El Sinarquismo: ¿Un fascismo Mexicano? 1937-1947* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1979); Friedrich Katz, "Algunos rasgos esenciales de la política del imperialismo alemán en América Latina," in *Hitler sobre America Latina: el fascismo alemán en Latinoamérica 1933-1943*, edited by Jürgen Hell et al. (Mexico City: Editorial Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1968), 42-48.

by courtesy of Monterrey industrialists.³⁶⁹ In the end a conservative opposition movement coalesced around General Juan Andrew Almazán; it would take the full weight of the Cardenista machine, and considerable violence and ballot box rigging to elect the PRM compromise candidate, former Secretary of Defense Manuel Ávila Camacho.³⁷⁰ In all probability the PRM had been defeated in Mexico City where, as in Guadalajara and Monterrey, the urban middle classes and the self-employed had openly supported Almazán.³⁷¹

In December 1940 Ávila Camacho assumed the presidency with war raging in Europe and an Axis victory looking not altogether unlikely. He played the international situation well.³⁷² In the midst of arrangements for hemispheric cooperation against the fascist threat, in November of the following year Mexican officials reached an agreement with the Roosevelt administration to settle all pending oil and property claims.³⁷³ Then in

³⁶⁹ For a long-term history of the PAN see: Soledad Loaeza, *El Partido Acción Nacional, la larga marcha, 1939-1994: oposición leal y partido de protesta* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999).

³⁷⁰ Albert L. Michaels, *The Mexican Election of 1940* (Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1971); Ariel J. Contreras, *México 1940: Industrialización y crisis política* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1977); Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), chapter 1.

³⁷¹ Diane Davis, *Urban Leviathan. Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 97-98. Marte R. Gómez, secretary of agriculture under Ávila Camacho later admitted that while the official candidate had won throughout the country, he had lost in the Federal District. James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change since 1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 180.

³⁷² Stephen R. Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development. The United States and Mexico, 1939-1954* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1995).

³⁷³ Lorenzo Meyer, "El conflicto petrolero entre México y los Estados Unidos (1934-1942)," *Foro Internacional* 7, no. 1-2, (Jul.-Dec. 1966), 149-150.

December 1942, a year after the attack on Pearl Harbor, a general commercial treaty was concluded, allowing bilateral trade and US investment in Mexico to boom.³⁷⁴

On the domestic front, Ávila Camacho took advantage of the international crisis to demand “national unity.”³⁷⁵ As the president led the country into a “battle for production,” the CTM and the newly-formed pro-government Cámara Nacional de Industrias de Transformación (CANACINTRA) agreed to the suppression of strikes and the rapid arbitration of disputes.³⁷⁶ Between 1940 and 1944 GDP grew by an average of 6 percent per year.³⁷⁷ At the same time, inflation was rampant, and wages were falling behind: industrial real wages in Mexico City fell by 45 percent between 1940 and 1946, which in the context of economic growth suggests income polarization.³⁷⁸ In spite of the best efforts of the labor bureaucracy, rank-and-file restiveness could not be contained and the number of strikes shot up during the last three years of the war.³⁷⁹ Food riots and hunger marches also multiplied.³⁸⁰ To dissipate discontent, and to weaken the labor movement, in February 1943 the PRM created the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP), a collection of organizations of professionals, state

³⁷⁴ Ian Roxborough, “Mexico,” in eds. Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 194-202.

³⁷⁵ Halbert Jones, “‘The War Has Brought Peace to Mexico’: The Political Impact of Mexican Participation in World War II” (Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 2006).

³⁷⁶ Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution*, 111-112.

³⁷⁷ Hernández, *Mexico*, 288.

³⁷⁸ Jeffrey L. Bortz, *Los salarios industriales en México, 1939-1975* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), 266.

³⁷⁹ Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution*, 164, table 5.1.

³⁸⁰ Enrique C. Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico. The Political Uses of Food since 1910* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002), 80 and n36.

employees, small-business owners, vendors, and other self-employed groups, as well as *colonos* and youth and women groups; its representatives immediately became the largest block in Congress.³⁸¹ Ruling Mexico was, more than ever before, a tough juggling act.

4.2 The Consejo Consultivo, an Experiment in “Democracia Funcional”

On December 31, 1928, in the wake of the political crisis caused by Obregón’s assassination, provisional President Emilio Portes Gil signed the *Ley Orgánica del Distrito Federal y Territorios Federales*, abolishing Mexico City’s Ayuntamiento for good. The municipalities of Mexico, Tacuba, Tacubaya, and Mixcoac would become the Departamento Central, to be administered by a presidentially-appointed Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal.³⁸² This reorganization eliminated the capital’s electoral politics at the municipal level, and ended four years of control of the local council by the Partido Laborista Mexicano, the political arm of the Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana, whose leaders were mistakenly suspected of having instigated Obregón’s assassination.

In early 1929 the CROM claimed to represent 160,000 of Mexico City’s inhabitants, out of a population of over a million. In addition to manual and clerical workers the confederation also represented owners of small workshops and independent

³⁸¹ Tiziana Bertaccini, *El régimen priísta frente a las clases medias, 1943-1964* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2009), 256-266; Luis Javier Garrido, *El partido de la revolución institucionalizada. La formación del nuevo estado en México (1928-1945)* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1982), 331-340; David Schers, *The Popular Sector of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional in Mexico* (Tel Aviv: The David Horowitz Institute for the Research of Developing Countries, Tel Aviv University, 1972), 1-20.

³⁸² *Ley Orgánica del Distrito Federal y de los Territorios Federales* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1929)

traders, as well as peasants, neighborhood activists, and tenants.³⁸³ Over the previous decade the CROM had acted as intermediary between its affiliated unions and the authorities, their link to municipal and national bureaucracies, using the city council as a venue for negotiation. The suppression of the council undermined this configuration of local politics. Under public attack, the CROM would remain active, but it ceased to be the umbrella organization under which different urban groups sought to advance their interests.

Diane Davis, one of the few scholars to have devoted any attention to the structure of local governance in the period, argues that the government could not risk abolishing the Ayuntamiento without proposing an alternative mechanism for the expression of the city's organized groups' grievances and demands, leading to the creation of the proto-corporatist Consejo Consultivo del Departamento Central in January 1929.³⁸⁴ While it would not have executive or legislative powers, the Consejo Consultivo was given the mandate to collaborate with the Jefe del Departamento in the management of the city, particularly in the design of policies pertaining to the provision of public services.³⁸⁵ Convening at least bimonthly, it was to be composed of thirteen councilors chosen by the president from organizations representing diverse interests, the so-called *fuerzas vivas de la ciudad*. Eight of them would come from groups that had been active within the CROM

³⁸³ Esther Martina Vázquez Ramírez, *Organización y resistencia popular en la ciudad de México durante la crisis de 1929-1932* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1998), 35-40; Rocío Guadarrama, *Los sindicatos y la política en México: La CROM, 1918-1928* (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1981), 199-202.

³⁸⁴ Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 65-72. For a thorough study of the government and management of the Federal District see: María Cristina Sánchez Mejorada's *Rezago de la modernidad. Memorias de una ciudad presente* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2005). Her focus, however, is on the 1940s and early 1950s.

³⁸⁵ *Ley Orgánica del Distrito Federal*, arts. 92-96.

in the late 1920s: three representatives of workers' unions, and one from associations of each of the following groups: small-scale merchants, small-scale industrialists, peasants, public employees (including teachers), and tenants (colonos e inquilinos).³⁸⁶ Capitalist merchants were represented by a delegate from the local Chamber of Commerce, large industrialists by a delegate from the Chamber of Industry, and the remaining three councilors represented, respectively, professionals (mostly architects and engineers), property owners, and mothers' associations (madres de familia).

To the extent that formal political participation remained possible at the local level, it was to become the prerogative of these well-defined interest groups acting through channels sanctioned by the political leadership. In contrast to the turbulent politics of the former Ayuntamiento, Calles and his allies hoped the Consejo Consultivo would be an arena for the representation of urban groups and social classes, a platform for the orderly promotion of their interests, and the management of their grievances. Because the interests represented in the Consejo were often contradictory, it was also, necessarily, an attempt to manage and reconcile competing claims over public resources and governmental support. The goal was not simply to regulate and channel political forces but to thereby pacify them. During its first meeting, the first Jefe del Departamento, seasoned class conciliator José Manuel Puig Casauranc, celebrated the Consejo as “an original experiment” in “functional democracy.”³⁸⁷

³⁸⁶ Davis believes that the over-representation of workers (3 councilors) responded to the power of organized labor within the official coalition and incipient party, and remarks that as recognition of particularly strong Cromista unions, the labor slots were consistently allocated to the Federación de Sindicatos Obreros del Distrito Federal, the Sindicato de Redactores de Prensa, and the Alianza de Camioneros.

³⁸⁷ 1/29/1929, AVCC, FR 328.38 M4c 1929. In November 1928, for example, as successor to Luis N. Morones as secretary of industry, Puig Casauranc had convoked and then chaired a Worker-Employer Convention to debate Portes Gil's project for a Federal Labor Law. Miles Vincent Rodríguez, “The

The Consejo Consultivo was an early, rather timid effort to diffuse or mediate conflicts specific to Mexico City's social and economic structure. Predominant were disputes that pitted small-scale independent producers and traders against large-scale industrialists and capitalist merchants, who not only competed for customers but also had competing interests over city regulations and, in particular, the use of urban space. According to Mexico's first industrial census, in 1930, there were 3,473 manufacturing enterprises in the Federal District, half of which were small concerns, with five employees or fewer. In contrast, there were only sixty-nine firms with over one hundred workers.³⁸⁸ Figures for commercial establishments are harder to come by, as the first commercial census was not taken until 1940. Population figures indicate, however, that in 1930 there were at least 60,697 people in the capital whose stated occupation was in commerce.³⁸⁹ Whereas some of them worked in elegant department stores such as El Puerto de Veracruz or El Palacio de Hierro, the vast majority of them were self-employed.³⁹⁰ While labor delegates brought grievances against capitalists to the Consejo, workers and capitalists had other channels, such as arbitration boards, to negotiate their differences. The Consejo was therefore of secondary importance to these classes in their dealings with each other.

Beginnings of a Movement: Leagues of Agrarian Communities, Unions of Industrial Workers, and Their Struggles in Mexico, 1920-1929" (Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 2010), 187-189; 194.

³⁸⁸ Dirección General de Estadística, *Primer censo industrial. Resúmenes Generales* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1933).

³⁸⁹ Dirección General de Estadística, *Quinto censo de población 15 de mayo de 1930. Distrito Federal* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1933), 53.

³⁹⁰ A report by a commission in charge of studying the feasibility of establishing a bank to extend loans to small-scale vendors claimed that in the summer of 1932 there were at least 20,000 active stalls licensed by the Oficina de Mercados of the Federal District. 07/12/1932, AGN, ALR, c. 148, exp. 531.1/37.

The minutes of the Consejo Consultivo captured the tensions that emerged between small proprietary traders and producers on the one hand, and capitalist merchants and industrialists on the other, as these classes sought to engage the support of the authorities against each other in the promotion of their interests. Because the Consejo was required to pre-approve new bylaws and sanction modifications to the many existing ones, representatives most commonly fought each other over provisions that would hinder one or other side of any particular struggle. On one occasion, for example, small-scale producers and traders of charcoal requested government intervention to set minimum prices to put a stop to large-scale producers and merchants selling below cost, forcing them out of business. The Jefe de Reglamentos, one Mr. Haro, observed that small proprietors, who had between two hundred and three hundred pesos of working capital, could not resist their competition for more than a couple of days, and were forced to sell their stalls to “*malos comerciantes*,” who in some cases had seized up to thirty “casillas” in the same market already. “The government has the duty to protect the interests of the public,” Mr Haro stated, “that is indisputable; but should this consideration be extended to the obligation to protect small businesses?”³⁹¹ He left it to the Consejo to ponder the issue, but not before warning councilors that were they not to take action, monopolies would soon corner charcoal markets and dictate prices at whim.

Sometimes, however, fears of monopolistic practices were exploited to justify regulations that reinforced the dominance of larger capitalist enterprises, as in the case of the city’s bread industry. Historian Robert Weis has shown how, starting in 1929, owners of the largest bakeries in Mexico City systematically obtained the authorities’ support

³⁹¹ 3/20/1929, AVCC, FR 328.38 M4c 1929.

against competition by independent producers, typically family enterprises and petty retailers, in return for agreeing to increase pay and improve conditions for unionized workers.³⁹² In the name of preventing the formation of a monopoly and of securing the city's hygienic and inexpensive supply of bread a *reglamento* was passed that mandated that no *fábricas de pan* could be located within tenements or apartments, forbade the opening of a bakery within five hundred meters of an existing one, set a minimum price, and contemplated the creation of a corps of honorary inspectors that would help the authorities enforce the new regulations.³⁹³

The negotiations and the passing of the *reglamento del pan* had taken place just before the inauguration of the Consejo Consultivo, and small producers and traders affected by it construed the new institution as a forum where they could bring their grievances. In September 1930 the Consejo discussed the possibility of amending the *reglamento*. In the name of independent bakers, a representative of the Liga de la Pequeña Propiedad explained the need for certain modifications. He objected that the distance requirements were too restrictive, being even greater than those for *cantinas*, which only needed to be fifty meters from each other. The *reglamento*, moreover, was in practice only applied to small-scale producers, because capitalists consistently obtained *amparos* from the courts, allowing them to circumvent it. Furthermore, he complained that minimum prices were only selectively respected, and that given that the supposedly honorary inspectors were in reality paid by the Unión de Proprietarios de Panaderías, the

³⁹² Robert G. Weis, "Immigrant Entrepreneurs, Bread, and Class Negotiation in Postrevolutionary Mexico City," *Mexican Studies/ Estudios Mexicanos* 25, no.1 (Winter 2009): 71-100. A similar trend is discernible in the milk industry. Enrique C. Ochoa, "Reappraising State Intervention and Social Policy in Mexico: The Case of Milk in the Distrito Federal during the Twentieth Century," *Mexican Studies/ Estudios Mexicanos* 15, no.1 (Winter 1999): 78-82.

³⁹³ Weis, *Immigrant Entrepreneurs*, 88.

association of the city's most powerful bakery owners, "they protect only the interests of this group, while they victimize independent individuals."³⁹⁴ This time small producers were successful. The reglamento was temporarily modified to address their objections.

One of the major sources of conflict in the city in the early 1930s was the proliferation of street stalls. Starting in 1930, the *Revista de Obras Públicas* drew attention to the fact that the rise in population and the growth in the city necessitated more market space, while noting that municipal authorities had failed to provide purpose-built halls. Instead, Architect Francisco Bulman explained that the old Porfirian markets had expanded by "invading surrounding streets" with myriads of stalls, which, besides being "foul-smelling and unhygienic, give the public thoroughfare a disagreeable appearance, and leave a bad impression on the tourists that visit us; they also hide the facades of beautiful houses, and force pedestrians to walk at the center of the streets."³⁹⁵ With the number of automobiles increasing every year, references to the danger of traffic accidents became central to debates over the use of the city streets for commercial purposes.³⁹⁶ What is more, Bulman believed, because many *colonias* lacked most public services, every street was a potential market. As a cautionary tale against past authorities' lack of foresight, he reflected on the experience of Colonia Peralvillo, where at some point a vendor had obtained a permit to establish a stall on Beethoven street. He was soon joined by others. Because the original vendor had set a precedent, it was impossible to

³⁹⁴ 9/11/1930, AVCC, 004-ACT-04-1930.

³⁹⁵ Francisco Bulman, "La situación actual de la ciudad en lo relativo a mercados," *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 8-9, August-September 1930, 84.

³⁹⁶ By 1940, there were 35,000 cars (4,500 of which were taxis), and 10,000 trucks in Mexico City. Patrice Elizabeth Olsen, *Artifacts of Revolution. Architecture, Society, and Politics in Mexico City, 1920-1940* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008), 109, 128-129, 239.

refuse them licenses, so this street “became populated by *locatarios*.” First they built booths that could be considered “*semi-ambulantes*,” and little by little their radius of action grew, until the street was completely full. At that moment, the Departamento de Salubridad demanded improvements in hygiene, which led to the *locatarios*’ request for help from the old Ayuntamiento, which they obtained, resulting in “the more or less good condition, to the extent it was possible, of their stalls, leaving the street of Beethoven transformed into the market of the same name.”³⁹⁷

Immediately after its creation, the Cámara de Comercio de la Ciudad de México, the business association of large capitalist merchants, used the Consejo to launch an attack on street commerce. The Cámara’s representative Rodrigo Montes de Oca presented a project for a new reglamento on street sales in downtown areas that would, he claimed, improve traffic circulation. He further explained that the goal was to eradicate what he considered disadvantageous competition from street-stall owners, many of whom, he protested, had enough capital to rent private premises and whose rent-free businesses had an unfair advantage.³⁹⁸ The proposal was supported by Mr Lajous, the representative of large-scale industrialists, who argued that “all those who have set stalls on the streets, on the pavements, and outside market halls ... must be made to pay the same taxes as [established] merchants, and to respect the same working hours.”³⁹⁹

The Cámara encountered opposition from the start. With the excuse that Montes de Oca and Lajous had called the traders in question *ambulantes*, the Departamento’s Jefe

³⁹⁷ Bulman, “La situación,” 83.

³⁹⁸ 3/6/1929, AVCC.

³⁹⁹ 4/24/1929, AVCC.

de Mercados tried to limit the scope of the reglamento to encompass only itinerant peddlers and especially those who sold manufactures in installments door-to-door.⁴⁰⁰ It seems likely that he was motivated by the fact that, unlike the owners of stalls, these traders were beyond the Departamento's control. The representative of small-scale vendors, Emigdio Hidalgo Catalán, agreed on this more restrictive, and more literal, definition of the term *ambulante*, and with the support of the labor representatives managed to postpone a resolution.

In May 1930, Montes de Oca, who had been reappointed to the Consejo Consultivo, restated the need for a *reglamento de ambulantes*. By then the new representative of small-scale commerce, Pedro Villegas, seemed prepared to reach for a compromise that at least in the short run would appeal to large-scale merchants as well as to many among his much more fluid constituency. Accepting the Cámara's position, he was willing to support a reduction of the size of street stalls and of the number of licenses issued in order to protect vendors within market halls and small-scale merchants in private shops from competition by other independent traders. But instead of stating this openly, however, he produced a scapegoat, directing attention to foreign vendors who, according to him, had taken over the streets flanking the city's markets. As they had already accumulated enough capital, he argued, they could be forced to move to private accommodation "so that the stalls they now occupy become available for use by Mexicans, so that the conflict becomes one between Mexicans."⁴⁰¹ Montes de Oca concurred that foreigners were a threat to large and small commerce alike.

⁴⁰⁰ Idem.

⁴⁰¹ 5/8/1930, AVCC.

Labor councilor Antonio Díaz Lombardo did not fall for it, and demanded that, given the economic crisis that engulfed the city, no rushed decisions be taken. He proposed that the authorities be consulted first, and that then more effort be put into reconciling the needs of “*comerciantes en pequeño*, who have the right to live,” with the demands of the “*comercio grande*, which is confronting difficult circumstances.”⁴⁰² The government was also wary of the merchants’ advances. PNR operator Crisóforo Ibáñez, acting as president of the Consejo Consultivo in his capacity as secretary general of the Departamento del Distrito Federal, reminded councilors that the city was experiencing high unemployment, and with so many people going hungry they should refrain from doing “anti-social work.”⁴⁰³ An alternative that appealed to all parties was for the government to build new market halls to relocate vendors, but the Departamento was in no position to pay such expenses.

When Lamberto Hernández was put in charge of the Departamento in October 1930, he took up from where his predecessor had left off. In his first meeting with the Consejo Consultivo he discussed what he considered were the main issues facing the city. Among them was the “very delicate subject of *comercio ambulante*, because if it is true that traders give downtown areas a pretty disagreeable aspect, it is no less true that we must be tolerant of the poor’s need to make a living.”⁴⁰⁴ Echoing Villegas’s earlier arguments, Hernández announced in addition that, inspired by “patriotic sentiments,” the president had given orders to the secretary of Gobernación to carry out an investigation to

⁴⁰² Idem.

⁴⁰³ 8/29/1930, AVCC.

⁴⁰⁴ 10/15/1930, AVCC.

determine whether the “foreign elements” who were “killing our *pequeños comerciantes*” had obtained the necessary permission for commercial activities upon arrival in the country.⁴⁰⁵ Chief of Intelligence Services Pablo Meneses found himself reporting on the immigration status and activities, including the Jewish religious rites involved in the production of kosher meat, of “a large number of Russians, Czechoslovakians, Poles” accused of invading the streets of Jesús María, and the surroundings of San Juan Market.⁴⁰⁶ For its part, the Departamento had commissioned a survey of foreign merchants, to determine whether they had enough resources to relocate from their stalls on the city’s streets to private premises.⁴⁰⁷ Letters denouncing foreigners circulated for commentary through the Departamento’s offices, such as that written by small-scale *comerciante* Dionisio Coria who, in the name of “the Mexican Family,” decried Chinese, Syrio-Lebanese, and Jewish “blood-suckers” who, with the assistance of their “wealthy compatriots,” had supposedly taken over the stalls outside of La Lagunilla Market.⁴⁰⁸

By early 1931, after almost two years of negotiations, the Consejo Consultivo was ready to approve a *reglamento del comercio semi-fijo y ambulante* that promised

⁴⁰⁵ Idem.

⁴⁰⁶ 2/21/1931, AGN, DGIPS, c.2, exp.21.

⁴⁰⁷ 11/26/1930, AVCC.

⁴⁰⁸ 12/24/1930, AHDF, DDF, Oficina Consultiva, box 3. Similar letters were addressed to the President. See for example: 2/21/1931, AGN, POR, c.68, exp.7/2986. On racism against the Chinese in Mexico, especially in the north, see: Javier Treviño Rangel, “Los ‘hijos del cielo’ en el infierno: un reporte sobre el racismo hacia las comunidades chinas en México, 1880-1930,” *Foro Internacional* 45, no. 3 (181) (Jul. - Sep., 2005), 409-444; Avital Bloch and Servando Ortoll “The Anti-Chinese and Anti-Japanese Movements in Cananea, Sonora, and Salt Lake River, Arizona, during the 1920 and 1930s,” *Americana, E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2010); On the history of Syrian and Lebanese immigration to Mexico, the immigrants commercial practices, and the discrimination they suffered see: Theresa Alfaro *SV El camino Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2007); On antisemitism in Mexico see Alicia Gojman de Backal, *Camisas, escudos, y desfiles militares. Los Dorados y el antisemitismo en México (1934-1940)* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000).

something to every one of its members.⁴⁰⁹ Street stalls could remain, but only as long as their owners had a total working capital of less than three hundred pesos and no means to rent a private shop.⁴¹⁰ This would reduce competition with established merchants large and small, as well as with market vendors. Those traders who no longer qualified for licenses would have to rent an “accesoria,” to the benefit of landlords. Street stalls in downtown areas, moreover, had to shrink in size, a measure that appealed to bus owners and drivers, who favored smoother traffic circulation, and the architects represented in the Consejo, who had begun to lobby for the burgeoning tourism industry. Itinerant vendors would also face tighter constraints, but those with long-standing licenses were temporarily exempted, together with those selling “objects of the lowest value,” as requested by labor representatives worried that many among them were unemployed workers.⁴¹¹ In general, this reglamento reflected the Consejo’s attempt to unite the city’s interest groups. In March of that year, President Pascual Ortiz Rubio signed the decree putting it into effect. As a result, in a context of heightened xenophobia fanned by the local press, in April 1931 foreign vendors were forced to abandon their stalls.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ 1/28/1931 and 2/4/1931, AVCC. For an account of the passing of the reglamento from a street vending perspective, see Gary I. Gordon, *Peddlers, Pesos and Power*, 50-59.

⁴¹⁰ According available estimates 100 pesos represented the minimum middle class income in 1932. José E. Iturriaga, *La estructura social y cultural de México* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, [1951] 2003), 79.

⁴¹¹ 2/25/1931, AVCC.

⁴¹² Vázquez Ramírez, *Organización y resistencia popular*, 106. During the first quarter of 1931, two of the most widely-read newspapers of the period, *El Nacional* and *Excelsior*, reproduced merchants and vendors’ anti-foreign views. See *ibid*, nn17-29. That year, Jewish merchants were expelled from their shops outside of La Lagunilla market. Gojman de Backal, *Camisas, escudos, y desfiles militares*, 165-166, 185-187. Whilst vendors continued to decry foreigners’ participation in markets for the rest of the decade, I could not find evidence of official support for their xenophobic complaints after these events.

As is often the case, consensus was hard to achieve but easy to undermine. Already in December 1931 discussions in the Consejo Consultivo suggest that the reglamento had only been selectively enforced. Small-scale industry representative Armando Salcedo stated that it was shameful how *puestos semi-fijos* continued to block the streets surrounding La Lagunilla. Montes de Oca, still representing the Cámara de Comercio, brought attention to an article in *El Universal* lambasting the invasion of central streets by small-scale vendors, and proposed that the Consejo request that the Police Chief apply the provisions of the reglamento. He was outraged that tennis shoes were being sold on Tacuba Street. Even Gonzalo Velarde, who that year represented small-scale commerce, agreed that “the city itself has turned into a market,” though he insisted that vendors should not be disturbed until appropriate market halls became available.⁴¹³ Responding to pressures from the Alianza de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Primer Cuadro, and the Unión de Resistencia de Comerciantes Semifijos y Ambulantes, labor councilor Elías Hurtado began a campaign to change the reglamento. “There are so many traders competing with each other that this is truly a mess. I am against those who compete with serious commerce, those who take to the streets with embroideries or shoes, merchandise in hand, without paying serious contributions or rents ... Trade that is not in basic items should be banished from the streets. But commerce in primary products, products of immediate consumption, I think we have to tolerate.”⁴¹⁴ In February 1932, with the Departamento under a new Jefe, Vicente Estrada Cajigal, Hurtado convinced the

⁴¹³ 12/16/1931, AVCC.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

Consejo to modify the reglamento, to allow *ambulantes* to sell basic goods and the products of domestic manufacturing in downtown areas.⁴¹⁵

In the end the Consejo Consultivo could not contain the multiplicity of actors that took part in the city's commercial structure, and was unable to implement its carefully-negotiated compromises. When Montes de Oca decried the continued presence of street vendors, advocating that the Consejo demand that the Jefe del Departamento enforce the reglamento, Velarde found it necessary to explain. He acknowledged that, whereas at the time of the passing of the reglamento they had agreed that there would be no more than three hundred licensed vendors in the city center, "unfortunately, due to the maneuvers of their organizations," the number of authorized *ambulantes* had grown to eight hundred since the reglamento was changed. In fact, according to the secretary of the Consejo, these organized vendors were "the first to complain" about the chaotic state of downtown streets. Velarde estimated that there were an additional seven hundred to 1200 unauthorized peddlers. He proposed that the organizations preoccupied with the enforcement of the reglamento name honorary inspectors to review all existing licenses in conjunction with the relevant authorities.⁴¹⁶ The Cámara de Comercio and organized *ambulantes* were not the only ones upset by the growing numbers of street vendors. Market vendors were alienated too. In October 1932, the *locatarios* from Álvaro Obregón Market declared themselves on strike in protest at the competition they suffered from

⁴¹⁵ 2/3/1932, AVCC; Vázquez Ramírez, *Organización y resistencia popular*, 117-118.

⁴¹⁶ 9/32/1932, AVCC.

vendors in adjacent streets; they abandoned their stalls and refused to pay taxes.

Locatarios in three Tacubaya markets followed suit.⁴¹⁷

The architects of the Consejo Consultivo had assumed the existence of coherent interest groups, but small-scale vendors proved this was hardly the case. As a group, vendors displayed both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies: On the one hand, they shared the experience of conflictive relations with larger commercial enterprises, which made their organizations prone to associate with one another in confrontations with these enterprises. On the other hand, vendors were also in permanent competition with each other for customers and commercial spaces, creating the conditions for clashes among themselves and between their organizations.

Both points were acknowledged by the Federación Nacional de Comerciantes e Industriales Mexicanos en Pequeño. Formed in May 1932 and representing twenty-six legally recognized organizations of small-scale vendors, under Estrada Cajigal the Federación had presented to the Consejo Consultivo a project for the creation of a Banco Refraccionario del Pequeño Comerciante de los Mercados del Distrito Federal, “which would bring many benefits for the organization of small-scale vendors ... and free them from the clutches of the greedy *agiotista*.”⁴¹⁸ The following winter a self-appointed commission of vendor representatives insisted on the importance of such a bank:

We firmly believe that our only salvation is our unity, and the formation of cooperatives for consumption, credit, and production [financed by the Banco del Pequeño Comerciante], that would alleviate the heavy burdens of the usurer and

⁴¹⁷ Vázquez Ramírez, *Organización y resistencia popular*, 111.

⁴¹⁸ 12/2/1932, AGN, ALR, c.148, exp. 531.1/21.

the intermediary, that is, the *bodeguero*, who do not leave us enough margin to live; they are our main enemies.⁴¹⁹

In the supporting documents José Escamilla, secretary general of the Unión de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado Hidalgo, explained that, in addition, the formation of such cooperatives would allow them to

unify the criteria of the different elements of each market, putting an end to the antagonism that currently rules, and that only leads to rivalries. It is notorious enough that today each market has between four and six organizations, all with the same objectives; but they are only good at clashing with each other, generating hatred, selfishness.⁴²⁰

Such fragmentation made it difficult for vendors to construct a collective interest. In the absence of institutions to facilitate coordination of their actions, all any individual organization could do was to make local, short term deals with other classes or the government, if nothing else to undermine other organizations' agreements when these threatened their members' commercial interests. But by the same token, while vendors lacked the capacity to lobby for policies that would benefit them collectively, the group's fragmentation made it difficult for the authorities to manage their organizations, and might explain why in this period they were able to escape official control.

In early January 1933, labor councilor Elías Hurtado reminded his colleagues that “the Consejo cannot and must not engage in politics, except for the high politics that benefits the classes here represented. Here no class prevails; here all is harmonized for the common good.”⁴²¹ But what was to be done when organized sections of these classes fought against each other or opted to pursue their interests elsewhere? There would not be

⁴¹⁹ 2/10/1933, *idem*, exp. 531.1/37.

⁴²⁰ 7/12/1932, *idem*.

⁴²¹ 1/5/1933, AVCC.

time to find out. A few weeks later, the Consejo suffered a severe blow with the passing of the *Ley de Planificación y Zonificación del Distrito Federal*.⁴²² As the economy began to recover large industrialists and merchants, property owners, bankers, architects, and civil engineers urged the government to redirect urban development and policymaking discussions away from the Consejo and into other venues. The new law created a Comisión de Planificación where only these groups would be represented. Diane Davis draws attention to how the concomitant emasculation of the Consejo Consultivo left small producers and vendors without an effective channel for participation, paving the way for renewed political and social unrest in the city.⁴²³ For now, however, it suffices to remark that the Consejo never achieved a monopoly on political representation for Mexico City's interest groups. While it continued to exist for decades, for all practical purposes it was by 1933 a truncated experiment.

4.3 One city, many markets

On December 1932 President Abelardo Rodríguez appointed politician and entrepreneur Aarón Sáenz as Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal, a position he would retain until June 1935, when Cárdenas asked his entire cabinet to resign.⁴²⁴ His two-and-a-half-year-long tenure represented a period of relative political stability at the

⁴²² "Ley de planificación y zonificación del Distrito Federal y Territorios de la Baja California," *Diario Oficial*, January 17, 1933; "Reglamento de la ley de planificación y zonificación," *Diario Oficial*, February 22, 1933.

⁴²³ Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 79-80.

⁴²⁴ Pedro Salmerón Sanginés, *Aarón Sáenz Garza: militar, diplomático, político, empresario* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 2001); James C. Hefley, *Aarón Sáenz, Mexico's Revolutionary Capitalist* (Waco, TX.: Word Books, 1970).

local level,⁴²⁵ which, coupled with renewed economic growth, left lasting marks on the cityscape. Historian Patrice Olsen describes how private- and public-sector actors engaged in a negotiated process of urban development that transformed the city's built environment.⁴²⁶ This entailed changing power relations. Whereas the Consejo Consultivo had focused on the mediation of conflicts, a stronger pro-business Departamento now took over this role and went further, attempting to modify urban social realities.

Public credit agency Nacional Financiera was created in August 1933 to assist banks with liquidity problems by taking over foreclosed real-estate, and to extend credit to channel these assets into rural production and urban real-estate projects.⁴²⁷ New colonias were built, along with hotels and office and commercial buildings. Higher revenues and the newly formed *Banco Nacional Hipotecario Urbano y de Obras Públicas* allowed the Departamento del Distrito to embark on a series of public works.⁴²⁸ Monuments to the Revolution and to General Obregón were erected; numerous streets were paved and widened; the old Porfirian project for the Palace of Fine Arts was updated and completed; in response to growing outspoken demands for public services,

⁴²⁵ Under President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, in comparison, the city had witnessed the appointment and removal of six different heads of the Federal District. *Departamento del Distrito Federal. Resumen de Actividades, 1949* (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1950), 10.

⁴²⁶ Olsen, *Artifacts*, chapter 3.

⁴²⁷ "Decreto que autoriza a la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público para la fundación de una Sociedad Financiera con carácter de Institución Nacional," *Diario Oficial*, August 31, 1933; "Decreto que modifica al que autorizó a la Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público para la fundación de una Sociedad Financiera, S.A., con carácter de Institución Nacional de Crédito" *Diario Oficial*, April 30, 1934. María Elena Cardero, "Estructura monetaria y financiera de México: 1932-1940," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 41, no. 3 (July-September 1979), 752.

⁴²⁸ The National Bank for Urban Mortgages and Public Works was created in February 1933 and it lent 11.5 million pesos to the Departamento during that year. *Informe presidencial y memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal que rinde el C. Jeje del mismo por el período administrativo comprendido entre el 1 de julio del 1933 y el 30 de junio de 1934* (Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1934), 9.

public lighting and water-distribution networks were expanded; primary, secondary, and technical schools were built, with capacity for tens of thousands of pupils; two experiments with subsidized workers' housing were finalized; and a week before Lázaro Cárdenas assumed the presidency, a new, multifaceted commercial facility, the Abelardo Rodríguez Market, was inaugurated.⁴²⁹

Sáenz received both applause and criticism for his efforts. His detractors in the press were quick to point out that he personally stood to profit from this ambitious urban overhaul, as the *Compañía de Fomento y Urbanización*, his construction and paving company in partnership with Calles, secured the period's largest contracts.⁴³⁰ The censure was so widespread that in the Departamento's published report of activities for the year 1933 Sáenz found it necessary to defend his administration from accusations of "unspeakable squandering, and of having performed useless or non-urgent public works, for which they claim we have paid unjustifiable prices, within a system of favoritism and cronyism."⁴³¹ Not surprisingly, urban professionals employed by the Departamento supported him. Architect Antonio Muñoz García had been responsible for the city council's Architecture Office from the time it was created in 1924. From 1930 he was in charge of the Departamento's Building and Monument Construction and Conservation Service.⁴³² In 1935 he commended the building program carried out under Sáenz as

⁴²⁹ Olsen, *Artifacts*, 76.

⁴³⁰ Ageeth Sluis, "City of Spectacles: Gender Performance, Revolutionary Reform, and the Creation of Public Space in Mexico City, 1915-1939" (Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, University of Arizona, 2006), 227.

⁴³¹ *Gobernar la ciudad es servirla. Informe que rinde el C. Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal, Lic. Aarón Sáenz, a la ciudad de México* (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1934), 2-3.

⁴³² Antonio Muñoz García, "Los mercados de la capital," *Obras Públicas* 2, no.12, (December 1930).

having “no precedent, either in its nature, the importance of the works, or in the services it provides to the city.”⁴³³ That he had designed two of the program’s largest projects no doubt influenced his opinion.

Others praised Sáenz for the political underpinnings of his redevelopment program and for his managerial skills. On November 29, 1934, the Consejo Consultivo decided to “pay a humble homage” to him and Secretary General of the Departamento José Benítez for “the magnificent work done while in charge of the destiny of the Federal District.”⁴³⁴ Small-scale vendors representative José Luis Fernández took the floor to extol how “in your capable hands, guided by modern men’s intelligence, the complicated administrative machinery, so necessary for the wellbeing of the collectivity, has resembled a perfect clockmaker’s mechanism.” Labor councilor Rosendo Salazar’s proclamation was even more verbose. Celebrating the government’s pursuit of “distributive justice,” he thanked Sáenz on behalf of the city, and in particular of its workers. He congratulated his fellow councilors and himself for having collaborated with this particular administration. He declared himself an admirer of Sáenz and Benítez’s “great administrative talent, honorability, and revolutionarism [sic].” In particular, he highlighted the construction of the Centro Escolar Revolución, “one of the wonders of modern times,” and of working class housing, which “give the urban proletariat greater trust in revolutionary regimes.” He also believed that the Abelardo Rodríguez Market was a work of “huge importance.” He concluded by pronouncing Sáenz and Benítez’s labors

⁴³³ Antonio Muñoz García, “Edificación llevada a cabo por el Departamento del Distrito Federal en el período 1932-1934,” *Revista Mexicana de Ingeniería y Arquitectura* 13, (April 1935), 186.

⁴³⁴ 11/24/1934, AVCC.

as “unique, firm, great, positively revolutionary, in the high and pure sense of the word.”⁴³⁵

The reorganization of public markets was central to these labors. Within the government, the Department of Public Works had been advocating it since the beginning of the decade. In particular, Architect Muñoz García argued passionately for a reengagement with public markets. While he acknowledged the need for markets as a public service that guaranteed the city’s supply of basic necessities at affordable prices, he urged the Departamento to stop considering the city streets as viable commercial spaces. Making perfunctory references to the need to improve traffic conditions, hygiene, and the appearance of the public thoroughfare, he insisted that the government renounce the revenues generated by street stalls. Instead, the Departamento should focus on building new halls and improving existing ones for “vendors of few resources,” giving preference to those trading fruits, legumes, and vegetables. “Today, this stands in accordance with the social ideal of helping those who can hardly help themselves.”⁴³⁶

Muñoz García believed the Departamento should force all but the poorest of vendors to rent private premises. He was explicit about whose interests he was advocating. In order to stimulate investment, he proposed to leave to private initiative the construction of “commercial centers in the proximity of markets, to offer small-scale commerce appropriate locales.”⁴³⁷ Moreover, echoing the Chamber of Commerce’s position in the Consejo Consultivo, Muñoz García expected his plan to “guarantee

⁴³⁵ Idem.

⁴³⁶ Muñoz García, “Los mercados de la capital,” 270, 273.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, 274.

activity in commercial life” by eliminating “disloyal” competition to established merchants, and to “benefit property owners” who “day after day, see their [rental] properties vacated owing to unequal competition” by street stalls. To finish, he declared: “Let’s revolutionize! Let’s rectify our criteria, modify our laws, so that the ideal of modern life becomes a reality in our cities!”⁴³⁸

Several vendor groups had also favored a program of market construction for years. In March 1930, when *locatarios* in El Volador were informed that they needed to relocate, they asked to be allowed to move to Mixcalco, urging the government to redevelop the market.⁴³⁹ Mixcalco was among the markets about which Obras Públicas expressed concern. According to a survey it was “to date, only a group of barracas, without a proper building.”⁴⁴⁰ Similarly, the second committee of the PNR of the Federal District wrote to the Consejo Consultivo in support of a vendors’ initiative calling for the construction of a market on the Canal de Jamaica, and the general improvement of the area.⁴⁴¹ Obras Públicas had characterized Jamaica Market as “nothing but a cluster of more or less homogeneous stalls”⁴⁴² While there is no reason to assume vendors did not share the government preferences for improved infrastructure, the fact that they enunciated this preference in letters addressed to the authorities suggests they believed

⁴³⁸ Ibid, 275-276.

⁴³⁹ 3/12/1930, AVCC.

⁴⁴⁰ “Origen de los nombres de los mercados de la ciudad y fechas de construcción,” *Obras Públicas* 1, no. 4, April 1930, 288-289.

⁴⁴¹ 11/2/1933, AVCC.

⁴⁴² “Origen de los nombres,” 288.

that by embracing official projects they improved their business prospects, or at least their chances of trading in relative peace.

In some cases, vendor support for market projects was the product of rivalries among stall holders within and around market halls. Two weeks after the first meeting of the Consejo Consultivo, the Unión de Comerciantes del Mercado de la Lagunilla requested that the 200,000 pesos budgeted for market improvements in 1929 be invested in enlarging their market. Such an extension would make it possible for more vendors to be incorporated into the covered areas of La Lagunilla, raising their fees to the levels paid by those already inside the market and thereby reducing their uncompetitive advantage. Small-scale vendors representative Emigdio Hidalgo Catalán commented he had a meeting with these vendors, who were “very enthusiastic ... and willing to cooperate with their own funds so long as the Departamento takes their petitions into account.”⁴⁴³ This time they were not successful. Three years later, in February 1932, a group of La Lagunilla vendors repeated the petition, requesting the reorganization of this market, “because due to the installation of cloth and notions stalls on Honduras Street, the eastern part of the market has died, while the northern side has been completely deserted.”⁴⁴⁴ Otherwise, they warned the Consejo, they would have to take to the streets, where customers were.

On another occasion the Unión Feminista del Mercado de La Merced y Calles Adyacentes requested the construction of a pavilion for a group of their associates who sold sweets in the annex called Mercado de Ampudia, “who toil outdoors, suffering from

⁴⁴³ 2/13/1929, AVCC.

⁴⁴⁴ 2/12/1932, AVCC.

the inclemencies of the weather.”⁴⁴⁵ This was one of the first vendor organizations to unite competing factions within La Merced.⁴⁴⁶ The Consejo Consultivo was perfectly aware of the situation of Ampudia Market. This market had grown after vendors were forced to abandon their spaces on Uruguay Street, and were moved to “a sort of pen enclosed by wire mesh, where there are a set of poorly aligned booths and the trade in sweets is carried out. There are about twenty or thirty stalls, property of the *locatarios* themselves.”⁴⁴⁷ In addition to what may have been a genuine concern with the wellbeing of their associates, this type of petition reflects efforts to cement solidarity among union members, and to advance the position of a particular organization in relation to others in the same market. Maybe for this reason, the small-scale vendors’ representative on the Consejo expressed concern that acceding to this petition would create “privileges.”⁴⁴⁸

With so many convergent interests, Sáenz recognized the imperative of market reform. At the end of 1933 he described “the market problem” as “one of the most urgent, serious, and difficult to resolve.” By his estimates, the city counted on forty markets, “which are barely sufficient to serve half of the population residing in the capital of the Republic. This demands either the construction of new markets in proportion to

⁴⁴⁵ 1/19/1933, AVCC.

⁴⁴⁶ In her study of Puebla’s markets and street vendors, Sandra Mendiola suggests that women found it easier than men to develop bonds of solidarity because they shared the experience of having to combine commercial activities with child-rearing, and, in general, assisted each other with reproductive labors. Sandra C. Mendiola García, “Street Vendors, Marketers, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Puebla, Mexico” (PhD Dissertation, History Department, Rutgers The State University of New Jersey, 2008).

⁴⁴⁷ 1/19/1933, AVCC.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.* No annex was built in the 1930s. In September 1939, the Unión de Locatarios Dulceros del Mercado Ampudia repeated the request. 9/14/1939, AGN, LC, c. 361, exp. 418.5/49.

population growth, or improvement of the existing ones, to increase their capacity and their efficiency.”⁴⁴⁹

The campaign Sáenz launched to transform the city’s ever-growing street markets into what promised to be hygienic and orderly indoors facilities got off to a good start. That year, he reported the construction of the Melchor Ocampo Market, as well as the extension of the Morelos Market in Colonia Tacuba. In addition, the Departamento signed a pilot contract with a private investor for the construction and exploitation of a market in Colonia Del Valle.⁴⁵⁰ Most funds and attention, however, went to the construction of the Abelardo Rodríguez Market. According to art historian James Oles this market was one of the most important urban renovation projects of the entire decade.⁴⁵¹ Located within a few blocks of the Zócalo, it was designed by Muñoz García to provide the area around Venezuela street with a modern commercial structure. Comprising 335 stalls, it also offered social and cultural services, among them a daycare center for vendors’ children and a theater.⁴⁵² Under the supervision of Diego Rivera a group of artists was commissioned to produce murals to decorate its walls. The Abelardo Rodríguez Market would be inaugurated with fanfare on November 24, 1934. Historian Ageeth Sluis portrays it as “a microcosm of revolutionary reform.”⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁹ *Gobernar la ciudad es servirla*, 49.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid*; 3/16/1933, AVCC.

⁴⁵¹ James Oles, “Noguchi in Mexico: International Themes for a Working-Class Market,” *American Art* 15, no 2 (Summer 2001), 16.

⁴⁵² *Informe que rinde el C. Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal de la obra realizada durante el año de 1934 a los habitantes de la ciudad* (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1935), 137-153.

⁴⁵³ Sluis, *City of Spectacles*, 240.

Building markets, unfortunately, was only part of the challenge. In order for vendors to relocate to the new halls and designated areas and, in general, to participate in any renewal project, doing so had to make economic sense to them. With the support of the Federación de Comerciantes e Industriales Mexicanos en Pequeño, a group of vendors that described itself as *comerciantes ambulantes del Mercado Melchor Ocampo* refused to take up stalls within the new market hall, in spite of the concerted efforts of the market administrator, fee collectors, and the police, on the grounds that neither their capital nor the volume of their sales were enough to pay the necessary fees. Instead, “to avoid difficulties, they are willing to wear the mandatory uniform, carry their respective licenses, and remain within assigned spaces,” but requested that “they were allowed to toil without obstacles.”⁴⁵⁴

The Departamento needed to find the appropriate combination of enticement and coercion even in those cases when it chose to privatize markets. The contract between the Jefe del Departamento and María Luisa Reyes Espíndola de Cal y Mayor for the establishment and exploitation of a market in Colonia del Valle contained both. On the one hand, it stipulated that the Departamento would ensure a kilometer-wide “market protection zone” where, with the explicit objective of getting vendors off the streets and into the market, all licenses for fixed and semi-fixed stalls were to be revoked. On the other hand, to make the transition more palatable for vendors—and no doubt to increase profits—the concessionary committed to setting aside five thousand pesos for small loans to *locatarios*. Moreover, the representative of *madres de familia* to the Consejo Consultivo, Quezada de Martínez Garza, proposed that the authorities ensure that the

⁴⁵⁴ 8/30/1933, AGN, ALR, c. 224, exp. 616/17

market owner provide a daycare facility for the children of the *locatarios*, “a social service so indispensable in the times we live in.” The owner would contribute the room, and either the Department of Public Health, or Protección a la Infancia would supply the necessary personnel.⁴⁵⁵

The Unión de Comerciantes Semifijos en el Mercado Insurgentes was reluctant to comply with the government’s designs. In January 1934 they were informed that they had to close down and remove their stalls within a matter of weeks. Almost immediately, the union’s secretary, one José Mendoza, wrote to the president to request his intervention against “such arbitrariness, because they are not to blame for the smallness of the market hall, and the fact that the signatories do not fit in it.”⁴⁵⁶ Common practice dictated that the president’s office forward the complaint to the Departamento. A month later, the secretary general of the Departamento, José Benítez, was compelled to respond to the union’s accusations that the Departamento had based its decision on “trivial considerations,” and was responding to “influences far removed from the people.”⁴⁵⁷

Benítez’s reply to the union indicates how much was at stake in any market redevelopment project, and shows that far from following a predetermined plan, the government was reacting to pressures from various groups. “For some time,” he explained, “the Departamento has been receiving complaints about the stalls around the Insurgentes Market.” Some referred to isolated instances of alcohol sales during night hours, when there was little control. Others came from merchants with stores in close

⁴⁵⁵ 4/27/1933, AVCC.

⁴⁵⁶ 1/12/1934, AGN, ALR, c. 224, exp. 616/17-1.

⁴⁵⁷ 2/12/1934, *idem*.

proximity of the market who protested that the “invasion” of the sidewalks in front of their establishments by vendors hurt their interests. Furthermore, the chief of police had requested that the stalls be removed to improve traffic circulation around the intersection of Chapultepec and Insurgentes Avenues. Finally, the secretary of Economía Nacional had intervened following a complaint by the managers of Hotel Genève that vendors’ presence on the streets were detrimental to tourism, “an industry that the government has been giving support to in the belief that it would greatly benefit the country.” Benítez concluded, “thus you should be able to accept that the Departamento has enough reasons of public interest, even if in this case the members of your union might accidentally suffer.” Still, he offered vendors two extra months, and invited them to discuss the situation further in the hope that many of them would follow the example of most of the *locatarios* inside the Insurgentes Market hall, who not long ago had been in their position.⁴⁵⁸

Even the flagship project of the Abelardo Rodríguez Market faced resistance from vendors who feared that relocating to the new building would be detrimental to their businesses. In December 1934, *locatarios* from La Merced and San Lucas Markets protested that the Departamento was forcing them to carry out the traditional holiday fair, the *romería de navidad*, in the Abelardo Rodríguez instead of their respective markets, where they had already spent money in preparation. Neither Sáenz nor Herrera Salcedo, the Jefe de Mercados, had been receptive to their plight.⁴⁵⁹ A few months later, Congressman and PNR’s Presidente del Comité Ejecutivo del D.F. José María Dávila

⁴⁵⁸ Idem.

⁴⁵⁹ 12/15/1934, AGN, LC, c. 361, exp. 418.5/1; 12/18/1934, idem.

wrote to the president on behalf of a group of comerciantes from the Unión de Locatarios de Puestos Aislados de la Ciudad de México who owned stalls on del Carmen and República de Colombia streets, requesting a repeal of the order to relocate to the new market.⁴⁶⁰ The president's office recommended a postponement of the relocation order,⁴⁶¹ but Secretary Benítez objected, noting that that "it is not possible to allow the existence of stalls in those streets ... because it would render worthless the substantial expenses incurred to house the area's small-scale vendors."⁴⁶²

Despite the efforts of Benítez and others, repeated attempts to create traffic into the Abelardo Rodríguez did not work. In April 1935, the Federación Nacional de Comerciantes e Industriales en Pequeño, which had not only encouraged its associates to establish their stores there, but had also taken one of the largest units available to be used as its offices, complained that "commercial movement is nil."⁴⁶³ Donasiano Lascano, president of the Unión de Comerciantes del D.F. agreed, and refused to move members of his organization selling haberdashery to the Abelardo Rodríguez because "there is no demand there."⁴⁶⁴

The government's failure to persuade vendors to occupy the new market exposed its inability to confront a highly mobilized but fragmented vendors' movement. Some vendor organizations belonged to the Federación Nacional de Comerciantes e Industriales en Pequeño, which was nominally "adheridas al PNR." But with multiple organizations

⁴⁶⁰ 2/8/1935, idem.

⁴⁶¹ 2/26/1935, idem.

⁴⁶² 3/4/1935, idem.

⁴⁶³ 4/11/1935, AGN, LC, c. 638, exp. 521/27.

⁴⁶⁴ 6/8/1935, AGN, LC, c. 361, exp. 418.5/2.

representing vendors even within one market the PNR leadership found it hard to distinguish among them and to form the alliances required to legitimize its urban policies. It only took a large enough group of vendors deciding to remain on the surrounding streets to undermine any other group's the decision to enter the Abelardo Rodríguez Market.

After Cárdenas replaced Sáenz with Cosme Hinojosa in June 1935, the balance between carrots and sticks seems to have shifted further towards the latter. That summer witnessed a confrontation between vendors in Mixcalco Market and the Departamento. After twelve years of selling in that market and adjacent streets, a group of vegetable vendors were forced to abandon their stalls. They had to either give up trading, or take up new stalls in the Abelardo Rodríguez, which they insisted they could not afford.⁴⁶⁵ They complained that newly appointed Jefe de Mercados, Alberto Cárdenas, disregarded the existence of an amparo in their favor.⁴⁶⁶ Forty vendors who decided to remain in their stalls alleged they were increasingly harassed by the police and Salubridad officials who detained them at the administration of the Abelardo Rodríguez.⁴⁶⁷ Ángel Arana, secretary general of the Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado Mixcalco sought the president's intervention: "Your brother, Mr. Lieutenant Colonel Cárdenas, refuses to listen to us. We do not want to cause you troubles, having always supported you. We beg you to name another person to take care of our conflict, so justice can be done. Our families today went without bread."⁴⁶⁸ When almost a month later the union continued to decry the daily

⁴⁶⁵ 8/9/1935, *idem*, exp. 418.5/1.

⁴⁶⁶ 8/20/1935, *idem*.

⁴⁶⁷ 8/27/1935, *idem*.

⁴⁶⁸ 8/30/1935, *idem*.

imprisonment of vendors at the Abelardo Rodríguez, the new secretary general of the Departamento, Antonio Villalobos, informed the presidency that whereas the charges were correct, these were “recidivist *ambulantes*” picked up from “forbidden zones,” who were only kept at the market the necessary time to forward them to the appropriate authorities.⁴⁶⁹

But sticks alone would not do. Cárdenas’ government soon recognized that in order to manage the vendor movement, it needed to increase its administrative capacity over vendor affairs. Until then, there were no specific provisions for dealing with conflicts between organizations, which hindered any market redevelopment project. As late as April 1934, the Consejo Consultivo had responded to a complaint by Unión Femenina de Comerciantes y Madres de Familia del Mercado de la Lagunilla against a rival organization headed by one Sra. Loreto Rivera by stating that it could not intervene in personal or inter-union matters, which ought to be resolved by the organizations involved.⁴⁷⁰ Things had to change. In August 1935, when an organization of “mothers of La Lagunilla” invited counselor Sra. Tapia de Gómez to visit their market, she returned in shock: “I observed things impossible to tolerate, and the Consejo needs to take action ... to find a way to improve the conditions of this market, because ... pavilions were built for certain types of vendors, but then others arrive with money to purchase those places, and these vendors have to move outside of the market.”⁴⁷¹ As a result, the Consejo created a Comisión de Rastros y Mercados. The Departamento too began to pay closer

⁴⁶⁹ 9/24/1935, AGN, LC, c. 638, exp. 521/48; 10/16/1935, idem.

⁴⁷⁰ 4/19/1934, AVCC.

⁴⁷¹ 8/15/1935, AVCC.

attention. When a few months later a contract with one María Servín de Peralta for the construction and exploitation of the Hidalgo Market was approved,⁴⁷² Cosme Hinojosa told the press that the construction of the new hall “comes to fulfill the promise made to the *locatarios* de la Lagunilla ... to resolve, as much as possible, the problem of small-scale vendors.”⁴⁷³

By mid-1936, Hinojosa had created two new offices within the markets department. The first one was a statistics office, because “economic and social imperatives demand precise knowledge of all the elements that coalesce around the development of markets.” This office was immediately given the task of mapping the city’s markets, including the areas around them with street stalls that fell under the control of each particular market administrator.⁴⁷⁴ The second was the Oficina de Agrupaciones y Asuntos Sindicales, established “to attend to the numerous conflicts that arise daily between *locatarios* or their organizations, as a result of the application of bylaws and other decisions by the markets department.”⁴⁷⁵ It had become paramount to record information on markets, and to create mechanisms to use it effectively.

⁴⁷² 12/5/1935, AVCC.

⁴⁷³ “Nuevo mercado en populosa colonia de esta capital,” *Excélsior*, December 22, 1935. It took years for this market to be built. In July 1939, partly due to vendors’ opposition to it, the project was still being negotiated. 7/10/1939, AVCC; 7/31/1939, idem.

⁴⁷⁴ Departamento del Distrito Federal, *Memoria presentada al H. Congreso de la Unión por el período comprendido de septiembre de 1935 a agosto de 1936* (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1936), 30. Markets’ higher visibility did not translate into higher levels of tax collection. While markets continued to represent a significant source of income for the Departamento, the total nominal revenue they generated increased very little during the 1930s. Given the fact that inflation rates were positive this implies a decline in real terms. Moreover, the share of total revenue due to markets consistently fell during this decade. See appendix, Figures 5 and 6.

⁴⁷⁵ Idem, 31.

According to the new offices, between September 1936 and September 1937 the number of licensed stalls in the city barely grew, from 17,782 to 17,934. But there was a lot of movement: 5,070 new licenses had been granted and 4,918 revoked. This means that on average thirty-eight stalls were negotiated on any given day, producing ample room for clashes among vendors and between vendors and the state.⁴⁷⁶ The latter in particular might explain why President Cárdenas appointed one of his brothers to run them. Regardless of how obscure a figure Alberto was, the filial bond did not escape those dealing with him.⁴⁷⁷

While government intervention in intra-union relations was increasingly necessary to run the city, it also risked alienating many. Closer links between the state and particular unions risked exacerbating tensions among vendors, as well as fostering anti-government sentiments among those who felt left behind, as events at the Martínez de la Torre Market illustrate. In August 1935 Guillermo Blancarte of the Federación Mexicana del Trabajo denounced rival union leaders who, with the support of the market administrator, “by threats and blows try to sow terror among our *compañeros*.” The complaint extended to the markets department, which had also intervened against the Federación, evicting member vendors from their stalls on the market annex on Mosqueta

⁴⁷⁶ Departamento del Distrito Federal, *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal presentada por el C. Jefe del mismo, al H. H. Congreso de la Unión por el período comprendido del 1 de septiembre de 1936 al 31 de agosto de 1937* (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1937), 62. The daily average was calculated assuming 260 working days per year.

⁴⁷⁷ I have not been able to locate any reference to Alberto Cárdenas in the literature on the period. In 1938, a foreign correspondent described him as the president’s “little-seen brother.” “Mexico: Troubles and Taxes,” *Time Magazine*, July 11, 1938. Later on, he is mentioned as a supporter of opposition candidate Miguel Henríquez Guzmán during the presidential race of in 1952. Verónica Oikión Solano, “La oposición Henriquisita en Michoacán, 1950-54,” *Tzintzun* 29, (January-June 1999), 98.

Street.⁴⁷⁸ Similarly, less than a year later Roberto López in his capacity as president of the Unión Mexicana de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Martínez de la Torre protested against Alberto Cárdenas' decision to revoke a license from a compañera, "favoring enemies" instead.⁴⁷⁹ Vendor representative Agapito Cifuentes remarked, "What a contrast Mr. President, you extend your hand to the poor while your brother contradicts your ideology."⁴⁸⁰

4.4 Vendors' Tribulations: Inflation Management and Contested Elections

In Mexico, as in life, problems rarely displace each other. They cumulate. As the government developed closer connections with the city's vendor movement, disputes among their organizations became more violent, generating discontent among the rank and file. To make matters worse, the late 1930s witnessed a surge in inflation, which prompted the Cárdenas administration to intervene in urban markets for basic goods following demands by workers and capitalists. Vendors were further alienated by price controls and direct state participation in retail activities. By the end of the decade, in the midst of a contested presidential race, the government was suspicious of the political allegiances of small-scale merchants, whose interests had been subjugated to those of groups that carried more political weight. With a right wing opposition emboldened by the rise of fascism around the world, vendors in the capital were perceived as a high-risk group.

⁴⁷⁸ 8/28/1935, AGN, LC, c. 361, exp. 418.5/15.

⁴⁷⁹ 6/23/1936, idem.

⁴⁸⁰ 9/30/1936, AGN, LC, c. 361, exp. 418.5/10.

Worker mobilizations against the decline in the purchasing power of their wages began in earnest in 1936, when the cost of living began to rise in the Federal District.⁴⁸¹ In March 1936, Fidel Velázquez and Rodolfo Piña Soria, in the name of the Federación Regional de Obreros y Campesinos del D.F., requested presidential intervention so that “authorities regulate the price of commodities, because the current situation renders nugatory both the minimum wage and the payment of the seventh day.”⁴⁸² By December, the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas demanded “the formation of a Central Committee for Price Regulation.”⁴⁸³ From 1937 the CTM led a wave of demonstrations and proclamations against the high prices of basic foodstuffs. Committed to Popular Frontism, it was careful neither to criticize the government nor to confront capitalists, but focused on “hoarding” merchants instead. Likewise, wary of the political cost of conflicts over higher wages, the government’s initial public response was to set up price controls and to blame inflation on ruthless middlemen and retailers. A propaganda campaign against “speculators” responsible for “starving the population” ensued.⁴⁸⁴

Small-scale vendors found themselves in a complicated situation. Even if they ultimately chose final prices, they were only partly responsible for them. Once they paid their suppliers, and the rent or fees for their commercial establishment, they needed to add a margin in order to make a living. If wholesalers did not respect official prices, it was impossible for retailers to do so. But since consumers bought from them, it was

⁴⁸¹ Cárdenas, *La hacienda*, 75; In Mexico City, the general cost of living rose by 6 percent in 1936, 21 percent in 1937, and then by an additional 11 percent in 1938. Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 46, table 3-1.

⁴⁸² 03/04/1936, AGN, LC, c. 638, exp. 521/35.

⁴⁸³ 12/31/1936, *idem*.

⁴⁸⁴ Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 46-49.

vendors who were chronically denounced and fined for infringements. In their defense, they tried to distance themselves from their suppliers by decrying their abuses. In June 1937, small-scale vendors from the Federación de Comerciantes e Industriales en Pequeño attacked the Asociación Nacional de Almacenistas Comerciantes de Víveres y Similares, which represented the city's most powerful wholesalers, in the national press.⁴⁸⁵ Yet there was little vendors could do. Because they sold in public spaces, they faced both consumers' anger and government attempts at price controls.

At the same time Cárdenas' government doubled its efforts to control the vendor movement. Local politicians and city officials distributed patronage and favors to cooperative groups, and organized attacks against uncooperative ones. Early 1938 witnessed violent episodes in the Martínez de la Torre Market. In January, Ángel Fraga Ferreira on behalf of the Juventudes Izquierdistas de México condemned "harassment" by the Police and the markets department as "they unjustly imprisoned more than twenty families."⁴⁸⁶ His appeal for presidential support seemed to have gone unheard. Tensions also heightened between the market's vendor organizations. From the same market, on April 2, Altagracia Hernández of the Liga Revolucionaria de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado Martínez de la Torre wrote to President Cárdenas to inform him that earlier that day, their Secretary General Genaro Mijangos was assaulted by a group of *comerciantes* led by "professional politician" Luis R. Velasco, at the corner of Moctezuma and Zarco. Velasco was a member of the Consejo Consultivo that year, and had been involved in the creation of the Federación de Comerciantes e Industriales en

⁴⁸⁵ 6/12/1937, AGN, LC, c. 638 , exp. 521/35.

⁴⁸⁶ 1/21/1938, AGN, LC, c. 361, exp. 418.5/15.

Pequeño earlier in the decade. The clash between the two groups of *comerciantes* ended, Hernández reported, with dead and wounded on both sides and with Mijangos hurt and in jail. “Markets authorities, far from offering us guarantees, have been extorting us, and Velasco’s group, encouraged by the attitude of lower officials, has not shown any restraint in throwing itself at us, leading to this mess, which has already produced orphans and anguish.”⁴⁸⁷ She demanded justice. But given the president’s other concerns, her chances of obtaining a positive response were negligible.

The previous month, March 1938, had been eventful for Mexico. Cárdenas had nationalized the oil industry and, with the support of all major campesino, worker, and government employees’ organizations, created the PRM. It was also when the government decided to step up efforts to contain inflation, especially in major urban centers, and formed the Comité Regulador del Mercado de las Subsistencias.⁴⁸⁸ Given the context, vendors’ interests received little consideration. After a much-criticized beginning, when the new State Food Agency sold to the very wholesalers the government was otherwise vilifying, it began to supply grains to authorized retail merchants in the larger cities. These merchants obtained subsidized products, and in return committed to reselling them at official prices. As the largest consumer market in the country, by June Mexico City had twenty-two authorized retailers, nine in La Merced Market alone.⁴⁸⁹

Soon after, in October 1938, a commission of presidential advisers raised concerns about the new approach to food policy. In a report entitled “Shortcomings of the

⁴⁸⁷ 4/2/1938, *idem*.

⁴⁸⁸ Hugo Azpeitia Gómez, *Compañía Exportadora e Importadora Mexicana, S.A., 1949-1958: conflicto y abasto alimentario* (Mexico City: CIESAS, 1994), 28-29.

⁴⁸⁹ Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 59.

Working of the Comité Regulador del Mercado de las Subsistencias and How to Correct Them” they drew attention to the fact that the actions of the Comité had been so limited that they had not created effective competition. Most small-scale vendors still had to buy from wholesalers who had no incentive to lower their prices. The commission was particularly vocal in its criticism of price controls, a “dangerous territory because it will require the deployment of an army of inspectors that ... will burden small-scale vendors with bribes, not lowering prices in the slightest,” and

will most certainly lead to resentment among the many proletarian elements who own small commercial businesses and have bought at high prices, a resentment that will diminish their support for the Revolution, and make them side with large commerce, following it in any fascist intent that it might share with other reactionary sectors, especially when elections approach.⁴⁹⁰

Less than three months later, the same commission reiterated this point of view. In a study of the political situation in the city, it warned against the possibility that the “Reaction” would agitate public opinion against the government, as a result of “revolutionary” intervention in basic good markets. Due to the failure of price controls and the limited effects of subsidizing a small number of retailers, the recommendation was to establish outlets to sell cheaply and directly to the public. Presidential advisers believed that this measure, while necessary, entailed serious political risks as it would displace a large number of small-scale vendors: “Among such groups of small producers and traders is where in other countries fascism has recruited its infantry.”⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹⁰ 10/20/1938, AGN, LC, c. 638, exp. 521/35.

⁴⁹¹ 1/16/1939, *idem*. It is hard to discern derogatory bureaucratic jargon from reality. On the one hand, Albert Michaels suggests government officials tended to label all opposition forces fascist. Michaels, “Las Elecciones,” 123. On the other hand, according to historian Alicia Gojman de Backal sentiments akin to those behind fascism were not uncommon among public market vendors. For example, in November 1937 *locatarios* from La Merced formed an organization called the Legión Mexicana Nacionalista, “to fight tenaciously to reclaim our economy from the hands of undesirable foreigners, and defend the history, tradition, and customs of our homeland.” Gojman de Backal, *Camisas, escudos, y desfiles militares*, 164.

Relations between vendors and the state were at an all time low. The Alianza de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado Hidalgo refused to relocate to allow for works to be carried out in their market by concessioner María Servín de Peralta. They requested that the concession for the exploitation of the market was given to them instead. When the Consejo Consultivo informed them that it was not possible to rescind the existing contract, they went to the courts, requesting an amparo, which was denied. Still, they would not move, despite repeated efforts by the police to make them. They had even rebuffed attempts to carry out a census of their stalls. The president of the Consejo exclaimed “they were in open rebellion against the Departamento.”⁴⁹²

These were divisive times. On August 28, 1939 Almazán inaugurated his campaign for the Presidency with a massive rally in Mexico City. By later 1939 there were twenty-five official stores in the Federal District, selling subsidized grains, sugar, lard, and milk.⁴⁹³ Diane Davis argues that market vendors were among the groups that, lacking effective mechanisms to contest Cardenista urban policies, formed the bulk of Almazán’s support. In particular, the latter’s alliance with Morones brought to his camp many vendor unions that had been, or still were, affiliated to the CROM.⁴⁹⁴ Moreover,

Shortly before that, the president of the Cámara Israelita de Industria y Comercio de México had written an “urgent telegram” to Lázaro Cárdenas requesting an audience to discuss the actions of the Bloque de Acción Revolucionaria Pro-Pequeño Comercio e Industria, which was campaigning “to restrict the civil rights of Jewish people, and the cancelation of legally granted licenses.” 10/4/1937, AGN, LC, c. 637, exp. 521/4. Tiziana Bertaccini also points at small-scale vendors’ flirtation with right-wing groups such as the openly xenophobic Comité Pro-Raza, and the Confederación de la Clase Media. Bertaccini, *El régimen priísta*, 227-332. In any case, what matters here is that this period, as Alan Knight reminds us, saw high levels of popular mobilization to the right. Alan Knight, “Cardenismo: Juggernaut or Jalopy?”, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26, no. 1 (Feb. 1994), 92.

⁴⁹² 7/10/1939, AVCC; 31/7/1939, idem; 8/14/1939, idem.

⁴⁹³ Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 60.

⁴⁹⁴ Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 91-98.

the intelligence services' fear of an almanista fifth column within the government bureaucracy might not have been unfounded,⁴⁹⁵ and there are some indications that their organizers tried to influence small-scale merchants political behavior. Councilor Paz de López alerted the Consejo Consultivo that within the police “there are several inspectors, among them one Mr. Pimienta, that are making downtown vendors sign for an almanista party before they can obtain their licenses.”⁴⁹⁶

The creation of the PRM and the alliances on which it was based had led to the exclusion of vendors, squeezed by the government's need to placate workers and their demands for cheaper food. In the end, no extreme right-wing movement developed in Mexico City, though vendors did withdraw their support from Cárdenas' chosen successor. Nobody doubted that, no matter what official figures said, Ávila Camacho had not carried the capital on election day.

4.5 Conclusion

Following the 1940 general election Almazán lost his political standing, yet the forces that had rallied behind him did not go away. And neither did the government's preoccupation with vendor politics. The intelligence services reported on vendors as part of their continued monitoring of former almanista opposition groups.⁴⁹⁷ By 1943,

⁴⁹⁵ Navarro, *Political Intelligence*, 21-22; 63-64.

⁴⁹⁶ 8/14/1939, AVCC.

⁴⁹⁷ For example, in early 1942 intelligence agents reported that in response to a renewed surge in inflation, the Partido Autonomista Mexicano was launching a campaign against the high cost of living that included a “plan to cause a scandal” at a Comité de las Subsistencias depot; an attack on several La Merced wholesalers; and PAM-organized meetings in several markets. 1/9/1942, AGN, DGIPS, c. 70, exp. 1; 1/10/1942, idem; 1/8/1942, AGN, MAC, c. 581, exp. 521.8/1; 1/20/1942, idem; 4/16/1942, AGN, DGIPS, c.70, exp. 1; 4/20/1942, idem. *Locatarios* representatives from La Lagunilla, La Merced, and Martínez de la

moreover, concerns with right-wing agitators combined with unease about the activities of communist organizers in markets.⁴⁹⁸

The Ávila Camacho administration went beyond surveillance of vendor politics. Encouraged by the Gobierno del Distrito, it decided to move ahead with the long-awaited project of a bank for *locatarios*. In December 1941, arguing that such an institution would protect vendors from “usury rates that apart from reducing the just profits they have the right to, necessarily inflate the price of the merchandise they offer the public,” the president initiated the necessary legislation in Congress.⁴⁹⁹ As a result, in the summer of 1943 the Banco del Pequeño Comercio del Distrito Federal was formed.⁵⁰⁰ By August 1945 the bank boasted of having branches in twenty-five markets, and more than thirty-seven thousand completed operations. It also praised itself for having assisted in the organization of credit unions, through which vendors made collective purchases, obtaining better terms from their suppliers.⁵⁰¹

Torre were present in a “secret” PAM assembly where they pledged to fight both “speculators” and the politicians “who monopolized access to basic goods, selling them at whatever price they wanted.” 4/23/1942, *idem*. On surveillance of former Almazanista groups more in general see: Navarro, *Political Intelligence*, 171-174.

⁴⁹⁸ According to agent 184 a communist fee collector from the Tacubaya Market was forcing vendors to attend a party gathering at the Cine Regis, under threat of increasing the cost of their stalls. 6/30/1943, AGN, DGIPS, c. 93, exp. 10. Agent 97, in turn, recounted a talk the Communist Party gave in the Ampudia Market to discuss trends in prices, and the international situation as World War II was coming to an end. 2/14/1944, AGN, DGIPS, c. 95, exp. 9.

⁴⁹⁹ 12/26/1941, AGN, MAC, c. 769, exp. 542.21/52.

⁵⁰⁰ 8/10/1943, AGN, MAC, *idem*.

⁵⁰¹ Gobierno del Distrito Federal, *Memoria del Gobierno del Distrito Federal, del 1 de Septiembre de 1944 al 31 de Agosto de 1945*, (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1945), 91.

More broadly, the PRM leadership scrambled to build up strength among dissident and disenfranchised urban middle-class and self-employed groups.⁵⁰² In September 1942, the party sponsored the formation of the Federación de Ligas del Sector Popular del Distrito Federal. The secretary general of the Sindicato de Trabajadores del Departamento del D.F. remarked that the new organization would help redress “the neglect that elements of the popular sector have suffered, [which] created the conditions for some leaders of the right to disorient the people.” Jesús Bautista, old time founder of the Federación de Comerciantes e Industriales en Pequeño, joined its executive committee.⁵⁰³ The following February, the party created the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares, which promised to defend the class interests of its members and satisfy their specific needs.⁵⁰⁴ Bautista became the first small-scale vendors’ delegate for the Federal District.⁵⁰⁵

Party restructuring and institution building notwithstanding, material and political problems remained. Infrastructural improvements had not taken place, and newspapers continued to run articles decrying the state of the city’s markets. Many journalists thought that some did not deserve the title.⁵⁰⁶ And it would take more than the new Banco’s patronage to secure vendors’ commitment to the regime. A few months after the creation

⁵⁰² Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 99-101.

⁵⁰³ Miguel Osorio Marbán, *El sector popular del PRI* (Mexico City: Coordinación Nacional de Estudios Históricos, Políticos y Sociales—PRI, 1994), 41-43.

⁵⁰⁴ Schers, *The Popular Sector*, 1-20; Bertaccini, *El régimen priísta*, 256-266; Garrido, *El partido de la revolución institucionalizada*, 331-340.

⁵⁰⁵ *Historia Documental CNOP* (Mexico City: Instituto de Capacitación Política—PRI, 1984), 89.

⁵⁰⁶ “El Mercado de La Merced es un antro de suciedad,” *Novedades*, August 23, 1944, 15; “Esfuerzos por dotar a esta ciudad de mercados cómodos,” *El Nacional*, September 1, 1945, 8; “Carece la capital de buenos mercados,” *Excélsior*, September 12, 1945, 10.

of the CNOP, the Sindicato de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Interior y Exterior del Mercado de La Merced y Calles Adyacentes, in letterhead of the PRM's Comité Central Ejecutivo del D.F., complained about planned increases in the taxes market vendors paid; the wholesalers' abuses, which made them "practically [their] commission-only employees;" and the "exorbitant interest rates" they were still paying to private lenders. They believed they were "one of the forgotten groups of the benefits of the Mexican Revolution."⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁷ 3/6/1944, AGN, MAC, c. 924, exp. 564.1/1014.

Chapter Five:

The Business of Development, 1945-1958

During this period the city witnessed rapid economic growth, partly driven by the support that capitalists obtained from the government. This process underlay a negotiated class peace that required that state actors kept prices for wage goods low. As a locus of retail transactions, markets were ridden with tension. Conflict erupted as the government fixed prices, encouraged direct sales from producers, and supplied subsidized foodstuffs. Producers big and small, large-scale merchants from the city, and market vendors competed over the distribution of profit margins. Complicating the situation further, population growth led to increasing numbers of peddlers, who clashed with already established market vendors. Building upon previous organizational experience, vendors dealt with these challenges by participating in local and national politics. Not only did vendors participate in national electoral campaigns; they also fought to elect sympathetic congressmen through the CNOP, and they strengthened their civil associations to lobby at the local level. Through these institutions and organizations vendors sought to secure their position as retailers by gaining access to improved market infrastructure and social services, protection from competition, and arbitration in distributional struggles. At stake was the livelihood of vendors and their families, and the construction of a way of life that promised to be increasingly middle class.

5.1 *Desarrollismo* in Mexico

World War II left the Mexican elite in an ambivalent position. On the one hand, the future seemed bright. Cooperation with the Allied war-effort had boosted the economy by inflows of foreign capital and high demand in the United States for Mexican exports, not only of raw materials, but also of manufactures.⁵⁰⁸ It had also elevated the political standing of Mexico in the international arena. In July 1944 Mexico presented a self-confident image at the Bretton Woods Conference, where Finance Minister Eduardo Suárez chaired one of the three commissions in charge of designing the financial architecture that would oversee global trade and investment for the next twenty-seven years.⁵⁰⁹

On the other hand, there were also reasons to be wary. The United States came out of World War II an unrivalled industrial and military superpower. What complicated Mexico's prospects in the immediate term was that its external sector, already heavily linked to its northern neighbor in the 1930s, had become even more dependent on US markets: by 1940, 90 percent of foreign trade was with the United States.⁵¹⁰ In addition, industrial growth had been reliant on US financial and technical assistance. So when in the spring of 1945 the United States disclosed its post-war economic plan for the hemisphere at the Inter-American Conference on the Problems of War and Peace, held at

⁵⁰⁸ Enrique Cárdenas, *La hacienda pública y la política económica, 1929-1958* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 91-99.

⁵⁰⁹ Eduardo Turrent Díaz, *México en Bretton Woods* (Mexico City: Banco de México, 2009).

⁵¹⁰ Peter Smith, *Talons of the Eagle, Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 118-119; Ian Roxborough, "Mexico," in eds. Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 194-195.

Chapultepec Palace of all places, Mexican elites were in for a shock. The so-called Clayton plan proposed that Latin American countries abandon any aspirations to industrialize and instead refocus their economies on the exports of primary products, in the expectation that European reconstruction would absorb any increased production. Latin American governments were expected to dismantle protectionist policies, embrace free trade, and facilitate the movement of foreign capital in and out of their countries.⁵¹¹ As the Cold War began to unfold, anything less than full compliance would be dubbed socialism.⁵¹²

But Mexico had changed. Thanks to the trade disruptions and pro-business policies of the Great Depression and World War II, Mexican firms could now produce larger volumes of consumer goods and industrial inputs.⁵¹³ Capitalists in light industries were the first to object to the Clayton Plan. CANACINTRA, which represented mainly small and medium-size firms in the Mexico City area, was the most vociferous critic of the economic effects of renewed foreign competition. Organized labor, led by the CTM, seconded the capitalists' objections, worried about the impact of open trade on their employment and wages. The official response came in December 1946 when Miguel Alemán assumed the presidency with a pledge to continue on the path to

⁵¹¹ Jon V. Kofas, *Foreign Debt and Underdevelopment: U.S.-Peru Economic Relations, 1930-1970* (Lahnman, MD: University Press of America, 1996), 22-27.

⁵¹² Friedrich Katz, "La guerra fría en América Latina," in ed. Daniela Spencer, *Espejos de la guerra fría: México, América Central y el Caribe* (Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social/Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores/Porrúa, 2004), 18.

⁵¹³ Stephen R. Niblo, *War, Diplomacy, and Development. The United States and Mexico, 1939-1954* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1995), 143-146.

industrialization.⁵¹⁴ In isolation, the protestations of the CANACINTRA and the CTM would not have sufficed to challenge the US post-war settlement. In fact, these organizations had lost significant political clout by the end of 1946. The broader protectionist consensus, which included the larger industrialists from the CONCAMIN and the COPARMEX, emerged from the combination of mounting trade deficits and the realization that US grants and loans would not be forthcoming on the scale necessary to fund Mexico's development. In addition, as international reserves dwindled, macroeconomic constraints left the new administration little option but to implement trade controls and raise tariffs in 1947, and follow in July 1948 with a devaluation of the peso. Thus sheltered from competition by these and similar subsequent policies, manufacturing industries grew at an average annual rate of 7.6 percent between 1949 and 1958, a whole point faster than overall GDP.⁵¹⁵

The belief that the government should be directly involved in the country's industrialization went beyond support for protectionist measures. The developmentalist dictum of import-substitution soon grew into a national ideology. In the name of progress, modernity, and development the state openly promoted capital accumulation. Contrary to assertions by some US and domestic opponents, government intervention in the economy did not displace private enterprise, as suggested by the period's high rates of

⁵¹⁴ Susan M. Gauss, *Made in Mexico. Regions, Nation, and the State in the Rise of Mexican Industrialism, 1920s-1940s* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 169-171; Stanford A. Mosk, *Industrial Revolution in Mexico* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1950), 33-35.

⁵¹⁵ Cárdenas, *La hacienda*, 115-123, 130-133; Roger D. Hansen, *The Politics of Mexican Development* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Miguel S. Wionczek, *Nacionalismo mexicano e inversion extranjera* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1967).

private investment.⁵¹⁶ Rather, official policy made these enterprises more profitable, at least for those businessmen who could count on official favors, most notable among which were tax exemptions, cheap credits, subsidized utilities and transport, preferential access to import permits and foreign currency, guaranteed purchase contracts, and land grants. The influence of the ECLA notwithstanding, economic policy did not stem from a philosophical position or follow a systematic program, *pace* the likes of the Banco de México's Bureau of Industrial Research. There is ample evidence of the particularistic, discretionary nature of state actions.⁵¹⁷

Despite the Mexican government's nationalistic rhetoric promoting economic independence, and even occasional expressions of anti-imperialism, economic policy did not block or discourage the inflow of foreign capital. External pressures were quickly accommodated within Mexico's state capitalism and US investment in manufacturing expanded dramatically during both the Alemán and the Ruiz Cortines administrations. Available data suggests that together with the largest of Mexican firms, giant multinational corporations benefited disproportionately from developmentalist policies.⁵¹⁸ Also, regardless of the emphasis on industrialization, the government promoted capitalist agriculture just as avidly. Public funds were poured into rural areas in

⁵¹⁶ Soledad Loaeza, "Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la superpotencia, 1944-1968," in Erik Velásquez García *et al.*, *La Nueva Historia General de México* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2010), 668

⁵¹⁷ Niblo, *War*, 221-232; Kenneth C. Shadlen, *Democratization without Representation. The Politics of Small Industry in Mexico* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 34-36. Raymond Vernon's *The Dilemma of Mexico's Development*, published in 1963, is still the most eloquent characterization of the period's political economy.

⁵¹⁸ José Luis Ceceña, *México en la órbita imperial* (Mexico City: Ediciones "El Caballito," 1970), chapter 4; Shadlen, *Democratization*, 33-35; Niblo, *War*, 225-226. For an analysis of the cultural maneuvers of large US corporations in their attempts to capture Mexican customers see: Julio Moreno, *Yankee Don't go Home! Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920-1950* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

the form of subsidies and infrastructure works, particularly irrigation. As with industrial promotion, large agribusinesses were the primary beneficiaries. And while about 40 percent of agricultural subsidies targeted the production of cheap food for urban centers, local and foreign exporters received the lion's share of support. Here too nationality was not key. In La Laguna region, for example, one of the firms profiting most from state-financed water-management projects was none other than William L. Clayton's cotton business A.C. & Co.⁵¹⁹

In some key respects developmentalism worked in Mexico. Between 1946 and 1958 GDP growth was relatively high, even taking into account population growth. Real income per capita rose by an estimated average of almost 3 percent per year. Industry grew as a share of the economy, and with it came better paying jobs.⁵²⁰ Social expenditures grew and public education expanded.⁵²¹ Public works across the country made good propaganda for the new Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).⁵²² This, however, does not mean that the politics of the so-called miracle were peaceful, or that

⁵¹⁹ Stephen R. Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s. Modernity, Politics, and Corruption* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 1999), 187-188; Niblo, *War*, 228, 266.

⁵²⁰ Gustavo Garza, *El proceso de industrialización en la ciudad de México, 1821-1970* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1985), 141-143; Clark W. Reynolds, *The Mexican Economy. Twentieth-Century Structure and Growth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 36-43, 58-64, 185-196. Data is limited, but available information suggests that while real wages remained below their pre-war level, they improved between 1946 and 1960. Jeffrey L. Bortz, *Los salarios industriales en México, 1939-1975* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988), 266-270.

⁵²¹ James W. Wilkie, *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change Since 1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 158-169. Per capita social expenditures and education outlays grew during the Alemán and Ruiz Cortines administrations. Public health expenditures did not.

⁵²² The Sinarquista movement, the most serious political threat of the late 1930s and early 1940s, now proclaimed President Alemán "the best sinarquista in Mexico" owing to his construction and public works projects. "Best Sinarquista in Mexico," *Novedades*, April 20, 1951. Quoted in Aaron W. Navarro, *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 226, fn. 123.

repression was uncommon.⁵²³ Denunciations of electoral fraud were systematically met with violence.⁵²⁴ The left had been under attack even before the beginning of the Cold War, and by the late-1940s, under US guidance, unions and governmental offices had been successfully purged of communists.⁵²⁵ Whereas communist-free unions were tolerated, independent militant actions were not; the same went for campesino organizations and their protests.⁵²⁶ Yet, just as important for the political stability of the period were divisions within the labor and agrarian movements, which allowed the government to put a check on class-based challenges to the dominance of capital over economic policy.⁵²⁷ What is more, support among organized elements of civil society for

⁵²³ There is a rich and growing historiography that emphasizes the importance of political violence in this period. Thomas Rath, *Myths of Demilitarization in Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Benjamin T. Smith, *Pistoleros and Popular Movements. The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Jaime Pensado, "Political violence and student culture in Mexico: The consolidation of *Porrismo* during the 1950s and 1960s" (PhD Dissertation, History Department, University of Chicago, 2008).

⁵²⁴ Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s*, 150-159, 230-235.

⁵²⁵ Luis Medina Peña, *Civilismo y modernización del autoritarismo*, vol. 20 of *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1979), 112-194; Katz, "La guerra fría," 25; Barry Carr, *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), chapters 5.

⁵²⁶ The history of the government's handling of labor conflicts and the *charrismo* in the country's most powerful industrial unions is relatively well known. We now also have eloquent accounts of the violence exerted on peasant communities and organizations. Tanalís Padilla, *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata. The Jaramillista Movement and the Myth of the Pax PRIísta, 1940-1962* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008); Gladys Irene McCormick, "The Political Economy of Desire in Rural Mexico: Revolutionary Change and the Making of a State, 1935-1965" (PhD Dissertation, History Department, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009).

⁵²⁷ John Womack, Jr., "Luchas sindicales y liberalismos sociales, 1867-1993," in Marcello Carmagnani, Alicia Hernández Chavez, and Ruggiero Romano eds., *Para una historia de América: los nudos*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 444-448; Kevin J. Middlebrook, *The Paradox of Revolution. Labor, the State and Authoritarianism in Mexico* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), chapter 4; Jorge Basurto, *Del avilacamachismo al alemanismo (1940-1952)*, vol. 11 of *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, ed. Pablo González Casanova (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1984); José Luis Reyna and Raúl Trejo Delarbre, *De Adolfo Ruiz Cortines a Adolfo López Mateos (1952-1964)*, vol. 12 of *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, ed. Pablo González Casanova (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1981).

a stronger state capable of effecting economic change underlies this stability. One of developmentalism's achievements was to foment the perception that any quest for social justice was best served by appealing for government patronage. PRI politicians at the top of their game were capable of discerning which demands to attend in order to ensure continued stability, and which could be ignored without serious consequences. In a country where the state controlled less than 10 percent of GDP this was no small feat.⁵²⁸

5.2 Vendors and the Cost of Living

The developmentalist drive was nowhere stronger than in Mexico City. The combination of protectionism, investment in public services, and direct industrial promotion transformed the capital and its environs. Manufacturing output grew in real terms from 2.2 billion pesos in 1940 to 7.3 billion pesos in 1950, and 13.5 billion pesos in 1960. As a share of national production, this represented an increase from 32 to 46 percent.⁵²⁹ By 1955 Mexico City already produced more than half of the country's silk and rayon textiles, matches, cigarettes, soaps and detergents, pharmaceuticals, wheels and tires, and auto assembly.⁵³⁰ Industrial employment also grew dramatically, rising from 89,000 workers in 1940 to 407,000 in 1960. As a result, Mexico City's share of the

⁵²⁸ Alan Knight, "The Weight of the State in Modern Mexico", in ed. James Dunkerley, *Studies in the Formation of the Nation-State in Latin America* (London: ILAS, 2002). As Paul Gillingham puts it, the Mexican state of the 1940s and 1950s resembled a pufferfish, desperately inflating itself to look bigger than it really was. Gillingham, "Maximino's Bulls: Popular Protest After the Mexican Revolution, 1940-1952," *Past and Present*, no. 206 (Feb. 2010), 181.

⁵²⁹ Figures in constant 1950 pesos. Garza, *El proceso de industrialización*, 142-143.

⁵³⁰ In terms of production value. Gauss, *Made in Mexico*, 198.

country's manufacturing labor force climbed from 24.6 to 46 percent.⁵³¹ Meanwhile, and partly as a result of the higher labor demand, the city's population grew from 1.5 million in 1940 to 2.2 million in 1950, and 2.8 million in 1960. The Federal District's population, in turn, grew from 1.8 million in 1940 to 3.1 million in 1950, and a staggering though not yet explosive 4.9 million in 1960.⁵³²

These economic and demographic trends did not bode well for market vendors. As retailers of basic goods, the prices they charged were the most visible element of the cost of living, which had been at the centre of political debate since 1936. As the industrialization of Mexico City gained momentum after 1945, organized labor demanded higher wages. Industrialists, with the help of the government, largely succeeded in refusing them. Unions therefore appealed to the government to reduce the prices they paid for basic goods. In response, following the pattern developed by the Cárdenas administration, the government intervened directly in the provision of these goods. The result was an implicit pro-growth compact between government, capitalists, and industrial unions that kept wages low while reducing worker militancy. Enrique Ochoa has shown that once repression of the labor movement accomplished what it could, price controls and food subsidies were offered as a substitute for nominal wage gains. A new State Food Agency, the CEIMSA, would become the primary vehicle the government

⁵³¹ Garza, *El proceso de industrialización*, 142-143.

⁵³² Luis Unikel, *La dinámica del crecimiento de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: Fundación para Estudios de la Población, 1972), 9; James B. Pick and Edgar W. Butler, *Mexico Megacity* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 54.

used to manage industrial relations.⁵³³ Vendors had much to lose from government intervention in the city's supply network.

Inflation management gained political urgency in the aftermath of the 1948 devaluation of the peso. In late July intelligence services agents from the Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (DGIPS) were ordered by the secretary of Gobernación to make daily visits to the city's markets in order to gather information on the evolution of the prices of basic goods, on consumers moods, and to report any related political comments they might overhear. After each visit agents submitted written reports to the director general of political and social investigations, which were then summarized into a memorandum that, marked as confidential, was forwarded to the office of the secretary of Gobernación. According to the memo of July 22, 1948, for example, agents visited the markets of San Juan, La Merced, La Lagunilla, Tepito, Hidalgo, Martínez de la Torre, San Cosme, Santa Julia, Tacubaya, Tacuba, Vallejo, and Guadalupe Hidalgo, where they witnessed "tough bargaining, and exchanges of harsh words and insults" over prices between vendors and their customers. In their reports, agents related interminable attacks on the government, including on the president, and expressed fears that "people were losing respect for the high office." They also catalogued the most vituperated officials, in this case the secretaries of Hacienda and Economía, but more than anybody else, the *Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal*, Fernando Casas Alemán, who many

⁵³³ Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 112-113, 127. In July 1949, the State Food Agency was revamped and taken over by the CEIMSA, a branch of the national export-import bank. Under Ruiz Cortines, the State Food Agency would receive more than twice the funds allocated to the Secretaría de Recursos Hidráulicos, and several times the money the federal government invested in agricultural credit. *Idem*, 132

believed was personally profiting from the situation. The memo ended on a worrying note, stating that people were already talking of “taking violent measures.”⁵³⁴

Over the next few days the intelligence agents, who were now also visiting union halls, reported that prices continued to increase and that there were rumors of forthcoming demands for higher wages and possible strikes.⁵³⁵ By July 30, they conveyed a general sense of alarm: “prices haven’t continued to go up, but discontent has not gone away ... The atmosphere in general is charged with pessimism ... Propaganda urging workers to take a more assertive stance, even if it came to confronting the government, is incessant.”⁵³⁶ On August 4 the railway workers’ union began to discuss the organization of a “monster demonstration against the high cost of living.”⁵³⁷ Five days later another memo relayed two tendencies among workers: “one that insists on maintaining discipline and order to face the situation in cooperation with the government, and another one that at all costs wants wage increases, and if refused, plans to resort to strikes.” Supporters of the latter tendency included railroad workers, trolley workers, cinematographers, and electricians.⁵³⁸ This strategy gained momentum on August 14, when Mexico’s most powerful unions took a page in *El Universal* to invite “the working class, all the

⁵³⁴ 7/22/1948, AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 1, 15-16. While intelligence agents’ reports provide a fascinating window into the period’s popular politics, the agents’ incentives to exaggerate threats and thus raise their profile should not be overlooked. Moreover, because they were under the perview of the Secretary of Gobernación, their content, especially any criticism of other high level party and government officials, has to be read in the light of the Secretary’s political agenda. After all, beginning with Alemán, four of the next five presidents would be former Secretaries of Gobernación. In 1948, Ruiz Cortines might have hoped to discredit Casas Alemán, who would later be his rival for the PRI’s presidential nomination.

⁵³⁵ 7/23/1948, *idem*, 25-26; 7/26/1948, *idem*, 54.

⁵³⁶ 7/30/1948, *idem*, 91.

⁵³⁷ 8/4/1948, *idem*, 175.

⁵³⁸ 8/10/1948, *idem*, 254.

progressive and revolutionary organizations, non-unionized workers, the people of the Federal District and the Republic at large” to a demonstration on August 21. While taking pains to express that the demonstration was not against Alemán’s “democratic regime,” the organizers opposed key aspects of its economic policy such as the terms of its relations with the United States and its commitment to put a check on wage demands.⁵³⁹

The Alemán Administration did not sit still in the face of growing discontent. The Departamento del Distrito announced the tightening of price controls and the appointment of a Comisión de Inspección de Artículos Controlados, at the same time that the State Food Agency declared it would increase its supply of subsidized goods to the city. In addition, the federal government launched the much publicized “mercados agrícolas,” where producers were invited to sell directly to the public in order to circumvent intermediaries and thus, in theory, achieve lower prices.⁵⁴⁰ In tune with Alemán’s *desarrollista* support for agribusiness, to guarantee supply to the new markets the government worked directly with large capitalist agriculturalists represented by the Asociación Nacional de Cosecheros de Cereales y Productos Alimenticios (ANC). This umbrella organization representing 620 producer groups had been created the previous year with presidential backing. In response to the opportunities that the fight against the high cost of living opened up, it now moved to “break the monopoly” of the city’s largest merchants.⁵⁴¹ The invitation to supply the *mercados agrícolas* was also extended to

⁵³⁹ *El Universal*, August 14, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 2.

⁵⁴⁰ “Enérgico plan para control de precios,” *La Prensa*, August 14, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c.111, exp.3. 9; “Para frenar el alza,” *El Universal*, August 11, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 1, 311. The *mercados agrícolas* were also referred to as “mercados de emergencia” or “mercados populares.” For the sake of clarity and consistency I always call them *agrícolas*.

⁵⁴¹ Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 111-112.

smaller producers, and both the Confederación Nacional de la Pequeña Propiedad Agrícola, and the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC) accepted it gladly. These organizations appreciated the chance to enter the city's supply network, and also boasted of their collaboration with the official campaign against inflation in their correspondence with the authorities.⁵⁴²

Intelligence agents immediately began reporting the “very good impression caused by the determination of the government to watch over prices and the other measures in favor of lowering the cost of living.”⁵⁴³ In particular, “the opening of the [first] *mercado agrícola* in the Colonia del Valle has increased optimism. People from all social classes are attending it to make their purchases.”⁵⁴⁴ The city's press corroborated this perception.⁵⁴⁵ By August 16 *Excélsior* declared the success of this market, which was so crowded that by ten in the morning it was hard to walk around it; the entire stock of vegetables, grains, poultry, bread, milk, and other products sold only too rapidly.⁵⁴⁶ *El Universal* agreed, adding that prices there were 25 percent lower than elsewhere. In an editorial it further remarked that “it would be desirable that other [such] markets were built with the same impetus. Every zone of the Federal District needs one.”⁵⁴⁷ The

⁵⁴² For example, see AGN, MAV, C.671, exp. 562.32/18-4.

⁵⁴³ 08/11/1948, AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 1, 316.

⁵⁴⁴ 8/14/1948, AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 13.

⁵⁴⁵ Just as intelligence reports need to be read with an eye on the agents' personal interests and their bosses' political projects, journalists in this period had strong incentives to present the federal government in a positive light. See Niblo, *Mexico in the 1940s*, 346-350.

⁵⁴⁶ “Esta semana bajarán los precios de la carne,” *Excélsior*, August 16, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 15.

⁵⁴⁷ “La campaña de abaratamiento,” *El Universal*, Sección editorial, August 16, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 22.

following day *El Nacional* announced that two more *mercados agrícolas* were due to be inaugurated the following Saturday, the very day of the planned demonstration against the high cost of living.⁵⁴⁸

Whereas consumers appeared to have been pleased, vendors were far from thrilled. As retail outlets, the *mercados agrícolas* represented direct competition for the city's public markets. Already on August 18, intelligence agents interviewed locatarios of the Lázaro Cárdenas Market, which was located near the new mercado agrícola, who complained about the loss of clientele. The agents noted that these vendors were planning an assembly to discuss their new challenges, and decide on how to approach a forthcoming meeting with Governor Casas Alemán.⁵⁴⁹

Organized vendors soon engaged the press to publicize their grievances and defend their place in the city's commercial structure. In an article in *Excélsior*, the Federación Nacional de Comerciantes e Industriales en Pequeño argued that, instead of creating new retail outlets, government efforts to reduce the cost of living should focus on providing vendors with subsidized goods that they could then sell on at the official prices. They proposed the establishment of two big distribution centers in the outskirts of the city, and a network of smaller depots in the proximity of each of the Federal District's fifty-two markets, where they could buy cheap merchandise.⁵⁵⁰ Short of that, they

⁵⁴⁸ "Se instalarán todos los mercados de emergencia que sean necesarios," *El Nacional*, August 17, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp.3, 59.

⁵⁴⁹ 08/18/1948, AGN, GDIPS, c.111, exp. 3, 86.

⁵⁵⁰ "Limpia de políticos y acaparadores en los nuevos mercados," *Excélsior*, August 19, 1948, 17, 27, in LT, AE.

requested to be allowed to purchase from the *mercados agrícolas* in order to resell in the city's public markets, "with the solemn promise to obtain [only] a fair profit."⁵⁵¹

Government intervention also strained the already difficult relations between established wholesalers and vendors. By the late 1940s La Merced neighborhood, which had grown around the market of the same name, was home to the city's largest food merchants, and functioned as a supply depot and distribution center.⁵⁵² Locatarios from all over the Federal District attended La Merced warehouses and shops to make their purchases. In as much as vendors competed with their suppliers over profit margins, conflict between them was systemic. Now the politicization of the cost of living threatened to make it escalate into a public confrontation. According to *La Prensa*, the president of the Federal District's commission for the enforcement of price controls, one Luis Araujo Valdivia, sought to reduce prices by collaborating with large-scale merchants and repressing retailers.⁵⁵³ Were price controls to work, one group's profits had to come out of the other's, and wholesalers had an advantage: controls were easier to enforce on final sales. For their part, a group of small-scale vendors approached *Excelsior* to blame the high cost of living on "the six hundred bodegueros of La Merced, who hoard fruit, vegetables and to a lesser extent, grains and seeds, and the four hundred almacenistas de abarrotes who hoard seeds and grains in large quantities." What is more, they accused these merchants of encroaching upon the new *mercado agrícola* with the help of local

⁵⁵¹ "Esta semana bajarán los precios de la carne," *Excelsior*, August 16, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 15.

⁵⁵² Héctor Castillo Berthier, *Estructura de poder de los comerciantes mayoristas de abarrotes de la Ciudad de México* (Mexico Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1994), 17-71.

⁵⁵³ "Enérgico plan para control de precios," *La Prensa*, August 14, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c.111, exp. 3, 9.

officials.⁵⁵⁴ *El Popular* also reported vendors' complaints that "it is the same coyotes from La Merced, los comerciantes hambreadores such as the brothers Julio and Abraham Vera, the Moranchels, and the Rosettes who control the new market in the Colonia del Valle."⁵⁵⁵ According to *Excélsior* the producers from the ANC shared this view, the secretary of that organization calling them "a cancer that was starting to take hold of the *mercado agrícola*."⁵⁵⁶

The group of small-scale vendors that talked to the *Excélsior* maintained that the government's failure to protect their interests was "causing serious agitation among seventy thousand locatarios who are willing to attend the demonstration and gathering of the twenty-first,"⁵⁵⁷ which *El Popular* insisted was "for the implementation of effective measures against the high cost of living" and "a fight to the death against speculators, hoarders, those enriched by the misery of the people."⁵⁵⁸ The organizers also took a page in *Excélsior*, to state that the demonstration was "neither Communist, Catholic, nor Masonic, but of Mexicans against the high cost of living."⁵⁵⁹ No wonder they tried to explain themselves: The same day, that newspaper published an interview with the secretary general of the CTM, who said the demonstration was a "training session of the

⁵⁵⁴ "Limpia de políticos y acaparadores en los nuevos mercados," *Excélsior*, August 19, 1948, 17, 27, in LT, AE.

⁵⁵⁵ "Los coyotes de La Merced intervienen en los nuevos mercados de emergencia," *El Popular*, August 19, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c.111, exp. 3, 100.

⁵⁵⁶ "Limpia de políticos y acaparadores en los nuevos mercados," *Excélsior*, August 19, 1948, 17, 27, in LT, AE.

⁵⁵⁷ *Idem*.

⁵⁵⁸ "Tendrá verdaderas proporciones populares la manifestación de hoy contra la carestía," *El Popular*, August 21, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 163.

⁵⁵⁹ Open letter, *Excélsior*, August 21, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 166.

lombardo-communists, to test the efficacy of the slogans and tactics elaborated by international conspirators, experts in mutinies and coups d'état.”⁵⁶⁰ Though more circumspect in their statements, this was also the opinion of the Confederación Patronal de La República Mexicana.⁵⁶¹ The apparent paradox of vendors demonstrating alongside workers against the prices they were themselves charging did not go unnoticed: *La Prensa* reported that businessmen considered the participation of the locatarios as evidence of extremism because it was against their interests to limit profits.⁵⁶²

Available sources do not reveal whether vendors attended the demonstration—which, according to intelligence agents, had a substantial though not huge turnout of seven to eight thousand. Vendors' grievances, however, were well represented at the rally. One of the banners, for example, denounced the continued dominance of the large wholesalers, proclaiming, “the government of the Republic is in La Merced.”⁵⁶³ In one of the speeches the agents recorded, Adán Nieto, on behalf of the miners' union, declared that “the people, like myself, ask what is the cause of the increase in the cost of living, and we respond that it is caused by corrupt politicians, the usual hambreadores, and bad officials.” Acknowledging the government's efforts to control prices, this speaker lamented that “unfortunately in Mexico the law only punishes the poor meat vendors, and not the real hoarders, the influential, or the amigazos of the president.” He also referred to the *mercados agrícolas* as the “little markets...that resolve nothing, that are only a

⁵⁶⁰ “Dice la CTM que el mitín de hoy es de comunistas,” *Excélsior*, August 21, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 167.

⁵⁶¹ “Clasificación divergente del desfile contra la carestía,” *El Universal*, August 21, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 169.

⁵⁶² “Condenan a agitadores,” *La Prensa*, August 21, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 176.

⁵⁶³ 8/21/1948, AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 191-194.

palliative,” arguing that “the problem of the cost of living will only be solved by finishing all monopolies and hoarders, as well as by cutting the nails of cronies and enriched politicians.”⁵⁶⁴

The government tried to reassure market vendors that it did not intend to displace them from the city’s commercial structures. The very day of the demonstration *La Prensa* announced the decision to devote the soon-to-be inaugurated *mercado agrícola* of Jamaica exclusively to sales to locatarios. Both the State Food Agency and the secretary of *Ganadería y Agricultura* also proposed ways to lower the cost of merchandise for vendors. The former vowed to open stores in public markets to supply subsidized products to the locatarios so they could resell them at “fair prices.”⁵⁶⁵ The latter met with various groups of vendors to discuss how they could work together to reduce prices.⁵⁶⁶ As a result of these meetings, the secretary of *Ganadería y Agricultura* helped to negotiate an agreement between the *Federación Nacional de Comerciantes e Industriales Mexicanos en Pequeño* and the producers from the ANC to “supply them directly, and eliminate intermediaries.” The goal was for vendors to be able to sell at the same price as the *mercados agrícolas*. The ANC approvingly described the *Federación* as a natural ally in their own campaign to push out local intermediaries because this organization controlled the majority of the locatarios and small-scale vendors of the markets of the Federal District.⁵⁶⁷ The press celebrated the agreement, with the *Excélsior* anticipating

⁵⁶⁴ *Idem*, 195-196

⁵⁶⁵ “Cincuenta mil compradores,” *Novedades*, August 23, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 229.

⁵⁶⁶ “Apertura del segundo mercado de emergencia,” *La Prensa*, August 21, 1948 in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 158-159.

⁵⁶⁷ 23/8/1948, AGN, MAV, c. 617, exp. 565.32/18-4.

“the general collapse of prices in the [Federal] District’s sixty markets” and applauding “the locatarios’ cooperation in this great crusade.”⁵⁶⁸

Despite official efforts, vendors still resented the competition from the *mercados agrícolas*. If we are to trust journalists, the *mercado agrícola* in the Colonia ex-Hipódromo de Peralvillo attracted thirty thousand customers during the morning of August 22, while the one in the Colonia Del Valle had twenty thousand visitors.⁵⁶⁹ In early September the Federación addressed President Alemán to make their objections explicit. “Loyal as we are,” its leadership decided to “speak frankly” of what they saw as the wrong turn that the campaign against the cost of living was taking. In particular, the *mercados agrícolas* were causing vendors “material harm because due to the disproportionate free publicity received by these markets, both by the press and the radio, the consuming public does not attend the other markets, where fifty thousand comerciantes [and] heads of households are suffering the consequences.” The Federación explained that vendors found themselves at a disadvantage because while they had to pay taxes, and incurred transport costs to move the merchandise from wholesale depots, the *mercados agrícolas* were exempted from all taxes and had their goods delivered directly by producers. Moreover, these markets were generating conflict among vendors themselves, for as the Federación told Alemán, a “few chosen ones have found places to set up stalls and make a profit.” The Federación leadership worried about the “disorientation” that this inequity among vendors would create in their organization, and its political implications. They also interposed a veiled threat, or at least a caution,

⁵⁶⁸ “Derrumbe general de precios en los 60 mercados del distrito,” *Excélsior*, August 21, 1948 in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 160.

⁵⁶⁹ “Los mercados de emergencia,” *El Nacional*, August 23, 1948, in AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 228.

warning the president that the new markets “are undermining to some extent the confidence placed in you.” The Federación “beg, and insist” that Alemán act promptly, to “realize the plan to supply the people by means of small-scale merchants.”⁵⁷⁰

The President apparently did not respond promptly enough. On September 20, 1948, the Federación wrote to Alemán again to inform him of an assembly of representatives of sixty-three vendor organizations, where they decided that their markets should be turned into *mercados agrícolas*; they now asked for his backing to enjoy all the official exemptions that this would imply. The Federación also requested assistance in buying their merchandise at production centers, and to be able to transport them to the capital without paying taxes, bribes, or any other expenses that, they claimed, were partly to blame for making subsistence goods expensive.⁵⁷¹ Like every other interest group, vendors requested more, not less, state intervention – but on their terms.

President Alemán did not need the Federación to inform him of dissatisfaction with the *mercados agrícolas*. The Unión de Pequeños Comerciantes del Mercado Río Blanco, for example, claimed that 90 percent of those selling goods in the *mercado agrícola* Francisco Sarabia were comerciantes from other city markets, rather than producers, as they should have been; intelligence agents soon confirmed that the Uniones de Comerciantes del Mercado Martínez de la Torre y La Merced were operating in this market.⁵⁷² The government was also aware that La Merced wholesalers were maneuvering to maintain control. Both the ANC and the CNC-affiliated Union Nacional

⁵⁷⁰ 9/6/1948, AGN, MAV, c. 671, exp. 565.32/18-4.

⁵⁷¹ 9/20/1948, *idem*.

⁵⁷² 8/24/1948, AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 3, 240.

de Transportes Ejidales insisted that the new mercados were not fulfilling their role because they were mostly being supplied by “the large-scale merchants of La Merced.”⁵⁷³ The commission in charge of inspecting controlled goods concluded that the charges were true, and that the *mercados agrícolas* were staffed by “those who are fronting for known acaparadores,” and by “old-time locatarios of ordinary markets.”⁵⁷⁴ The national government needed to look proactive in the fight against inflation, but these conflicts were more than they had bargained for. On October 30, 1948 the *Diario Oficial de la Federación* published a presidential decree putting all markets, including the *mercados agrícolas*, under the purview of the Departamento del Distrito Federal, devolving the problem to the local authorities.

The transfer of jurisdiction took place in March of the following year. Small producers from the CNC immediately saw their access to the *mercados agrícolas* curtailed, and began to complain to the President about the treatment that they were receiving from the new head of the markets department, one Lic. Rojas. Ejidatarios trying to sell their goods at the *mercado agrícola* Santa Anita accused Rojas of “representing the economic interests of monopolistic merchants, for he has attacked [our] markets, violently, closing down stalls, threatening us with jail time, imposing fines, and ordering policemen to assault us.” They were indignant: “we believe this is not the way to repay our efforts to collaborate with the government.”⁵⁷⁵ Others reported Rojas telling them that “the mercados agrícolas have finished because the emergency has passed.”⁵⁷⁶ In a similar

⁵⁷³ 9/18/1948, AGN, MAV, c. 671, exp. 565.32/18-4.

⁵⁷⁴ 9/17/1948, *idem*.

⁵⁷⁵ 3/5/1949, AGN, MAV, c. 804, exp. 703.4/476.

⁵⁷⁶ 3/8/1949, AGN, MAV, c. 671, exp. 565.32/18-4.

letter to Alemán a group of “campesinos” from San Nicolás Buenos Aires y Ciudad Cerdán, Puebla, “politely request constitutional guarantees for our compañeros...who cooperate with your campaign to lower the cost of living.” They protested that if they lost access to the *mercados agrícolas*, they would be left with no option but to sell to La Merced wholesalers.⁵⁷⁷ Eventually the large producers of the ANC joined their complaints. In a letter to Alemán proposing new regulations for the workings of *the mercados agrícolas*, they blamed the continued dominance of La Merced wholesalers on the Departamento del Distrito, believing that the problems with these markets started when the Departamento assigned administrators who, instead of assisting producers, “surrendered [them], in fact, to intermediaries and professional merchants.”⁵⁷⁸

In November 1949 the cost of living was still high, and again generating social and political tensions. That month intelligence agents recorded widespread discontent and “great anarchy” in retail prices all over the city.⁵⁷⁹ The national dailies, for their part, mourned the failure of the *mercados agrícolas*; *Excélsior* recalled their origins and early success, and discussed the need to “clean or purge them.”⁵⁸⁰ *Novedades* was more pessimistic, and in an editorial wondered “Should we admit that it’s impossible to give the people less expensive foodstuffs?”⁵⁸¹ Alemán would once more promise to enforce price controls, punish offending merchants, and supply the city with subsidized

⁵⁷⁷ 3/7/1949, idem.

⁵⁷⁸ 1/30/1950, idem.

⁵⁷⁹ 11/17/1949, AGN, DGIPS, c. 111, exp. 2, 64; 12/1/1949, idem, 97.

⁵⁸⁰ “Los mercados populares,” *Excélsior*, December 9, 1949, in BLT, AE.

⁵⁸¹ “La vuelta de los mercados populares,” *Novedades*, December 18, 1949, in BLT, AE.

products.⁵⁸² The complex web of overlapping and conflicting interests, however, made these promises hard to keep.

5.3 Growing City, Growing Challenges

The failure of the *mercados agrícolas* removed one source of potential competition but did little to improve market vendors' prospects in *desarrollista* Mexico. State participation in supply chains continued, and CEIMSA stores grew ever more important as the 1950s progressed. Moreover, vendors also faced private competition at both ends of the social spectrum. On the one hand, economic growth brought the threat of capitalist expansion into the city's retail market for basic goods. A group of Monterrey-based bankers formed Super-Mercados S.A. to introduce the "modern technique" of "American-style 'self-service stores'" to Mexico, which they believed would increase efficiency by reducing labor requirements relative to the existing network of small stores and "traditional markets."⁵⁸³ The US department store Sears Roebucks opened its first store in February of 1947 and was an instant hit among the city's upper-middle class eager to consume the latest fashions.⁵⁸⁴ The National Chamber of Commerce (CANACO) contrasted what they saw as the backwardness of vendors' practices with this "serious and evolutionary commerce," and harangued the government to take all necessary measures to ensure that "all of that energy spent on small-scale trading should be

⁵⁸² The State Food Agency CEIMSA announced that it would increase both the number of stores that sold directly to the public and those that supplied the city's market vendors. Ochoa, *Feeding Mexico*, 116.

⁵⁸³ 11/29/1945, AGN, MAC, c. 755, exp. 545.2/18.

⁵⁸⁴ Moreno, *Yankee don't go home*, chapter 6.

employed in agricultural production and in industries, allowing commercial interests to become decent enterprises that yield true profits.”⁵⁸⁵

On the other hand, the development of manufacturing and high end capitalist commerce was not sufficient to absorb the city’s growing working population, so the vast majority of its residents had to find employment in other sectors.⁵⁸⁶ Proprietary trading in its many forms was an obvious outlet, leading to fierce competition as vendor numbers rose. In 1945 CANACO put the number of small-scale vendors in the city at seventy thousand.⁵⁸⁷ The Federación Nacional de Comerciantes e Industriales Mexicanos en Pequeño, for their part, denounced the “peasants that come to the city to fail,” and informed one of the national dailies that it intended to “negotiate the protection of the Departamento del Distrito against the disadvantageous competition from a floating mass of more than one hundred thousand maladjusted workers, who one day are garbage pickers or porters, and another [day] penny-vendors of fruit and trinkets.”⁵⁸⁸ Regardless of the Federación’s prejudices, rural migrants were only part of the story;⁵⁸⁹ natural

⁵⁸⁵ “El problema del comercio en pequeño es de higiene,” *Novedades*, May 25, 1945, in LT, AE.

⁵⁸⁶ John Isbister, “Urban Employment and Wages in a Developing Economy: The Case of Mexico” *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 20, no. 1 (Oct., 1971), 30.

⁵⁸⁷ “El problema del comercio en pequeño es de higiene,” *Novedades*, May 25, 1945, in LT, AE. While CANACO claimed that this was the result of “a study” of the city’s commerce, it would suit them to err on the side of exaggerating the number.

⁵⁸⁸ “El pequeño comercio en mala situación,” *Excelsior*, April 11, 1945, in LT, AE. Vendor organization had reasons of their own for inflating the numbers.

⁵⁸⁹ According to Wayne Cornelius almost one-half of urban population growth during the 1940-1960 period resulted from rural migration. Wayne A. Cornelius, *Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 16.

population growth implied a young population, with many children taking to peddling to provide for themselves, or to contribute to their family's income.⁵⁹⁰

Growing numbers of vendors overwhelmed an already deficient market infrastructure and highlighted the Departamento's financial and institutional limitations. On January 28, 1947 the director of Public Works attended the meeting of the Consejo Consultivo to discuss Casas Alemán's program for the Mexico City and the Federal District. His intervention was sobering. He acknowledged that all urban services and infrastructure required attention, but regretted that the Departamento lacked funds to tackle them. One "of the most serious problems of the city is the absence of humane markets ... [but] the whole public works budget of several years would not be enough" to solve it. He estimated that while the city needed ten large and 250 small markets, no funds had been allocated to market construction in that year's plans.⁵⁹¹

Following this account, the Consejo asked the jefe de la Oficina de Mercados, Iñigo Noriega, to report on his labors as the head of the city's markets. On April 23 he informed the counselors that he could not say how many vendors there were in the city's forty-two markets because most trade, rather than being carried out within market halls, took place in *zonas de mercado*, or the areas surrounding markets. He had ordered each market administrator to take a census of the *zona de mercado* under his responsibility, but the task was proving difficult. To prepare for the results he had requested the printing of

⁵⁹⁰ Eileen Ford draws attention to the fact that between 1940 and 1960 children, defined as people aged 14 and under, went from 34.8 to 41.5 percent of the population of the Federal District, which she aptly calls a "city of children." Eileen Mary Ford, "Children of the Mexican Miracle: Childhood and Modernity in Mexico City, 1940-1968" (Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008), 40. On p. 49, based on material from Oscar Lewis' papers, Ford explicitly mentions child vendors.

⁵⁹¹ 1/28/1947, AVCC.

forty five thousand extra licenses, in addition to the forty thousand already issued. He had also instructed market administrators to survey the material state of each market, and to create a list of repairs needed. He had the information for only a few markets, but he was aware of the urgency of the works: most markets were over forty years old, had drainages that had collapsed, pavements and metallic structures that were in disarray, and were lacking lighting and water provision. “It’s a true catastrophe,” he concluded.⁵⁹²

Desarrollismo and economic growth were not yet translating into public works for the city.

The following year things would take a catastrophic turn indeed for Iñigo Noriega.⁵⁹³ In April 1948 he communicated to the Departamento’s under-treasurer that he suspected the falsification of market fees receipts. The under-treasurer suggested an audit, but Noriega preferred to bring in the secret services to corroborate his suspicions instead. This seems to have led nowhere. Two months later, the Treasury of the Departamento del Distrito performed its own audit of the Oficina de Mercados, during which treasury officials discovered more funds than were registered on the books. The markets accountant and cashier fled the premises, located in the top floor of the Abelardo Rodríguez Market. In July 1948 the judiciary took over the case; lower officials were immediately incarcerated. Then, in June 1949, the Oficina de Mercados was temporarily shut down by Casas Alemán, and following further testimonies by the former office accountant, accountant aid, deputy head of markets, and head of market inspectors, an

⁵⁹² 4/23/1947, *idem*.

⁵⁹³ The following account is based on “El Peculado de mercados,” *Departamento del Distrito Federal. Resumen de Actividades, 1949* (Mexico City: [s.n.], 1950), 79-81. It is very unusual for the Departamento’s summary of activities to include this type of material.

arrest warrant was issued against Noriega himself. He absconded, leaving the capital. The story gained publicity in December 3, 1949, when Noriega wrote to Alemán and the press, denouncing “monstrous machinations” and persecution against himself by the Tesorería officials. The obscure episode ends with his death, allegedly by suicide, soon after that.

The audit of the workings of the Oficina de Mercados concluded that during the first semester of 1948, 18 percent of market revenue had been stolen. It also revealed that funds had been consistently misappropriated during the previous five-and-a-half years, the whole period they investigated.⁵⁹⁴ The embezzlement it uncovered, therefore, began before Noriega had become head of markets, a position he took in December 1946, when Alemán assumed the Presidency and Casas Alemán was appointed to the Departamento del Distrito. Noriega tried to use this fact to defend himself from the charges. As could be expected, the Tesorería and the Departamento also denied responsibility, claiming that the Oficina de Mercados had long operated as an autonomous unit in which the Jefe de Mercados appointed his own people to run the city’s markets. They pointed out that market administrators collected market fees each day and delivered them to the markets accountant in the markets office, and only after that were funds deposited in the Treasury. As a result, there was ample opportunity for fees to go missing before they were handed over.

While this portrayal of the workings of the Oficina de Mercados was convenient for the Departamento, it was probably also true. Taking of bribes, issuing receipts that under-declared fees paid, and selling licenses to the highest bidder were common

⁵⁹⁴ In total, an estimated 5.2 million pesos went missing – 1.2 million more than the revenue markets produced in the second half of 1948.

practices, as vendors knew too well. After all, for more than a decade the Oficina de Mercados and the Federación de Comerciantes en Pequeño had both had their offices in the Abelardo Rodríguez Market. It would be easy to dismiss these practices as an anomaly, as the Tesorería and the Departamento implicitly did. But the regularity with which such actions were mentioned by vendors suggests that they constituted a well-established pattern of negotiations over access to public spaces for private use, and public protection for commercial pursuits. That individuals were able to gain private advantage from the use of public spaces and public office betrayed the government's weakness. It evinced the incapacity of the state to control its own officials, or at least its need to overlook their excesses in order to retain their loyalty.

In this context of continuing governmental failure to regulate and manage markets and to provide adequate infrastructure, rising vendor numbers led inevitably to conflict. Jesús Bautista, secretary general de la Federación Nacional de Comerciantes, drew attention to how these pressures affected the vendors of La Villa de Guadalupe. The area's small-scale vendors, he said, were the first to lament the deplorable conditions to which they were reduced by the voracity of the previous administrators and market authorities, who had only occupied themselves with personal gain. Bautista complained that vendors were again facing pressure to reduce the size of their stalls to less than two meters or agree to pay higher fees for the right to the space, noting that in the past, each time they reduced the size of the stalls, the space they freed up was given to new comerciantes, so that problems grew instead of getting resolved. "Today the matter has taken the proportion of a class problem." He believed the situation would only be

resolved once the authorities managed to build a large and modern market with enough capacity for all the vendors operating in the area.⁵⁹⁵

Such clashes among vendors were everyday occurrences in the city's *zonas de mercados*. La Lagunilla market, for example, spilled over the streets of Peru, Honduras, Juan Álvarez, Paraguay, Allende, and República de Chile, the plaza and streets of Comonfort, the *callejones* de La Vaquita, Altuna, Incas, and beyond.⁵⁹⁶ One Jesús Guzmán Olmos, “on behalf of the seven hundred families that comprise the Unión de Comerciantes en Pequeño del mercado de la Lagunilla,” requested that the President revoke permits allowing vendors to set up stalls on Honduras Street, and order the police to patrol the area. These *locatarios* claimed to having a long-standing agreement with the local authorities, starting in 1933 when they vacated those streets to enter the market on condition that the area would be protected.⁵⁹⁷ Guzmán Olmos had been lobbying, unsuccessfully, for improvements to La Lagunilla Market for quite some time. On October 7, 1948 he requested Alemán's intervention, hinting that the Departamento had not been responsive, and that for two years they had been asking for urgent repairs to be carried out.⁵⁹⁸ But this time he went further, speaking up for the city's market vendors at large: “We consider it's time the Government of the Departamento del Distrito Federal create a program to protect public market vendors, and to put a check on street vending,

⁵⁹⁵ “A vuelo de pluma trata importantes problemas el compañero Jesús Baustista, viejo comerciante,” *La Gaceta de México, Quincenal de Información y Variedades*, September 1949, 4, in AGN, MAV, c. 318, exp. 433/152-A.

⁵⁹⁶ “Carece la capital de buenos mercados,” *Excélsior*, September 12, 1945, in BLT, AE. See appendix to compare with the smaller 1930 La Lagunilla's *zona de mercado*.

⁵⁹⁷ 6/2/1949, AGN, MAV, c. 286, exp. 418.5/2.

⁵⁹⁸ 10/7/1948, *idem*.

because avenues of the largest city of the Republic present the aspect of Arab souks, while the city's markets find themselves half-empty.”⁵⁹⁹

Conflicts spiked during religious festivities, when the influx of customers attracted more vendors. Macario Juárez, from a rival organization, the Asociación Defensora de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado de la Lagunilla, denounced Olmos and other “dirty leaders of the La Lagunilla Market, [who] try to deprive us of our places in the annual fair of the Three Kings, hurting our humble vendors”. He begged President Alemán for his “just protection.”⁶⁰⁰ He too had a history of defending the rights of vendors to the Honduras street against market officials and other vendors alike.⁶⁰¹ Another area of heightened competition were the streets in the proximity of La Merced Market. The Frente Único de Locatarios y Comerciantes en Pequeño del D.F., a member of the Comité Coordinador de Unidad Proletaria del D.F. wrote to the jefe del Departamento de Mercados to request an end to the practice of issuing permits for temporary vendors during the fairs of *Todos los Santos*, the *posadas*, and *Reyes*. This practice, they explained, caused “the displacement of permanent vendors, the blockage of the streets that obstructs traffic, and bloody confrontations within this important sector.” He thought it was time for a change: “The persons interested in preserving this old system base their petition of permits on the invocation of custom, which is not properly that, but merely a vicious practice sustained during the longest time against all justice and equity.”⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ 6/2/1949, idem.

⁶⁰⁰ 12/13/1949, idem.

⁶⁰¹ 3/6/1946, AGN, MAC, c. 370, exp. 415.2/1; 3/11/1946, idem.

⁶⁰² 11/1/1950, AGN, MAV, c. 976, exp. 715/7247.

While physical infrastructure and institutional capacity were evidently lacking, there are some indications of state actors' attempts at increased control over the vendor movement. One of these attempts concerned the Banco del Pequeño Comercio. On May 2, 1950 Jesús Bautista intervened again for the Federación Nacional de Comerciantes, writing to Alemán with a sorry tale.⁶⁰³ He described how, from its formation in 1932, the Federación had worked for the creation of such a bank, and after it was created in 1943, for its stability and survival. When the Bank was about to be dissolved in 1948 Bautista met with President Alemán and obtained the 3 million pesos that saved it. But then things started to go wrong for the Federación. In December 1948 a law modified the statutes of the Bank, putting the figure of bank-sponsored credit associations at the center of its operations.⁶⁰⁴ In March 1949 the personnel of the Bank was renewed, and Guillermo Martínez Domínguez became the head of the Oficina de Promoción y Organización de Asociaciones de Crédito. And therein lay the problem: "From that day, Mr. Martínez Domínguez has used all means available to him ... to systematically develop a web of hostilities, hatred, intrigues, and slander against this Federation, its member organizations, and even against the small-scale vendors who commit the only crime of being members of this Federation." In particular, Bautista insisted that Martínez Domínguez had denied credit to the members of the Federación for the past fourteen months, and that nobody had corrected this irregularity. As concrete cases Bautista cited the Mercado San Juan, the Mercado Bugambilia, and finally the Mercado Lago Garda, where Martínez Domínguez had given "a large amount of money to one Mr. Macario

⁶⁰³ 5/2/1950, AGN, MAV, c. 579, exp. 545.22/466.

⁶⁰⁴ "Proyecto de ley para Bco. del Pq Comercio del DF, S.A. de C.V." in 12/15/1948, AGN, MAV, c. 579, exp. 545.22/470.

Lucero, a person of bad antecedents, to herd in outside vendors [comerciantes paracaídistas] and forcibly displace the true vendors, thus creating interminable problems.” He continued that Martínez Domínguez “is not only going to bankrupt the bank, but he’s also increasing the [already] enormous division within small commerce in the Federal District, instead of attempting to harmonize and unify it.”⁶⁰⁵ What is more, as Bautista had already recently warned Alemán in a separate letter, he had been using bank funds “to create groups to support his own ambitions.”⁶⁰⁶ After twenty years at the head of the Federación these were Bautista’s last interventions on behalf of the city’s market vendors.

The Federación was not alone in its denunciation of Martínez Domínguez. The presidentially-appointed Director General of the Bank, Juan de Dios Bojórquez, had his own objections. In March 1950, within three months of having taken over the Bank, he wrote to Secretary of Hacienda and Crédito Público Ramón Beteta, confessing he had already tried to resign over a conflict with this man. While the Federación objected to being crowded out by the Bank’s new credit associations, Bojórquez accused Martínez Domínguez of forming these associations from people who responded to him, to whom he appeared as a “protector or leader,” giving them money without safeguarding the interests of the Bank.⁶⁰⁷ The Bank’s management was divided and politicking was rampant; as an organ of the state, the Bank was far from monolithic.

⁶⁰⁵ 5/2/1950, AGN, MAV, c. 579, exp. 545.22/466.

⁶⁰⁶ 4/4/1950 AGN, MAV, c. 318, exp. 433.152.

⁶⁰⁷ 3/30/1950, *idem*.

Unsurprisingly, the vendor credit unions in question rejected Bojórquez's characterization of them. The same day that Bojórquez wrote to Beteta, they wrote to Alemán to denounce the chaotic situation that, they argued, Bojórquez himself had created. They claimed he broke the law, refused to listen to them, paralyzed the operations of the Bank, and spent its money in absurd ways.⁶⁰⁸ A year later, on February 6, 1951, they renewed the offensive, attacking Bojórquez for irregularities, including moving the Bank's offices to a property owned by his son. The leaders of the credit unions threatened to "cause a public scandal of large proportions, since each and every one of our five thousand compañeros would be a voice in the public plazas against the immoral behavior we are denouncing." What is worse, they argued, "panic would prevail and payments to the bank would be suspended, making it go bankrupt immediately. We don't want to lose this patrimony you have given us. We will fight to preserve it. But we're at a dead-end whose only exit is your personal intervention, and we trust you fully."⁶⁰⁹

Later that month, on February 23, 1951, Alemán received another sorry tale, this time from Bojórquez. Having failed to put a stop to Martínez Domínguez's maneuvers, he was preparing to leave the Bank, and wanted to put his objections on record. From the beginning of its activities, Bojórquez recounted, the Bank had been functioning with political aims: During the first six years of its existence, the bank had been under the control of the Federación de Comerciantes e Industriales en Pequeño, which almost finished the institution, leaving it with bad debts for six hundred and fifty thousand pesos.

⁶⁰⁸ 3/30/1950, *idem*.

⁶⁰⁹ 2/6/1951, *idem*.

At the end of 1948, following the change of its statutes, the bank itself began forming credit associations, creating around forty of them. In his opinion, however, these ended up being worse than the Federación. Credit began flowing exclusively to the members of these associations, and after a year and a half of this policy, they had bad debts of around three hundred thousand pesos. “The leaders, and even the members [of the associations], have got it in their heads that they are the owners of the Bank, and they are ready to cause scandals and demand rights, when in fact they are only debtors and its sole beneficiaries.”⁶¹⁰ His parting recommendation was to reorganize the Bank in order to make direct loans to individual vendors, and avoid dealing with organizations;⁶¹¹ he wanted the Bank to see vendors solely as subjects of credit. He had failed to understand that in *desarrollista* Mexico even the small profits of market vendors had become political concerns, and that vendor politics meant dealing with vendors’ organizations. Despite the protestations of Bojórquez and the Federación,⁶¹² in March 1951 Guillermo Martínez Domínguez was made the new director of the bank.⁶¹³

⁶¹⁰ 2/23/1951, *idem*.

⁶¹¹ Bojórquez proposed to offer vendors day-long loans at 0.5% interest, which implied an annualized rate of 617%. He defended this rate by comparing it with the *usureros*’ practice of charging 5%, or even 10% for 24-hour loans.

⁶¹² 2/12/1951, AGN, MAV, c. 318, exp. 433/152.

⁶¹³ 3/8/1951, *idem*. In 1952 Guillermo Martínez Domínguez was a man on the up. After leaving the Bank in 1955, he became Oficial Mayor of the Comisión Federal de Electricidad, later becoming its director general. In 1970 he was appointed director general of the public financing agency Nacional Financiera, a post he held until 1974. His brother Alfonso rose even higher: After two stints as federal deputy for the Federal District (1946-1949 and 1952-1955), he became head of the PRI’s Federal District regional committee in 1955, then Secretary General of the CNOP between 1960 and 1965, and Jefe del Distrito Federal in 1970-1971.

The most direct attempt to regulate markets took place later that year, in June 1951, when Alemán passed the new Reglamento de Mercados.⁶¹⁴ Bearing little resemblance to the realities of the city's markets, it can be read as a wishful expression, or an idealized version of what markets ought to have been like. Article 3 mandated well-defined markets and *zonas de mercados*, and clear distinctions between *comerciantes permanentes* and *comerciantes temporarios*, as well as between different types of *ambulantes*. According to articles 63 to 69, there would be no stalls outside of specified market zones, and those within these zones would not block traffic; the city center would be clear of street vendors. Article 7 dictated the working hours of markets and street stalls. Article 8 forbade the sale of alcohol in all of them. Articles 10 to 13 regulated the cleanliness and appearance of stalls and markets. Most importantly, article 15 required those registered for permanent or temporary stalls to carry out their trade personally or by means of a family member, while article 32 declared that in no case would the Departamento de Mercados issue more than one permit to any given person. Article 45, in turn, forbade the renting out of permanent or temporary stalls. Article 22 clarified that paying fees did not grant any rights, especially when vendors broke the rules established by the reglamento. Article 27 guaranteed that all registered vendors would be Mexican by birth. Articles 77 to 81 were devoted to vendor associations, stating that these would have a minimum of one hundred members, would have their statutes notarized, and that they would be properly and legally registered with the relevant authorities. The reglamento was so encompassing that it even contained provisions against cruel treatment of live animals sold in markets, in article 21.

⁶¹⁴ "Reglamento de mercados," *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, June 1, 1951, 6-15.

However unrealistic, it attempted to fill a real void: this was the only markets bylaw to be passed in the whole of the twentieth century.⁶¹⁵ And vendors celebrated it. Alemán received a shower of telegrams from vendor organizations congratulating him for the new reglamento. They believed it “legalized the patrimony of small-scale vendors.”⁶¹⁶ Víctor Manuel Ávila, secretary general of the Frente Único de Locatarios y Comerciantes en Pequeño del D.F., observed that it “fulfilled one of the most urgent needs that for many years has demanded resolution for the sake of the people of the Federal District... locatarios and small-scale vendors, knowing the reglamento, will now be able to pursue their activities within the framework of the law.”⁶¹⁷ There was no doubt an element of carefully staged sycophancy in these declarations of support, but vendors may also have hoped that more effective regulations would constrain official abuse and put a check on intra-group conflict. Vendors certainly had a stake in the building of state capacity.

It fell on a new jefe de mercados, Gonzalo Peña Manterola, to apply the new reglamento. Yet despite generalized support for the latter, Peña Manterola’s incursions into intra-vendor politics quickly made him the object of the Federación’s anger. In April 1952 the Federación’s new Secretary General Francisco Ruvalcaba denounced Peña Manterola for his “policy of division and hostility towards this National Federation and its member organizations.” He attached a detailed memo in which they complained that Peña Manterola “openly protects elements that have no representation whatsoever,” and accused him of “harassing our members with the purpose of dividing our organization.”

⁶¹⁵ The previous one was from 1885, and this one was still valid in 2005.

⁶¹⁶ 6/6/1951, AGN, MAV, c. 1139, exp. 003.12/21191.

⁶¹⁷ 7/12/1951, idem.

In particular the memo cited the case of the Mercado 1° de Mayo, which was empty because its surroundings were invaded by ambulantes under his protection, claiming he was trying to organize them for his personal political goals. The same situation arose in the *zona de mercado* of La Dalia, and on Honduras street in La Lagunilla. In the Mercados of Beethoven and La Merced, he removed vendors to make room for paving work on the Calzada de los Misterios and Roldán street respectively, but once the works were done, he refused to allow those from the Federación to retake their places, which he gave to others. The list of complaints continues. The memo ends with a plea that it not be forwarded to the Jefe del Departamento, Peña Manterola's boss, because that would only feed the vicious circle. Instead, they wanted the President to order an investigation to corroborate their claims.⁶¹⁸

Ruvalcaba requested the removal of Peña Manterola as the only way to restore harmony to the city's markets. With Presidential and Congressional elections scheduled for July that year, he believed that reference to his organization's official connections would improve his chance of a favorable resolution; he reminded Alemán that the Federación had always operated in agreement with the instructions of the Central Committee of the PRI, and the CNOP, to which it belonged. He ended his letter reiterating his assurance of their collective support. Ruvalcaba's strategy made sense. Small-scale *comerciantes*, and in particular the Federación, had been active in the CNOP from its creation in 1943. By the early 1950s the "popular sector" had gained influence within the party, giving the Federación the hope that by flaunting its affiliation it could sway market policy. But the gambit did not pay off. Peña Manterola would remain head

⁶¹⁸ 4/4/1952, AGN. MAV, c. 1265, exp. 243.2/34416.

of markets, joining the new administration under President Ruiz Cortines' appointed Jefe del Departamento Central, Ernesto P. Uruchurtu. Together they would transform Mexico City's markets as no one had done before.

5.4 Ernesto P. Uruchurtu, Peddler of Dreams

Uruchurtu took over the Departamento del Distrito Federal in early December 1952, promising to tackle the city's service and infrastructural needs and deficiencies. The city's finances were a shambles, so his first task was to increase tax collection. In his inaugural speech Uruchurtu asked residents to become "exigent contributors." If they wanted their demands met, they had to be willing to pay their taxes.⁶¹⁹ Somehow it worked. Through a combination of an expanded tax base and better administration by Uruchurtu himself, the DF's revenues trebled between 1953 and 1959.⁶²⁰ This dramatically improved the capacity of the local government to perform public works, allowing Uruchurtu to fulfill his commitment to control flooding, increase the supply of clean water, pave streets, reorganize traffic circulation, expand garbage collection services, and build markets to house tens of thousands of street vendors. Famously, he would also build over 100 fountains and plant thousands of trees and flowers, especially gladiolas. In every policy decisions Uruchurtu demonstrated an awareness of the

⁶¹⁹ "Promete Uruchurtu mejorar servicios públicos y frenar la carestía en el D.F.," *Excelsior*, December 6, 1952, in LT, AE.

⁶²⁰ These are nominal figures. Diane Davis, *Urban Leviathan. Mexico City in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 131; Oliver Oldman et al., *Financing Urban Development in Mexico City. A Case Study of Property Tax, Land Use, Housing, and Urban Planning* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 29.

anxieties of a growing city. He hoped to project a positive image of the city's dash for modernity.⁶²¹

The office of Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal, however, was a tricky position to hold. The Federal District was the stronghold of the CNOP, and the growing influence of the latter in the PRI increased the city's importance for national politics. This raised the profile of the Jefe, and the previous two, Javier Rojo Gómez and Fernando Casas Alemán, had entertained presidential hopes. Yet if the CNOP had become an indispensable component of Mexico's political structures, it also represented the most diverse and divided of all the sectors, and its internal conflicts would consume more than one political career. Its rivalry with the CTM for influence within the PRI further complicated the city's politics.⁶²² As vendors understood, the higher stakes in the city increased the peril of political action and threats of disruption, as well as their potential effectiveness.⁶²³

The choice of works performed in the city, and in particular the great expansion of market infrastructure, responded to a set of specific demands different groups and classes articulated through the multiple avenues of local and national politics. The existing historical literature has paid scant attention to Congress, but in a richer, larger city, it mattered greatly who won a candidacy and a seat. As María Cristina Sánchez Mejorada

⁶²¹ Rachel Kram Villarreal, "Gladiolas for the Children of Sánchez: Ernesto P. Uruchurtu's Mexico City" (PhD. Dissertation, History Department, University of Arizona, 2008), 17, 51-53.

⁶²² María Cristina Sánchez Mejorada, *Rezago de la modernidad. Memorias de una ciudad presente* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2005), 67-75; Davis, *Urban Leviathan*, 102-105, 126, 132-136.

⁶²³ Ben Smith's account of the centrality of female market vendors to Oaxaca's social movements in the 1940s and early 1950s also highlights their apt navigation of the state's intra-party conflicts, as well as their entanglement in *caciquista* struggles and their participation in oppositional politics. Smith, *Pistoleros and Popular Movements*, chapters 7-10.

indicates, congressmen could mediate between their constituents, and link them with federal authorities.⁶²⁴ Congressional politics was a key route through which vendors lobbied and negotiated in *desarrollista* Mexico.

In February 1953, for example, Juan José Osorio Palacios, Congressman for the second electoral district, wrote to Uruchurtu to “bring to your attention some of the most urgent problems confronting the aforementioned district ... and which diverse social sectors have put in my hands, with the desire to see them resolved in the shortest possible time.” Almost all of the problems he described related to markets and reflected the demands that vendors had repeatedly made through their organizations. This is not surprising, since the second electoral district was home to the markets and *zonas de mercado* of Abelardo Rodríguez, Tepito, La Lagunilla, 2 de Abril, Santa Ana, and Martínez de la Torre, all of which had vendor organizations operating within the CNOP. The list begins with a demand for “indispensable” childcare facilities in the district’s markets, and even identifies two locations which, he had been informed, could be suitable for the children of vendors from Tepito and La Lagunilla respectively. The district’s markets also needed their streets re-paved and their drainages fixed. Moreover, he stated the importance of improving markets to enable them to house more street vendors. The Congressman noted that since the administration of Lic. Javier Rojo Gómez vendors had been promised all of these improvements, but that this area remained an embarrassment to the city and its government. He finished by acknowledging the numerous constraints

⁶²⁴ Sánchez Mejorada, *Rezago de la modernidad*, 88.

facing Uruchurtu, but “on behalf of my constituents I cannot but make you aware of the needs of the area’s population.”⁶²⁵

From its creation, the CNOP obtained most of the congressional nominations for the Federal District. But which groups would capture a particular electoral district was not always obvious. In Mexico City vendor organizations and their leaders competed among themselves and with other “popular sector” groups, as well as with the CTM, for these nominations. In principle they could all propose candidates, and the mechanisms for this were not limited to formal party gatherings. On one occasion the Executive Committee of the Unión de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Exterior de Cines, Teatros y Puestos Aislados del DF wrote to the secretary of Gobernación to express their support for one “Profesora Ana Bertha Romero, great revolutionary and collaborator of President Don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines” for the congressional seat of the sixth electoral district, announcing that there were fifteen thousand voters in favor of this *profesora*.⁶²⁶ Elections gave brokers a chance to show their strength, at least in terms of numbers of supporters.

Reports from the new intelligence services, the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS), provide a window into the politics behind congressional nominations. In August 1953 the DFS took over the surveillance of markets from the DGIPS.⁶²⁷ Vinicio Ramón Sequeda, one of the founding officers of the DFS, was assigned to La Merced, the city’s wholesale depot and retail center. There are some continuities between DFS and the DGIPS markets reports: agents continued to monitor prices and consumers’ moods and

⁶²⁵ 2/9/1953, AHDF, DDF, OP, box 605.

⁶²⁶ 3/25/1955, AGN, SGG, 2.311.DF (29) 12. C69. Despite this show of support, Romero did not become a federal deputy.

⁶²⁷ 8/18/1953, AGN, DFS, 52-8 L-1.

opinions on the government. They both informed on vendors' and merchants' reactions to state intervention in the city's supply, in particular on their views on the functioning of the CEIMSA. They also included commentary on the relationship between vendors and public officials.⁶²⁸ Increasingly, though, the focus shifted towards vendors' and merchants' political behavior, including tensions among their organizations. The presence of DFS agents in the city's markets underscores the growing importance of vendors in local and national politics.⁶²⁹

The DFS was not, however, just the tool of a top-down, centralized leviathan. Vendor leaders knew how to use its agents and their reports as a means of communicating with the government. What is more, spreading rumors and passing information to intelligence agents became yet another avenue for political maneuvering. On March 1, 1955 Agent 88, one Facundo Gutiérrez Vizcaíno, reported to the DFS that, following the recommendation of Francisco Islas, secretary general of the Sindicato Independiente de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado de la Merced, he had interviewed one Antonio López Hernández, vendor of pencils and fountain pens. López Hernández had told him that he usually set up his stall next to 55 Corregidora Street, using a loudspeaker to announce his merchandise. Following orders of the same Mr. Islas, every half an hour he took time off his business to use his microphone to invite passersby to register for voting [empadronarse] and perform their civic duty in the upcoming mid-term elections. But on Saturday February 26, Mr. Francisco Ramírez, driver of truck number 949, showed up

⁶²⁸ For example, see: 8/21/1953, *idem*; 8/29/1953, *idem*.

⁶²⁹ The DFS was central to the PRI's electoral dominance in this period. The politization of intelligence services suggests that their interest in markets was driven by the preoccupations of the party leadership. Navarro, *Political Intelligence*, 186.

accompanied by policeman number 3039. This particular truck was used to remove *vendedores ambulantes*, but out of more than 200 such vendors in that street, he was the only one picked up. Given that he was also the only one carrying out “democratic labors”, he complained that this was unfair. Angry at being questioned, the driver of the truck unplugged the vendor’s equipment, and by blows got him and his merchandise on board the truck. After having beaten him, the driver told the vendor that he should speak with Peña Manterola if he sought an explanation, because it was he who had given the orders.

Islas clearly wanted this matter communicated to the DFS, and gave the agent his own interpretation of the events, remarking that the altercation was purely a political matter: Peña Manterola, claimed Islas, had been Casas-Alemanista in the previous presidential pre-race, and only after Ruíz Cortines was named did he change his allegiance and became Ruiz Cortinista. Islas insisted that, “Far from executing the postulates of this administration, many high up government employees, among them Peña Manterola and head of the Transit Department, are committing many injustices to discredit it and turn public opinion against it.”⁶³⁰ Finally, he wanted the agent to note that he, Islas, was going to unify small-scale commerce to make the President aware of who his trustworthy collaborators were.

Islas had political designs of his own. On March 23 1955, the same Agent 88 visited the offices of the Sindicato Independiente de Comerciantes en Pequeño de la Merced, where he had a conversation with Francisco Navarro, Diputado Suplente for the fifth electoral district. Navarro informed him that two days earlier eighteen representatives of La Merced vendors’ and merchants’ organizations had gathered there,

⁶³⁰ 3/1/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-74 L-1.

to unite the support of the district's "popular sector" for a ticket led by him, with Islas as Suplente, for the upcoming Congressional elections. Knowing that the message would get through, he told the agent that "If the PRI wants to win the elections in this district they should not impose foreign people, because that would give the PAN, which has supporters in this district, the opportunity to beat the official party." He insisted he had been working for the district for years, and was to be able to gather more than five thousand resident voters in under five hours. He let Agent 88 know that if he did not receive the candidacy he would respect party discipline and not fight for it, but then his followers would abstain from voting, and thus the PAN would win easily.⁶³¹

Agent 88 returned to La Merced daily during the election season, and on March 29 he witnessed an assembly held at the offices of the Sindicato Independiente, now "converted into the office of political matters for the fifth electoral district." Under the banner of the PRI and the CNOP, he reported, all the organizations of comerciantes of La Merced showed discipline and "revolutionary unity," vowing to fight opposition parties.⁶³² Two days later he seemed genuinely worried: Newspapers had announced the candidacy of Alfonso Sánchez Madariaga from the CTM for this district, causing widespread discontent in La Merced. Odilón Posadas, from the wholesalers organizations, announced that the PRI was not going to trick them this time, and that if they wanted to impose a workers' candidate then they would simply vote for any opposition ticket available. For his part, Francisco Robles Rodríguez, secretary general of the Unión de Comerciantes Detallistas de La Merced and an ally of Navarro and Islas,

⁶³¹ 3/23/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-75 L-1.

⁶³² 3/29/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-76 L-1.

commented that it looked like the government was scared of the CTM, and could not understand why they would nominate a workers candidate when the district was so clearly “popular.” On election day they would “show their worth, driving the PAN candidate to victory.”⁶³³

The government was not impressed. Francisco Islas found out soon enough that his attacks on Peña Manterola were not helping, as the latter stopped renewing the vending permits of his rank and file.⁶³⁴ Nor did Islas receive the nomination for Diputado Suplente. Despite merchants’ and vendors’ threats, the CTM candidate carried the district, though the position of Diputado Suplente was taken for the CNOP by Francisco Robles Rodríguez, Islas’ and Navarro’s ally. But conflict did not end there. Agent 88 reported further complaints on September 9, 1955, from this new Diputado Suplente. Robles Rodríguez believed that the new CTM congressman was trying to encroach upon the CNOP’s position in the district, by forming a local “central obrera filial de la CTM.” How dare he: Robles Rodríguez told the Agent that “if he won the congressional seat in to his district, it was solely and exclusively because of the vendor unions... all of which are under the complete control of the same Robles Rodríguez, Francisco Islas, and the former diputado suplente, Francisco Navarro.”⁶³⁵ The *comerciantes*’ warnings had not been too far-fetched: this would be the best election any opposition party would have

⁶³³ 3/31/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-77/78 L-1.

⁶³⁴ 6/2/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-79 L-1.

⁶³⁵ 9/9/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-109 L-1.

until as late as 1988, with the PAN obtaining three of the nineteen seats for the Federal District.⁶³⁶

While vendors organizations could not win all their battles, the Jefe del Departamento could not ignore their demands. The Unión de Comerciantes Mexicanos en Pequeño del Mercado San Juan, for example, wrote to President Ruiz Cortines in March 1953, requesting the building of a market, “from the Ayuntamiento to the Arcos de Belem,” to replace the one that had burned down in January 1950. These works were urgent because “many American tourists come to this market, and with pain and indignation we see how they take pictures, which logically they then use to denigrate us.” Moreover, lacking in pavements and drainage, the streets of Delicias and Aranda tended to flood with “black waters,” constituting a focus for infection, and causing losses to the vendors with stalls there. Following an established pattern, they also requested the creation of a daycare facility for their children.⁶³⁷ Initiating a massive market construction program in 1954, Uruchurtu would soon deliver.

If market construction on a large scale would satisfy a long-running demand of vendors, Uruchurtu’s dream of a modern city required the stick as well as the carrot: repression of street vending was an integral component of his markets strategy. From his very first week in office he launched a campaign to remove vendors from the city center.⁶³⁸ Yet the primary sources consulted for this period do not contain explicit attacks on the Jefe del Departamento. His nickname, “Regente de Hierro,” denoted strength as

⁶³⁶ Jacqueline Peschard, “Las elecciones en el Distrito Federal (1946-1970),” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 50, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1988), 238.

⁶³⁷ 03/1953, AGN, ARC, c. 411, exp. 418.5/7. The date is incomplete in the original.

⁶³⁸ Gary Isaac Gordon, “Pedlers, Pesos and Power: The Political Economy of Street Vending in Mexico City” (PhD Dissertation, History Department, University of Chicago, 1997), 83.

much as anything else. Rather, it is Jefe de Mercados Gonzalo Peña Manterola who is constantly criticized and censured. In February 1953, “one hundred and thirty vendors who used to make an honest living on the streets of Eligio Ancona” complained they had been “vilely abused by the head of the market department.” They demand justice, which they believe they deserve because “We were Ruiz Cortinistas and contributed actively to your campaign. Is this how were paid for our humble services?”⁶³⁹ On October 9 the *Frentes de Comerciantes en Pequeño* and *Femenil de Protección de Comerciantes*, both self-declared “active members of the Frente Coordinador de Unificación Nacional pro-Adolfo Ruiz Cortines,” censured Peña Manterola, who “with excessive force and disregard for the most elementary rights of citizens persecutes [vendors,] confiscating their merchandise, fining them, charging them excessive fees.”⁶⁴⁰ In August 1953, the *Alianza de Comerciantes en Pequeño del Mercado de Jamaica* wrote to Uruchurtu and to Ruiz Cortines to denounce him. In the letter to the President, they called him their “inquisitor and tormentor.”⁶⁴¹ DFS agents also communicated these opinions. In October 1953 they followed eight hundred vendors to the offices of the Departamento, where they demonstrated against Manterola’s actions. The agents reported that while the vendors’ leaders were willing to accept the offer of a re-accommodation made by Uruchurtu, their main problem was with his head of markets, who “in the presence of the jefe del Departamento is a white dove, and in his offices is a Nero who treats the public to

⁶³⁹ 2/18/1953, AGN, ARC, c. 677, exp. 521/1.

⁶⁴⁰ 10/9/1953, *idem*.

⁶⁴¹ 8/7/1953, AGN, ARC, c. 411, exp. 418.5/3. The *Alianza* was a member of the *Federación de Obreros del D.F.*, and affiliated to the *CTM*. 5/17/1957, *idem*.

infamies and insults.”⁶⁴² In January 1954, La Lagunilla’s Frente de Protección Mutua de Comerciantes en Pequeño requested the President order “an immediate and energetic investigation to corroborate the unspeakable abuses inflicted upon us by Peña Manterola.”⁶⁴³

John Cross and Gary Gordon analyze the politics of street vending during the Uruchurtu years, arguing that the combination of market construction and repression helped the government bring vendor organizations under tighter control.⁶⁴⁴ But this interpretation suggests that there was a coherent state attempting to bend vendor organizations to its will. The process, however, was more nuanced. Peña Manterola, rather than representing a unified state, was actively attempting to increase his own power and that of his camarilla within the CNOP, and the power of the CNOP within the PRI and the government. Market politics were a core part of CNOP politics, and there are indications that his repression of certain vendor groups was part of a fight against the CTM, and the product of competition for control of CNOP-affiliated vendor organizations. On June 17, 1953, then Congressman Víctor Manuel Ávila, in his role as Secretary General of the Frente Único de Locatarios y Comerciantes en Pequeño del DF, wrote to president Ruiz Cortines to bring to his attention a memo detailing Peña Manterola’s advances against the Frente Único. According to Ávila, Peña Manterola, in cahoots with César Cervantes and others, had created a rival Federación de Comerciantes en Pequeño with Mariano Chávez and Leonardo Salas Valencia at its head, “to which he

⁶⁴² 10/26/1953, AGN, DFS, 30-21 53 L-1 H-2; 10/29/1953, *idem*, H-5.

⁶⁴³ 1/10/1954, AGN, ARC, c. 1240, exp. 703.2/209.

⁶⁴⁴ John C. Cross, *Informal Politics. Street Vendors and the State in Mexico City* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 161-172; Gordon, “Pedlars, Pesos and Power,” 98-100.

is giving all the help and support imaginable.” Congressman Ávila left no doubt of his opinion. Peña Manterola, he insisted, was trying to “dissolve” the Frente Único by slandering its leaders in the press, forcefully removing the stalls of its rank and file, imposing illegal fines, and encouraging violent confrontations. “These scandalous practices,” he claimed, had already caused them “the loss of [several] organizations.”⁶⁴⁵

These accusations are repeated and expanded in a memo dated February 2, 1954. Its provenance is unclear, but it is part of a file in the presidential archives devoted to complaints about Peña Manterola. The first point raised in the memo reproduced Congressman Ávila’s accusations, using almost his exact words. It then broadened the scope, stating that Peña Manterola sought to dissolve all vendor federations in order to favor his own, and that to do this he played them against each other, and was willing to accuse their leaders of being enemies of the government. What is more, it related how Peña Manterola and his camarilla had “managed to impress Mr. Francisco Galindo Ochoa, regional executive president of the PRI, who receives them and gives them preferential treatment.” Following their request, Galindo Ochoa had convoked the representatives of all vendor federations to ask them to merge into one. This unification, the memo claims, would allow Peña Manterola to eliminate uncooperative leaders.⁶⁴⁶ Consistent with these complaints, in June 1955 DFS agents recorded that La Merced vendor leaders were calling the Jefe de Mercados “Maquiavelo Manterola.”⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴⁵ 6/17/1953, AGN, ARC, c. 677, exp. 521/1. The list of organizations that Ávila claimed had left the Frente Único included: Obrero Mundial, Colima, Ambulantes, Churubusco, San Juan de Letrán, Arenal, Lagunilla, Circumvalación, Jesús María, and Venustiano Carranza.

⁶⁴⁶ 2/2/1954, AGN, ARC, c. 1240, exp. 703.2/209.

⁶⁴⁷ 6/11/1955, AGN, DFS, 30-21-55 H-79 L-1.

As repression and political interventions gained momentum, Uruchurtu's market building campaign reached its peak. Between 1955 and 1958 he inaugurated sixty-nine markets with room for more than twenty nine thousand vendors. Twenty thousand stalls were built in 1957 alone, a year in which the Departamento del Distrito spent one quarter of its budget on the construction of thirty-eight market halls.⁶⁴⁸ This was the most intensive rate of market building that Mexico City would ever see. In the new markets vendors were provided with refrigerators and scales, while maintenance, security, electricity and water were paid for by the city, all for a notional rent. They had daycare facilities, and vendors also received medical check-ups and were offered literacy programs in the markets' offices.⁶⁴⁹ In other words, for the tens of thousands of organized vendors who found a place in the new markets, they represented dramatic economic progress, providing access to conveniences and social services that seemed unattainable ten years earlier.

La Merced's inauguration in September 1957 was the most celebrated of all market openings. The Departamento had contracted one of the most renowned Mexican architects of the twentieth century, Enrique Del Moral, to design it. The market was composed of seven different and separate halls: the enormous *Nave Mayor*, with capacity to house 3,205 vendors of fruits and vegetables; the *Nave Menor*, with 496 stalls dedicated to meat, fish, and dry goods; an adjacent annex devoted to hardware and leather goods; and three smaller sections located in front of the *Nave Mayor*: one selling toys and

⁶⁴⁸ Gordon, "Pedlers, Pesos and Power," 87.

⁶⁴⁹ A description of the markets built between 1955 and 1966 can be found in Jane Pyle, "The Public Markets of Mexico City" (PhD Dissertation, Geography Department, University of Oregon, 1968), chapter 1.

clothes, another occupied by 106 stalls selling plants and flowers, and a third for traditional Mexican sweets; finally, there was a separate unit for vendors of prepared foods and drinks. In total, 5,825 comerciantes found a home in La Merced. The complex included a loading and unloading platform that could receive 150 trucks simultaneously, as well as parking for 400 vehicles. It had refrigeration chambers, an area for washing fruit and vegetables, public toilets, first aid stations, a police station, and daycare units for the vendors' children.⁶⁵⁰ La Merced truly embodied the dream of Mexican modernity.

The public were impressed. Under headings such as “Monumental Markets,” and “The Biggest Market in the World,” the press reported that “more than fifty thousand people of all social classes” had gathered to attend the opening ceremony presided by Ruiz Cortines and Uruchurtu. The municipal band played music. Víctor Manuel Ávila was the first to speak on behalf of the vendors, to express gratitude for the transformation of the area, which until recently had been an unaesthetic oriental souk, and a barrier against traffic. Addressing the president, he declared that “Your ability to coordinate and equilibrate the interests of all sectors guarantees harmony and progress.” The president and his Jefe del Departamento, accompanied by several secretaries of state, then toured the seven buildings of the La Merced complex, receiving “demonstrations of sympathy and affection” at every step of the way.⁶⁵¹

Excelsior called La Merced “enormous and beautiful.” It described the crowds that attended the inauguration as “one of the most spontaneous demonstration of popular

⁶⁵⁰ López Rosado, Diego, *El abasto de productos alimenticios en la Ciudad de Mexico*, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988, 450-451; “Dignificación del comerciante en pequeño, salud y bienestar para sus hijos, metas del D.F.,” *El Nacional*, September 24, 1957, in LT, AE.

⁶⁵¹ “Monumentales centros de abastecimiento de La Merced y Jamaica, inaugurados ayer,” *El Nacional*, September 24, 1957, in LT, AE.

gratitude the city remembered.” Cheers of “Long live President Ruiz Cortines, the most conscientious president of Latin America” and “Long live the best regente the city’s ever had” resonated in the Nave Mayor.⁶⁵² *El Universal* celebrated “the disappearance of the old La Merced and Jamaica Markets,” stating that even if with them the city lost “two points of reference for our traditions and history,” this was “the natural tribute we must pay to the imperative of modernization.” With the inauguration of new markets Mexico City “has taken a giant step to put itself among the greatest metropolises of the world.”⁶⁵³ *El Nacional*, for its part declared that it “dignified small-scale vendors, providing for the health and wellbeing of their children,” and bringing them “comfort and hygiene.” The new halls were “works that represent progress and social justice.”⁶⁵⁴

Vendor organizations, for their own part, were effusive in their praise of the new markets. President Ruiz Cortines received congratulatory telegrams from scores of vendor leaders. Jesús Jiménez Torres for the Alianza de Comerciantes del DF declared that “With works like this, Mr. President, you justify the revolution... You have benefited not only small-scale vendors but also the city’s consumers, who will now buy their goods at fair prices.”⁶⁵⁵ Congressman Javier Salgado, in the name of the locatarios de La Merced, sent congratulations for the new market he had given them, and reported that the

⁶⁵² “Obras por 129 millones puso en servicio el Señor Presidente,” *Excélsior*, September 24, 1957, in LT, AE.

⁶⁵³ “Unidad técnica y social,” *El Universal*, September 24, 1957, sección editorial, in LT, AE.

⁶⁵⁴ “Dignificación del comerciante en pequeño, salud y bienestar para sus hijos, metas del D.F.,” *El Nacional*, September 24, 1957, in LT, AE.

⁶⁵⁵ 9/17/1957, AGN, ARC, c. 980, exp. 564.1/18.

new locatarios pledged to respect official prices, and help beat the high cost of living. He assured the president of their most loyal collaboration.⁶⁵⁶

As the 1958 election approached vendors showed their gratitude to the government. On February 2, combining support for both the government's registration campaign and its efforts to reduce the cost of living, representatives of five organizations, claiming to represent seventy thousand vendors, announced they would be offering a ten percent discount to customers who showed them their registered voter card.⁶⁵⁷ That same day, forty thousand vendors attended a rally for López Mateos's candidacy; they explicitly connected their backing with his promise for a continuity of Uruchurtu's policies.⁶⁵⁸ The July 1958 election would be the PRI's all time best in the Federal District.⁶⁵⁹

5.5 Conclusion

Uruchurtu would be reappointed by Presidents López Mateos and Díaz Ordaz, and in his fourteen years as Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal the city built one hundred and sixty markets with capacity for over fifty thousand stalls. Vendors, who had pushed for so long to be included in the drive for modernity, at last found themselves closer to a middle class way of life, buttressed by state support. Yet while the new markets represented material progress for those who obtained a stall, those who were left

⁶⁵⁶ 9/23/1957, idem.

⁶⁵⁷ "Descuento a quienes se empadronen," *Excélsior*, February 12, 1958.

⁶⁵⁸ Cross, *Informal Politics*, 170-171.

⁶⁵⁹ Peschard, "Las elecciones en el Distrito Federal," 233.

out faced the repressive end of these policies. Further tens of thousands of vendors remained on the streets, which were even less welcoming than before. Their numbers, moreover, would be ever-increasing. Population growth soon exploded. Urban modernity in the midst of rural poverty generated constant migration into the city and its environs, placing a limit on the city's pretensions to development. The better the city became, the more people it attracted to fill the gaps. With a capitalist sector too weak to incorporate the newcomers and the young, modernity would remain exclusive, at its best broadening economic progress to include more individuals and families, but at the same time generating inequality as the majority were, inevitably, left behind.

Conclusions

On May 25, 1961 three hundred vendor representatives gathered in the Follies Bergere Theater to celebrate the Second Congress of the CNOP-affiliated *locatarios*' organizations. The president of the congress, Adolfo Enríquez Guzmán, remarked that "until 1945 the locatarios constituted an anonymous sector in the concert of Mexican progress, a sector that now, with the new public markets built by the Federal government...takes its rightful place, to contribute with its efforts to collective advancement." Leonardo Salas Valencia, for the Federación de Comerciantes en Pequeño de los Mercados del Distrito Federal, proclaimed that locatarios had received in their stalls a valuable patrimony, and that it was their duty to preserve it and augment it. He urged vendors to educate themselves in how to better treat their clients; to establish cordial relations with the authorities and to improve their public image so that their petitions would be received with greater sympathy; to eradicate bribes and pay their taxes in full; to fight for a better functioning of the Banco del Pequeño Comercio; to act collectively to secure direct purchases from producers; and to seek official support for the creation of a *colonia* where they could build houses for their families, and scholarships so that their children could continue their studies. He exhorted the assembly to fight for vendors' unity and for further improvements in their living standards.⁶⁶⁰

In their middle class aspirations, market vendors became ever more dependent on the state. In a full dialectical circle vendors went from recipients of the compassion of the

⁶⁶⁰ "Reconocen la gran obra del gobierno federal los locatarios de mercados," *El Universal*, May 25, 1961, in LT, AE.

city's elite in the 1860s, to relying on *desarrollista* patronage in the decades after World War II, all the while contributing to the city's fiscal base, and, more often than not, to the pockets of local officials. Yet, while scholarly work on urban popular groups has tended to emphasize either their marginality and cultural dissonance, or their co-optation and manipulation by the state, neither interpretations accurately reflects vendors' experiences. In their own terms, from the Porfiriato onwards vendors took part in every market modernizing experiment the government undertook. What is more, their entrance into the belly of the beast was the product of careful, though always conflictive and sometimes violent, negotiations. Together with other mobilized urban groups vendors transformed the city's public sphere during the Revolution and its aftermath. They too created the mid-century PRI. Vendors were active participants in the process of state formation.

One final point. While most of this dissertation dealt with vendors' relationship with the state, this was the result of the available sources. When the material allowed it the narrative engaged with vendors' broader material interests, without which their politics cannot be comprehended. Vendors are often described as self-employed, or informal economic actors. But these categories do not encompass the complexity of their social and economic relations so they are, at best, insufficient. Despite their identification with labour struggles, especially in the 1910s and 1920s, vendors' interests differed from those of workers. Vendors were exploited by their suppliers and creditors, competed for custom with each other and with larger merchants, and at times came into conflict with the poorly paid industrial workers who bought their products. A historical account of these class relationships and conflicts, as they shaped and were shaped by evolving social norms and practices, is essential to understanding the development of modern Mexico.

Appendix

Table A1: Total municipal revenues (pesos), *derechos municipales*, and markets' contribution, 1869-1880

Year	Total revenue	of which <i>derechos municipales</i>	of which markets
1869	830,793	47%	11.4%
1870	839,509	48%	9.8%
1871	874,402	47%	9.5%
1872	848,703	47%	8.2%
1873	897,609	47%	8.0%
1874	921,969	46%	9.0%
1875	869,845	48%	9.8%
1876	839,043	43%	9.8%
1877	745,256	39%	10.9%
1878	869,578	48%	9.7%
1879	941,845	47%	10.7%
1880	1,006,547	44%	11.0%
		Average	9.8%
		standard deviation	1.1%

Source: Revenue and *Derechos Municipales* from Rodríguez Kuri, *Experiencia olvidada*, 120; Markets as in Table 2.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁶¹ Rodríguez Kuri includes figures for market revenue in his Anexo 1, pages 279-283, but these reflect viento fees only, and not the total revenue generated by markets.

Table A2: Revenues due to markets (pesos), 1869-1880

Year	Market revenue	of which <i>viento</i>	of which <i>arrendamientos</i>
1869	94,757	63,100	31,657
1870	82,061	62,772	19,289
1871	83,261	67,561	15,700
1872	69,414	52,431	16,983
1873	71,428	54,548	16,880
1874	82,567	65,265	17,301
1875	85,198	63,124	22,074
1876	82,421	58,766	23,654
1877	81,393	56,839	24,554
1878	84,679	60,484	24,195
1879	100,391	75,363	25,028
1880	110,969	86,034	24,934

Source: 1869-1879 from *Memoria 1879*, 220; 1880 from *Discurso 1880*, 12.

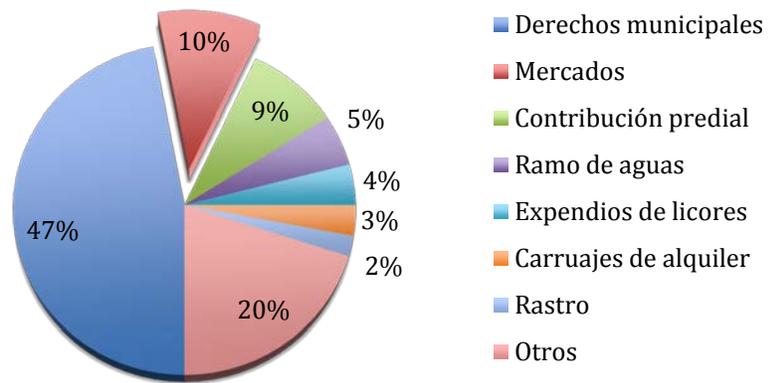


Figure A1: Municipal revenue sources, 1879

Source: *Memoria 1879*, 14-15.

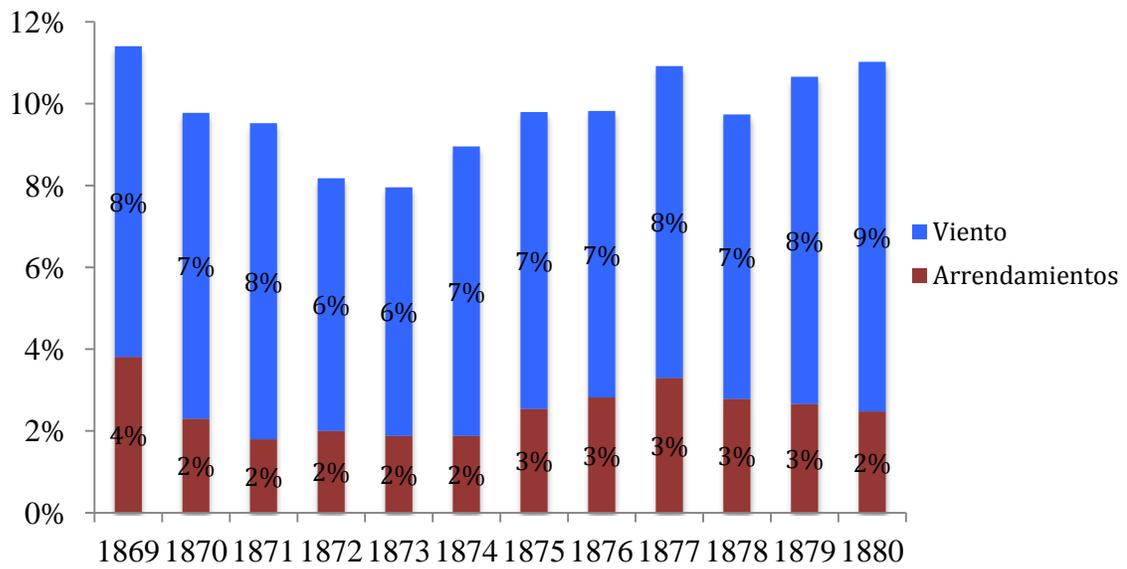


Figure A2: Revenue due to markets as a share of total municipal revenue, 1869-1880

Source: Tables 1 and 2.

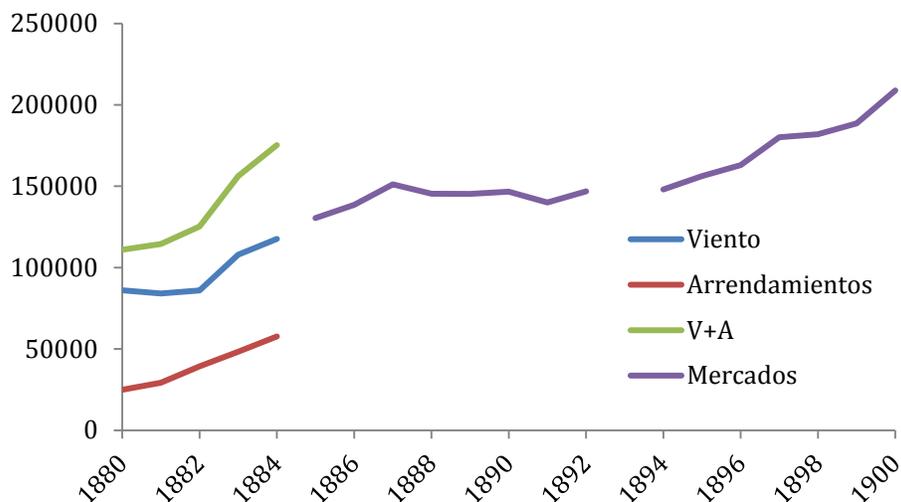


Figure A3: Revenues due to markets (pesos), 1880-1900

Source: Viento and Arrendamientos 1880 from *Discursos 1880*, 11-13; Viento 1881-1883 and Arrendamientos 1882-1883 from ML, 10/1/1884, 3; Arrendamientos 1881 calculated from idem and *Discursos 1881*, 20, which reports the sum of viento and arrendamientos; Viento and Arrendamientos 1884 from ML, 1/29/1885, 1; Mercados 1885 from *Discursos 1885*, 27; Mercados 1886, *Discursos 1886*, 30; Mercados 1887, *Discursos 1887*, 30; Mercados 1888, *Discursos 1888*, 29; Mercados 1889, *Discursos 1889*, 29; Mercados 1890, ML, 1/17/1891, 1; Mercados 1891, ML, 1/5/1892, 2; Mercados 1892, ML, 1/6/1893, 1; Mercados 1894, *Discursos 1894 y Memoria documentada*, 117; Mercados 1895, *Discursos 1895 and Memoria documentada*, 129; Mercados 1896, *Discursos 1896 y Memoria documentada*, 162; Mercados 1897, Rodríguez Kuri, *La experiencia*, 283; Mercados 1898, *Discursos y Memoria documentada*, 223; Mercados 1899, *Discursos 1899 y Memoria documentada*, 266; Mercados 1900, *Discursos 1900 y Memoria documentada*, 369.⁶⁶²

⁶⁶² The separate series for Viento and Arrendamientos go up to 1884, while from 1885 onwards data is reported only for "Mercados". The figures for "mercados" in 1885 and subsequent years, however, are substantially below the sum of viento and arrendamientos up to 1884, and more consistent with the viento-only figures. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that "Mercados" refers to the old viento category, and that figures for Arrendamientos stopped being reported by the markets commission.

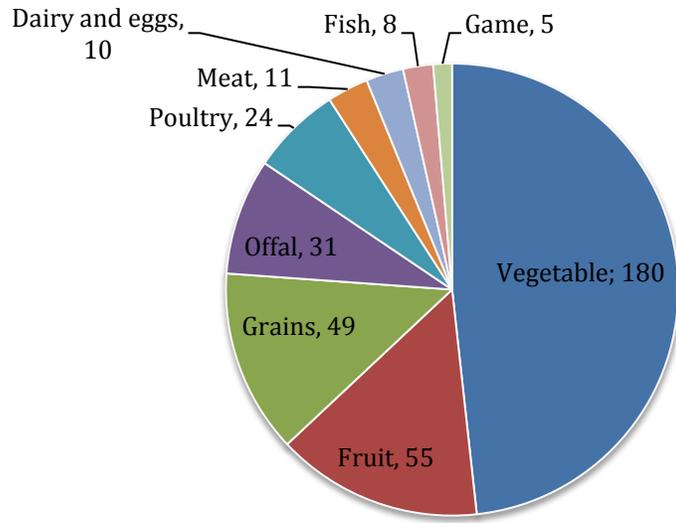


Figure A4: Numbers of stalls by product in La Merced market, 1903

Source: 9/25/1903, AHDF, CSG, vol. 608, exp. 5.

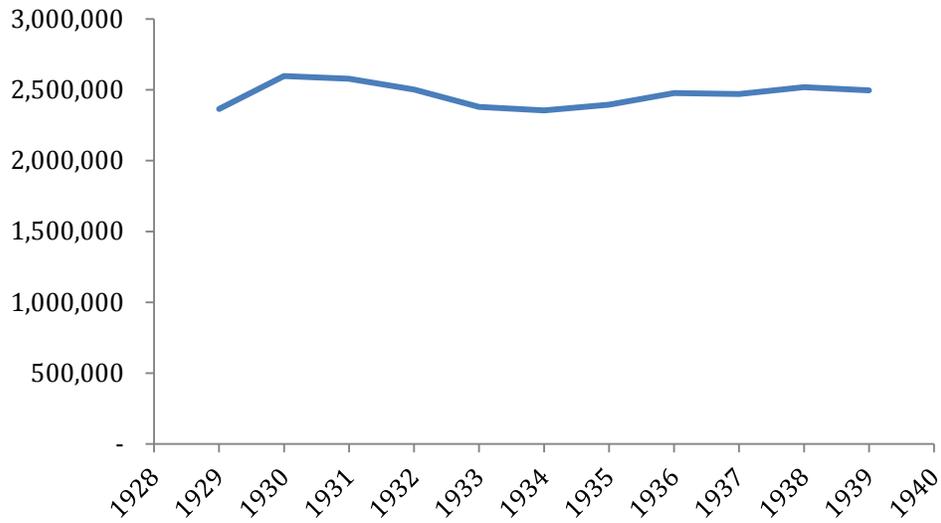


Figure A5: Revenues due to markets (pesos), 1929-1939

Source: Markets up to 1937 from *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1937 al 30 de agosto de 1938*, 346; Markets 1938 and 1939, from *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1940 al 31 de agosto de 1941*, table 114.

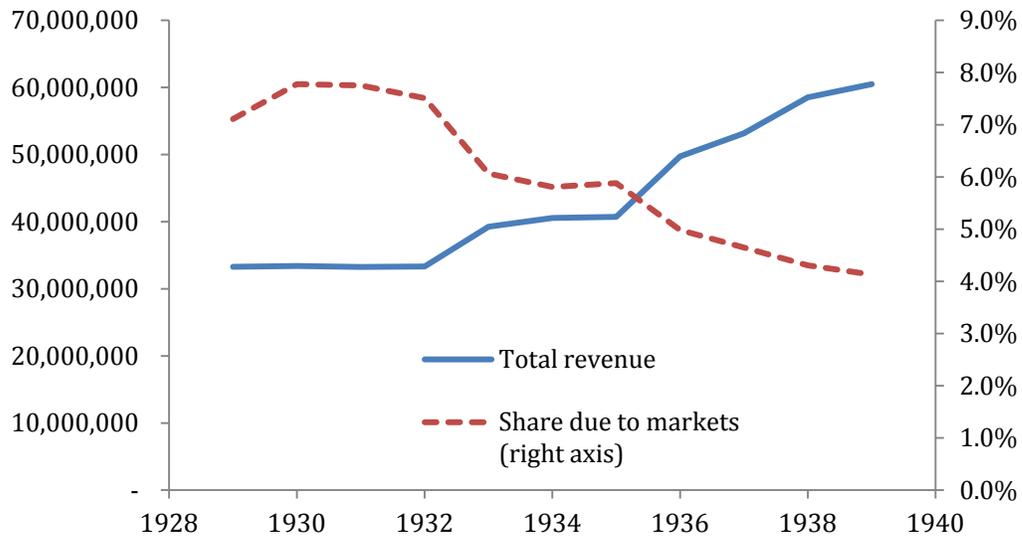


Figure A6: Total municipal revenue (pesos), and share due to markets (percent), 1929-1939

Source: Markets as in Figure 5; Ingresos up to 1937 from *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1937 al 30 de agosto de 1938*, 334; Ingresos 1938-1939 from *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1939 al 31 de agosto de 1940*, 9.

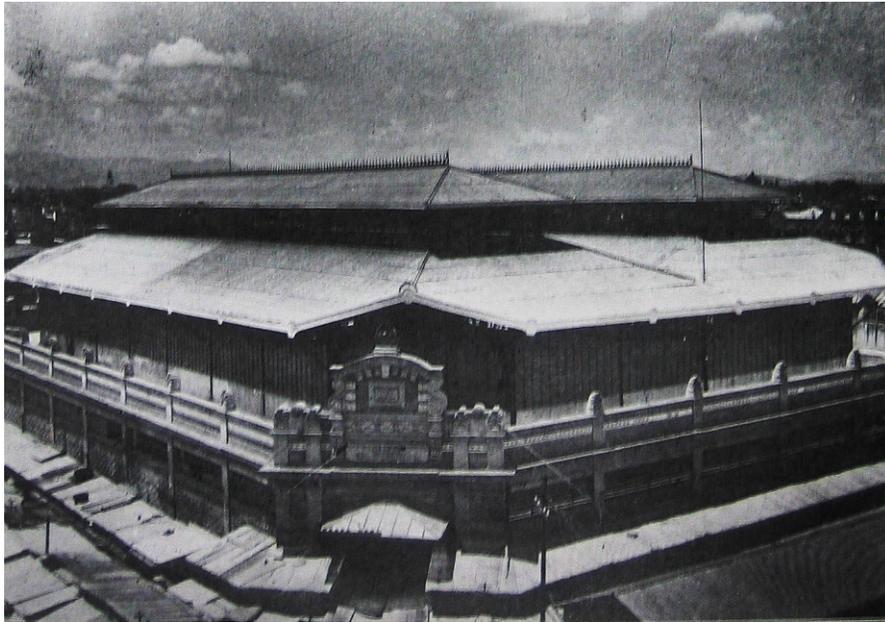


Figure A7: La Lagunilla's turn-of-the-century market hall, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 8-9, August-September 1930, 81.

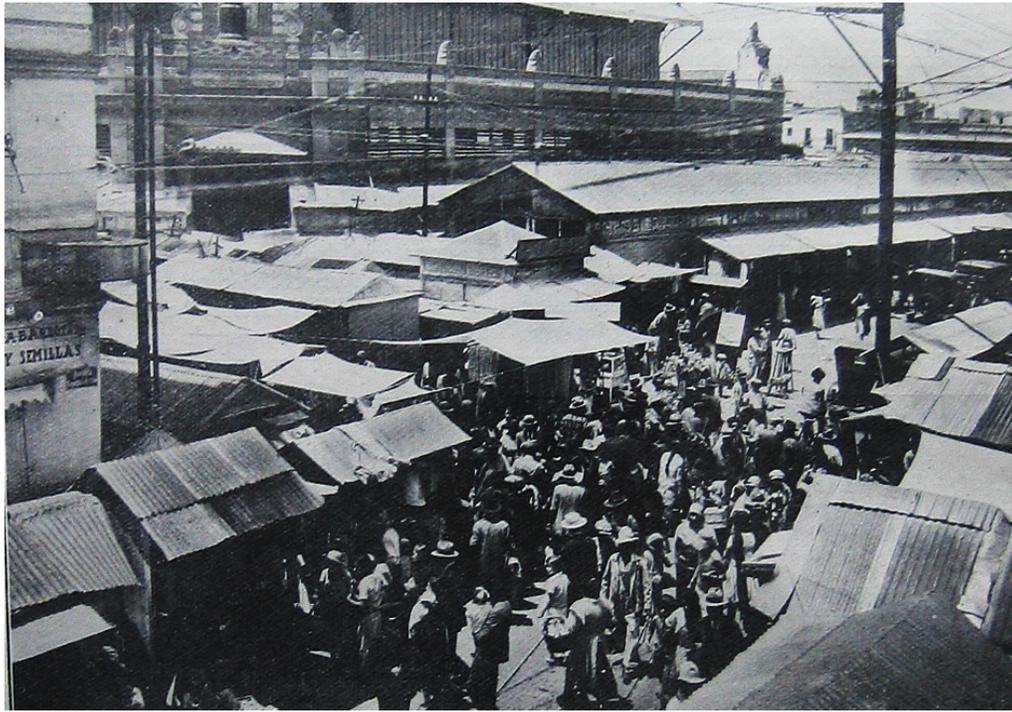


Figure A8: Market stalls outside of La Lagunilla's hall, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 8-9, August-September 1930, 82.



Figure A9: Stalls on Honduras Street, La Lagunilla market zone, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 8-9, August-September 1930, 83.



Figure A10: Vegetable vendors outside of La Lagunilla's hall, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 12, December 1930, 270.

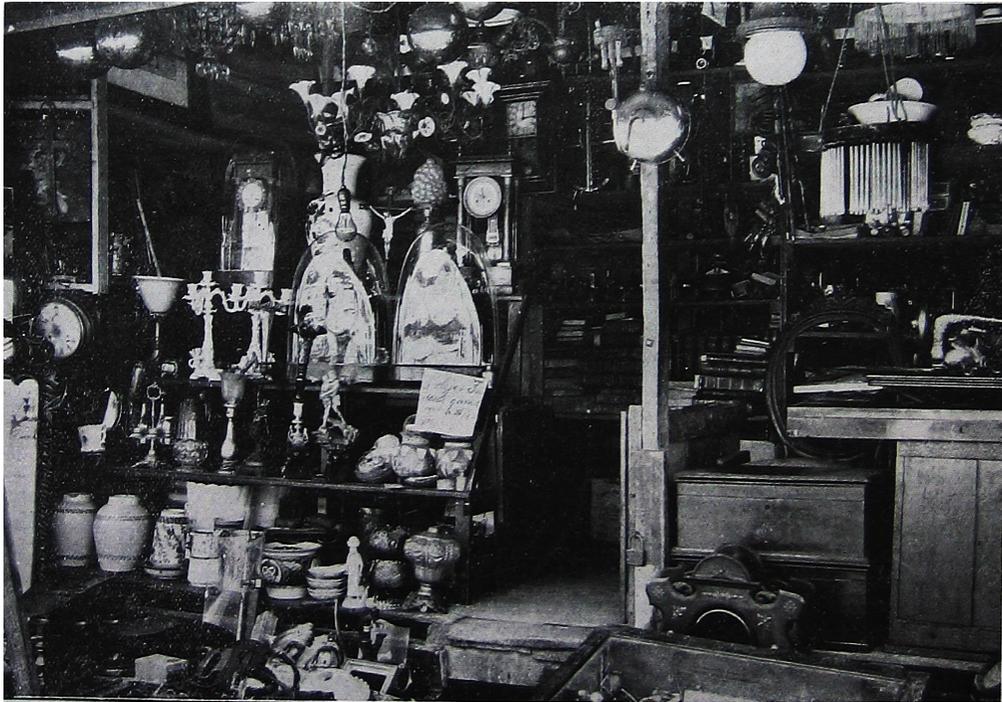


Figure A11: Antiques store in La Lagunilla, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 12, December 1930, 269.



Figure A12: Luxury fabric store in La Lagunilla, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 12, December 1930, 271.

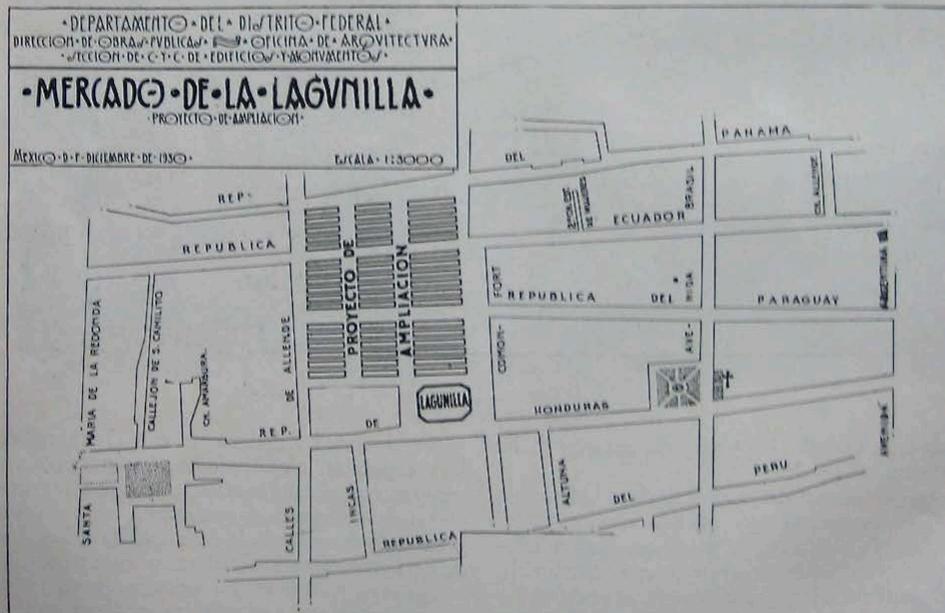


Figure A13: La Lagunilla area, and the market enlargement project, 1930

Source: *Obras Públicas* 2, no. 12, December 1930, 272.



Figure A14: Exterior of the Mercado Abelardo Rodríguez

Source: AGN, Fondo Hermanos Mayo, Sección Concentrados, Sobre 1654, Sin Fecha (ca. 1950-1970).



Figure A15: Interior of the Mercado Abelardo Rodríguez

Source: AGN, Fondo Hermanos Mayo, Sección Concentrados, Sobre 1654, Sin Fecha (ca. 1950-1970).



Figure A16: Modernist exterior of La Lagunilla market

Source: AGN, Fondo Hermanos Mayo, Sección Concentrados, Sobre 1666, Sin Fecha (ca. 1950-1970).



Figure A17: Interior the *nave mayor* of La Merced market, 1957

Source: AGN, Fondo Hermanos Mayo, Sección Concentrados, Sobre 1661, 1957.



Figure A17: Mercado Mixcoac

Source: AGN, Fondo Hermanos Mayo, Sección Cronológicos, Sobre 9329, September 1955.



Figure A19: Inauguration of Mercado Hidalgo

Source: AGN, Fondo Hermanos Mayo, Sección Cronológicos, Sobre 10577, November 1956.

References

Archives

Archivo General de la Nación (AGN)

Departamento de Trabajo (DT)

Dirección General de Investigaciones Políticas y Sociales (DGIPS)

Fototeca

Presidentes

Obregón-Calles (O-C)

Pascual Ortíz Rubio (POR)

Abelardo L. Rodríguez (ALR)

Lázaro Cárdenas (LC)

Manuel Ávila Camacho (MAC)

Miguel Alemán Valdés (MAV)

Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (ARC)

Secretaría General de Gobernación (SGG)

Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Salubridad y Asistencia (AHSSA)

Archivo Histórico del Distrito Federal (AHDF)

Actas y Versiones del Consejo Consultivo (AVCC)

Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, Fincas de Mercados (ACM, FM)

Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, Rastros y Mercados (ACM, RyM)

Consejo Superior de Gobierno (CSG)

Gobierno del Distrito, Mercados (GD, M)

Secretaría de Gobernación, Rastros y Mercados (SG, RyM)

Departamento del Distrito Federal, Oficina Consultiva (DDF, OC)

Departamento del Distrito Federal, Obras Públicas (DDF, OP)

Archivo Porfirio Díaz (APD)

Biblioteca Lerdo de Tejada (BLT)

Archivos Económicos (AE)

Hemeroteca

Fideicomiso Archivos Plutarco Elías Calles y Fernando Torreblanca (FAPECFT)

Plutarco Elías Calles (PEC)

Hemeroteca Nacional Digital de México

Newspapers and Periodicals

Boletín Oficial del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal

Diario Oficial de la Federación

El Boletín Municipal

El Demócrata

The Mexican Herald

El Municipio Libre

El Nacional

El País

El Popular

El Universal

Excélsior

La Colonia Española

La Patria

La Prensa

El Monitor Republicano

Novedades

Obras Públicas

Revista Mexicana de Ingeniería y Arquitectura

Times Magazine

Bibliography

- Castillo Méndez, Laura Elena. *Historia del comercio en la Ciudad de México*. Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal, Secretaría de Obras y Servicios, Colección Popular, 1973.
- Castillo Velasco, José M. del, ed. *Colección de leyes, supremas órdenes, bandos, disposiciones de policía y reglamentos municipales de administración del Distrito Federal*. Mexico City: Castillo Velasco e Hijos, 1874.
- Agostoni, Claudia. *Monuments of Progress: Modernization and Public Health in Mexico City, 1876-1910*. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press / University of Colorado Press / UNAM, 2003.
- Alfaro-Velcamp, Theresa. *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2007.
- Alonzo Romero, Miguel. *Un año de sitio a la presidencia municipal. Crónica y comentarios de una labor accidentada*. Mexico City: Hispano-Mexicana, 1923.
- Anderson, Rodney D. *Outcasts in Their Own Land*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976.
- Arrom, Silvia M. "Popular Politics in Mexico City: The Parian Riot, 1828." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (May 1988): 245-268.
- . *Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000.
- . *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- Arróniz, Marcos. *Manual del viajero en Méjico, ó Compendio de la historia de la Ciudad de Méjico*. Mexico City: Librería de Rosa y Bouret, 1858.
- Azpeitia Gómez, Hugo. *Compañía Exportadora e Importadora Mexicana, S.A., 1949-1958: conflicto y abasto alimentario*. Mexico City: CIESAS, 1994.
- Bailey, David C. "Revisionism and the Recent Historiography of the Mexican Revolution." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 58, no. 1 (Feb. 1978): 62-79.
- Barbosa Cruz, Mario. *El trabajo en las calles: Subsistencia y negociación política en la Ciudad de México a comienzos del siglo XX*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México / Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Cuajimalpa, 2008.

- Basurto, Jorge. *Del avilacamachismo al alemanismo (1940-1952)*, vol. 11 of *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, ed. Pablo González Casanova. Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1984.
- Bazant, Jan *Alienation of Church Wealth in Mexico: Social and Economic Aspects of the Liberal Revolution, 1856-1875*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Beatty, Edward. "The Impact of Foreign Trade on the Mexican Economy: Terms of Trade and the Rise of Industry 1880-1923." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 2 (May, 2000): 399-433.
- Beezley, William H. *Judas at the Jockey Club and Other Episodes of Porfirian Mexico*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1987.
- Bertaccini, Tiziana. *El régimen priísta frente a las clases medias, 1943-1964*. Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2009.
- Blanco, José J. *Se llamaba Vasconcelos. Una evocación crítica*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977.
- Bloch, Avital and Servando Ortoll. "The Anti-Chinese and Anti-Japanese Movements in Cananea, Sonora, and Salt Lake River, Arizona, during the 1920 and 1930s." *Americana, E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2010).
- Blum, Ann S. "Conspicuous Benevolence: Liberalism, Public Welfare, and Private Charity in Porfirian Mexico City, 1877-1910." *The Americas* 58, no. 1 (July 2001): 7-38.
- Bortz, Jeffrey L. *Los salarios industriales en México, 1939-1975*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988.
- Bullock, William. *Six Months Residence and Travels in Mexico*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, [1824] 1971.
- Busto, Emiliano. *Estadística de la República Mexicana. Estado que guardan la agricultura, indutria, minería y comercio. Resumen y análisis de los informes rendidos a la Secretaría de Hacienda por los agricultores, mineros, industriales y comerciantes de la República y los agentes de México en el exterior, en respuesta a las circulares de l de agosto de 1877*. Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1880.
- Calderón, Francisco R. *La República Restaurada: Vida Económica*. Vol. 2 of *Historia Moderna de México*, edited by Daniel Cosío Villegas. Mexico City: Hermes, 1955.
- Cárdenas, Enrique. *Cuando se originó el atraso económico de México: La economía mexicana en el largo siglo XIX, 1720-1920*. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva Fundación Ortega y Gasset, 2003.

- . *La hacienda pública y la política económica, 1929-1958*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México / Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994.
- . *La industrialización mexicana durante la Gran Depresión*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1987.
- Cardero, María Elena. “Estructura monetaria y financiera de México: 1932-1940.” *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 41, no. 3 (Jul.-Sep. 1979): 729-768.
- Carmagnani, Marcello. “El liberalismo, los impuestos internos y el estado federal mexicano, 1857-1911.” *Historia Mexicana* 38, no. 3 (Jan.-Mar. 1989): 471-496.
- . “Finanzas y estado en México, 1820-1880.” *Ibero Amerikanisches Archiv* 9, no. 3-4 (1983): 277-317.
- . *Estado y Mercado: La economía pública del liberalismo mexicano, 1850-1911*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica / Colegio de México, 1994.
- Carr, Barry. “The Mexican Communist Party and Agrarian Mobilization in the Laguna, 1920-1940: A Worker-Peasant Alliance?” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 67, no. 3 (Aug. 1987): 371-404.
- . *El movimiento obrero y la política en México, 1910-1929*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Dirección General de Divulgación, 1976.
- . *Marxism and Communism in Twentieth-Century Mexico*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- Castillo Berthier, Héctor. *Estructura de poder de los comerciantes mayoristas de abarrotes de la Ciudad de México*. Mexico Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1994.
- Ceceña, José Luis. *México en la órbita imperial*. Mexico City: Ediciones El Caballito, 1970.
- Coatsworth, John H. *Growth Against Development. The Economic Impact of Railroads in Porfirian Mexico*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1981.
- Connolly, Priscilla. *El contratista de don Porifirio: obras públicas, deuda y desarrollo desigual*. Mexico City: El Colegio de Michoacán / UAM-Azcapotzalco / Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997.
- Contreras, Ariel J. *México 1940: Industrialización y crisis política*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1977.
- Cornelius, Wayne A. *Politics and the Migrant Poor in Mexico City*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975.

- Cosío Villegas, Daniel. *El Porfiriato: Vida política, Política exterior, parte segunda*. Vols. 5 and 6 of *Historia moderna de Mexico*, edited by Daniel Cosío Villegas. Mexico City: Hermes, 1960-1963.
- , ed. *Historia Moderna de México*. 9 vols. Mexico City: Hermes, 1955-1972.
- Cross, John C. *Informal Politics. Street Vendors and the State in Mexico City*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Davies, Keith. "Tendencias demográficas urbanas durante el siglo XIX en México." *Historia Mexicana* 21, (Jul. 1971-Jun. 1972): 481-524.
- Davis, Diane. *Urban Leviathan. Mexico City in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Departamento del Distrito Federal. *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1939 al 31 de agosto de 1940*. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Penitenciaría, 1940.
- Departamento del Distrito Federal. *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1940 al 31 de agosto de 1941*. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Penitenciaría, 1941.
- Departamento del Distrito Federal. *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal. Del 1 de septiembre de 1937 al 30 de agosto de 1938*. Mexico City: DAPP, 1938.
- Departamento del Distrito Federal. *Memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal presentada por el C. Jefe del mismo, al H. H. Congreso de la Unión por el período comprendido del 1 de septiembre de 1936 al 31 de agosto de 1937*. Mexico City: [s.n.], 1937.
- Departamento del Distrito Federal. *Memoria presentada al H. Congreso de la Unión por el período comprendido de septiembre de 1935 a agosto de 1936*. Mexico City: [s.n.], 1936.
- Departamento del Distrito Federal. Resumen de Actividades, 1949*. Mexico City: [s.n.], 1950.
- Dirección General de Estadística. *Primer censo industrial. Resúmenes Generales*. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1933.
- Dirección General de Estadística. *Quinto censo de población 15 de mayo de 1930. Distrito Federal*. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1933.
- Discurso del C. Ingeniero Sebastián Camacho, presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1897 al instalarse el de 1898, discurso del C. Lic. Miguel S. Macedo, presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1898, contestación del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal C. Lic. Rafael Rebollar, y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1897,*

formada por el Secretario C. Lic. Juan Bribiesca. Mexico City: La Europea de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1898.

Discurso del C. Ingeniero Sebastián Camacho, Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1895, al instalarse el de 1896, contestación del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal Gral. Pedro Rincón Gallardo y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1895. Mexico City: Imp. y Lit. "La Europea" de Fernando Camacho, 1896.

Discurso del C. Lic. Miguel S. Macedo, Presidente del Ayuntamiento, contestación del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal C. Lic. Rafael Rebollar y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1898, formada por el Secretario Lic. Juan Bribiesca. Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1899.

Discurso del S. Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandón, Presidente del Ayuntamiento de México en 1900, discurso del S. Don Ramón Corral, gobernador del Distrito Federal y memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales de 1900. Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1901.

Discurso del Sr. D. Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga, Presidente del Ayuntamiento en 1903 y Memoria documentada de los trabajos municipales en el primer semestre de 1903. Mexico City: La Europea, 1903.

Discurso leído al 1° de enero de 1890 por el C. Gral Manuel González Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1889, y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación. Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1890.

Discurso leído el 1 de enero de 1891 por el C. Gral. Manuel González Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1890 dando cuenta de su administración y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación. Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León.

Discurso leído el 1° de Enero de 1889 por el Lic. Gral. Manuel González Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1888 dando cuenta de su administración y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación. Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1889.

Discurso leído el 1° de Enero de 1884 por el C. Pedro Rincón Gallardo como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1883 dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del C. Lic. Guillermo Valle Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1884 y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva corporación. Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León 1884.

Discurso leído el 1° de Enero de 1885 por el C. Guillermo Valle, como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1884 dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del Lic. Pedro Rincón Gallardo, Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1885, y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar la nueva Corporación (Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1885).

- Discurso leído el 1º de Enero de 1886 por el C. Pedro Rincón Gallardo como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1885, dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del C. Manuel González Cosío y Discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito al instalar la nueva Corporación.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1886.
- Discurso leído el 1º de Enero de 1888 por el C. Gral. Manuel G. Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1887, dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del Ciudadano Manuel Gargollo Segundo Regidor del Ayuntamiento de 1887 y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalarse la nueva corporación.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1888.
- Discurso leído el 4 de enero de 1887 por el C. Gral. Manuel G. Cosío como Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1886 dando cuenta de su administración, contestación del ciudadano Francisco Mejía, segundo regidor del Ayuntamiento de 1887.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1887.
- Discurso pronunciado por el Dr. Manuel Domínguez, Regidor 1º del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de México en 1880 al separarse de su puesto el 1º de Enero de 1881, y contestación del C. Pablo de Lascurain, Regidor 2º del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de 1881.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1881.
- Discurso pronunciado por el Sr. Pedro Rincón Gallardo, Regidor primero del Ayuntamiento Constitucional de México en 1881 al alejarse del puesto conforme a la ley, el 1º de Enero de 1882.* Mexico City: Imprenta del Comercio de Dublán y Cía., 1882.
- Discursos del Sr. D. Fernando Pimentel y Fagoaga, Presidente interino del Ayuntamiento en 1902, del Sr. D. Ramón Corral, gobernador del Distrito Federal, y del Sr. D. Guillermo de Landa y Escandón.* Mexico City: Tip. y Lit. "La Europea" de J. Aguilar Vera y Cía., 1903.
- Escalante Gonzalbo, Fernando. *Ciudadanos imaginarios.* Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1993.
- Esposición del Exmo. Sr. Ministro de Hacienda al Congreso dando cuenta del decreto de 6 de octubre último sobre dotación del fondo municipal de la Capital leída en la Camara de Diputados el día 19 de enero de 1849.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Vicente García Torres, 1849.
- Estadísticas históricas de México.* Aguascalientes: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, 1990.
- Florescano, Enrique. *El nuevo pasado mexicano.* Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 1999.
- Ford, Eileen Mary Ford. "Children of the Mexican Miracle: Childhood and Modernity in Mexico City, 1940-1968." Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2008.

- Fowler-Salamini, Heather. *Agrarian Radicalism in Veracruz, 1920-1938*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. "The Many Faces of Moral Economy: A Contribution to a Debate." *Past and Present*, no 58 (Feb. 1973): 161-168.
- Freeman Smith, Robert. *The United States and Revolutionary Nationalism in Mexico, 1916-1932*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Gamboa Ramírez, Ricardo. "Las finanzas municipales de la Ciudad de México, 1800-1850." In *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, edited by Regina Hernández Franyuti, 1:11-63. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 1994.
- García Cubas, Antonio. *Escritos Diversos de 1870 a 1874*. Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1874.
- Garrido, Luis Javier. *El partido de la revolución institucionalizada. La formación del nuevo estado en México (1928-1945)*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1982.
- Garza, Gustavo. *El proceso de industrialización en la ciudad de México, 1821-1970*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1985.
- Gauss, Susan M. *Made in Mexico. Regions, Nation, and the State in the Rise of Mexican Industrialism, 1920s-1940s*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.
- Geiger, John Lewis. *A Peep at Mexico: Narrative of a Journey across the Republic from the Pacific to the Gulf in December 1873 and January 1874*. London: Trübner & Co., 1874.
- Gibson, Charles. *Aztecs under Spanish Rule, A history of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico 1519-1810*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1964.
- Gill, Mario. *El Sinarquismo. Su origen, su esencia, su misión*. Mexico City: Olín, 1962.
- Gillingham, Paul "Maximino's Bulls: Popular Protest After the Mexican Revolution, 1940-1952." *Past and Present*, no. 206 (Feb. 2010): 175-211.
- Gilly, Adolfo. *The Mexican Revolution*. London: Verso Editions, 1983.
- Gobernar la ciudad es servirla. Informe que rinde el C. Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal, Lic. Aarón Sáenz, a la ciudad de México*. Mexico City: [s.n.], 1934.
- Gobierno del Distrito Federal, *Memoria del Gobierno del Distrito Federal, del 1 de Septiembre de 1944 al 31 de Agosto de 1945*. Mexico City: [s.n.], 1945.

- Gojman de Backal, Alicia. *Camisas, escudos, y desfiles militares. Los Dorados y el antisemitismo en México (1934-1940)*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000.
- Gómez-Galvarriato Freer, Aurora. "The Impact of Revolution: Business and Labor in Mexican Textile Industry, Orizaba, Veracruz, 1900-1930." Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 1999.
- . *Industry and Revolution. Social and Economic Change in the Orizaba Valley, Mexico* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013)
- , and Aldo Musacchio. "Un Nuevo Índice de Precios para México, 1886-1929." *El Trimestre Económico* 67 (Jan-Mar., 2000): 45-91.
- , and Emilio Kouri. "La reforma económica. Finanzas públicas, mercados y tierras." In *Nación, constitución y reforma. 1821-1908*, edited by Erika Pani, 63-119. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica / CIDE / INEHRM / CONACULTA, 2010
- Gonzales, Michael J. *The Mexican Revolution 1910-1940*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2002.
- González y González, Luis. "La Revolución Mexicana desde el punto de vista de los revolucionados." *Historias* 8-9 (1985): 5-13.
- , Emma Cosío Villegas, and Guadalupe Monroy, *La República Restaurada: Vida social*. Vol. 3 of *Historia moderna de México*, edited by Daniel Cosío Villegas. Mexico City: Hermes, 1957.
- Gordon, Gary Isaac. "Pedlars, Pesos and Power: The Political Economy of Street Vending in Mexico City." PhD Dissertation, History Department, University of Chicago, 1997.
- Gortari Rabiela, Hira de. "Política y Administración en la Ciudad de México. Relaciones entre el Ayuntamiento y el Gobierno del Distrito Federal y el Departamental: 1824-1843." In *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, edited by Regina Hernández Franyuti, 2:166-183. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 1994.
- , and Regina Hernández Franyuti, eds. *Memoria y encuentros: La Ciudad de México y el Distrito Federal, 1824-1928*. 4 vols. Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal / Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, 1988.
- Guadarrama, Rocío. *Los sindicatos y la política en México: La CROM, 1918-1928*. Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1981.
- Guerra, François-Xavier, and Annick Lempérière. "Introducción." In *Los espacios públicos en Iberoamérica: Ambigüedades y problemas, siglos XVIII-XIX*, edited by

- François-Xavier Guerra, Annick Lempérière, et al, 5-21. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge-England: Polity Press, [1962] 1989.
- Hale, Charles A. *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Hamilton, Nora. *The Limits of State Autonomy: Post-revolutionary Mexico*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.
- Hamnett, Brian R. "Liberalism Divided: Regional Politics and the National Project during the Mexican Restored Republic." 1867-1876." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (Nov. 1996): 659-689.
- . *Juárez*. London: Longman, 1994.
- Hansen, Roger D. *The Politics of Mexican Development*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
- Hart, John M. *Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931*. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1978.
- . *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Hefley, James C. *Aarón Sáenz, Mexico's Revolutionary Capitalist*. Waco, TX.: Word Books, 1970.
- Hernández Chávez, Alicia. *La Mecánica Cardenista*. Vol. 16 of *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1979.
- . *Mexico: A Brief History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Hernández Franyuti, Regina, ed. *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 1994.
- Historia Documental CNOP*. Mexico City: Instituto de Capacitación Política—PRI, 1984.
- Hoffmann Calo, Juan. *Crónica Política del Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad de México, 1917-1928, Los partidos, las elecciones, los gobernantes*. Mexico City: Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, 2000.
- Holden, Robert. *Mexico and the Survey of Public Lands: the Management of Modernization*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987.

Illades, Carlos. "Composición de la fuerza de trabajo y de las unidades productivas en la Ciudad de México, 1788-1873." In *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, edited by Regina Hernández Frayuntí, 2: 250-278. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 1994.

———. "Organizaciones laborales y discurso asociativo en el siglo XIX." In *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931*, edited by Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, 245-274. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán / UAM, 1996.

———, and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, eds. *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931*. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán / UAM, 1996.

Informe presidencial y memoria del Departamento del Distrito Federal que rinde el C. Jefe del mismo por el período administrativo comprendido entre el 1 de julio del 1933 y el 30 de junio de 1934. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1934.

Informe que rinde el C. Jefe del Departamento del Distrito Federal de la obra realizada durante el año de 1934 a los habitantes de la ciudad. Mexico City: [s.n.], 1935.

Instrucción pastoral que los Illmos. Sres. Arzobispos de México, Michoacán y Guadalajara dirigen a su venerable clero y a sus fieles con ocasión de la Ley Orgánica expedida por el Soberano Congreso Nacional en 10 de diciembre del año próximo pasado [1874] y sancionada por el Supremo Gobierno en 14 del mismo mes. Mexico City: Imprenta de José Mariano Lara, 1875.

Isbister, John. "Urban Employment and Wages in a Developing Economy: The Case of Mexico." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 20, no. 1 (Oct., 1971): 24-46.

Islas y Bustamante, Nicolás, ed., *Colección de leyes y disposiciones gubernativas, municipales y de policía vigentes en el Distrito Federal, formada por acuerdo del C. Gobernador Lic. Carlos Rivas*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Imprenta y litografía de Ireneo Paz, 1884.

Iturriaga, José E. *La estructura social y cultural de México*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, [1951] 2003.

Jiménez Muñoz, Jorge H. *La traza del poder: Historia de la política y los negocios urbanos en el Distrito Federal, de sus orígenes a la desaparición del Ayuntamiento (1824-1928)*. Mexico City: Dedalo, 1993.

Jiménez, Christina M. "Performing their Right to the City: Political Uses of Public Space in a Mexican City, 1880-1910s." *Urban History* 33, no.3 (2006): 435-456.

———. "Popular Organizing for Public Services: Residents Modernize Morelia, Mexico, 1880-1920." *Journal of Urban History* 30, no. 4 (May 2004): 495-518.

- John Skirius, *José Vasconcelos y la cruzada de 1929*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1982.
- Jones, Halbert. “‘The War Has Brought Peace to Mexico’: The Political Impact of Mexican Participation in World War II.” Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 2006.
- Katz, Friedrich. “Algunos rasgos esenciales de la política del imperialismo alemán en América Latina.” In *Hitler sobre America Latina: el fascismo alemán en Latinoamérica 1933-1943*, edited by Jürgen Hell et al, 9-96. Mexico City: Editorial Fondo de Cultura Popular, 1968.
- . “La guerra fría en América Latina.” In *Espejos de la guerra fría: México, América Central y el Caribe*, edited by Daniela Spencer, 11-28. Mexico City: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social / Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores / Porrúa, 2004.
- . “The Liberal Republic and the Porfiriato.” In *Mexico since Independence*, edited by Leslie Bethell, 49-124. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- . *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- . *The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, The United States, and the Mexican Revolution*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Keremitsis, Dawn. *La industria textil mexicana en el siglo XIX*. Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1973.
- Knapp, Frank A. *The Life of Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, 1823-1889*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951.
- Knight, Alan. “Cardenismo: Juggernaut or Jalopy?” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 26, no. 1 (Feb. 1994): 73-107.
- . “El liberalismo mexicano, de la Reforma a hasta la Revolución (una interpretación).” *Historia Mexicana* 35, no. 1 (July-September 1985): 59-91.
- . “Interpretaciones recientes de la Revolución mexicana.” *Secuencia* 13 (1989): 23-43.
- . “Revisionism and Revolution: Mexico Compared to England and France.” *Past and Present*, no 134 (Feb. 1992): 159-199.
- . “The Rise and Fall of Cardenismo.” In *Mexico since Independence*, edited by Leslie Bethell, 241-320. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- . “The Weight of the State in Modern Mexico.” In *Studies in the Formation of the Nation-State in Latin America*, edited by James Dunkerley, 212-253. London: ILAS, 2002.

- . *The Mexican Revolution*, 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Kofas, Jon V. *Foreign Debt and Underdevelopment: U.S.-Peru Economic Relations, 1930-1970*. Lahnman, MD: University Press of America, 1996.
- Konove, Andrew. “Black Market City: Street Vending and the Challenge of Governance in Mexico City (1692-1903)” Phd Dissertation, History Department, Yale University, 2013.
- Kram Villarreal, Rachel. “Gladiolas for the Children of Sánchez: Ernesto P. Uruchurtu’s Mexico City.” PhD. Dissertation, History Department, University of Arizona, 2008.
- Kuntz Ficker, Sandra. “Las nuevas series del comercio exterior de México.” *Revista de Historia Económica* 20, no.2 (2002): 213-270.
- . “Los ferrocarriles y la formación del espacio económico en México.” In *Ferrocarriles y obras públicas*, edited by Sandra Kuntz Ficker and Priscilla Connolly, 105-137. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / El Colegio de Michoacán / El Colegio de México/ IIH-UNAM, 1999.
- , and Priscilla Connolly, eds. *Ferrocarriles y obras públicas*. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / El Colegio de Michoacán / El Colegio de México/ IIH-UNAM, 1999.
- Leal, Juan Felipe and José Villaseñor, *La clase obrera en las historia de México: en la Revolución 1910-1917*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1988.
- Lear, John. “Del mutualismo a la resistencia: organizaciones laborales en la Ciudad de México de fines del Porfiriato a la Revolución.” In *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931*, edited by Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, 275-309. Zamora. Mich: El Colegio de Michoacán/UAM, 1996.
- . “Mexico City, Space and Class in the Porfirian Capital, 1884-1910.” *Journal of Urban History* 22, no. 4 (May 1996): 454-492.
- . *Workers, Neighbors and Citizens, The Revolution in Mexico City*. Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2001.
- Ley Orgánica del Distrito Federal y de los Territorios Federales*. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1929.
- Lieuwen, Edwin. *Mexican Militarism: The Political Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Army, 1910-1940*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968.
- Loeza, Soledad. “Modernización autoritaria a la sombra de la superpotencia, 1944-1968.” In *La Nueva Historia General de México*, Erik Velásquez García et al., 653-698. Mexico City: Colegio de México, 2010.

- . *El Partido Acción Nacional, la larga marcha, 1939-1994: oposición leal y partido de protesta*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999.
- López Cámara, Francisco. *La estructura económica y social de México en la época de la reforma*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1976.
- López Monjardin, Adriana. “El espacio en la producción: Ciudad de México, 1850.” In *Ciudad de México: Ensayo de construcción de una historia*, edited by Alejandra Moreno Toscano, 56-66. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1978.
- López Rosado, Diego G. *Los mercados de la Ciudad de México*. Mexico City: Secretaría de Comercio, 1982.
- . *Los servicios públicos de la Ciudad de México*. Mexico City: Porrúa, 1976.
- Los derechos del pueblo mexicano, México a través de sus constituciones*. 15 vols. Mexico City: Cámara de Diputados del H. Congreso de la Unión / Porrúa Grupo Editorial, 2000.
- Marichal, Carlos. “The Construction of Credibility: Financial Market Reform and Renegotiation of Mexico’s External Debt in the 1880’s.” In *The Mexican Economy, 1879-1930. Essays on the Economic History of Institutions, Revolution, and Growth*, edited by Jeffrey Bortz and Stephen Haber, 93-119. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- , Manuel Miño Grijalva, and Paolo Riguzzi, *El primer siglo de la hacienda pública del Estado de México, 1824-1923*. Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense / Gobierno del Estado de México, 1994.
- Martí, Judith E. “Subsistence and the State: Municipal Government Policies and Urban Markets in Developing Nations: the Case of Mexico City and Guadalajara, 1877-1910.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Anthropology Department, University of California, Los Angeles, 1990.
- Matute Aguirre, Álvaro. “Orígenes del revisionismo historiográfico de la Revolución mexicana.” *Signos Históricos* 2, no. 3 (Jun., 2000): 29-48.
- McCormick, Gladys Irene. “The Political Economy of Desire in Rural Mexico: Revolutionary Change and the Making of a State, 1935-1965.” PhD Dissertation, History Department, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009.
- Medina Peña, Luis. *Civilismo y modernización del autoritarismo*. Vol. 20 of *Historia de la Revolución Mexicana*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1979.
- Memoria con que da cuenta el C. Presidente del Ayuntamiento de 1875 al Ayuntamiento de 1876*. Mexico City: Imprenta del Comercio de Dublán y Compañía, 1876.

Memoria Corporación Municipal que funcionó de Agosto a Diciembre de 1867 (Mexico City: Imprenta de J. Fuentes y Compañía, 1868).

Memoria de los principales ramos de la policía urbana y de los fondos de la Ciudad de México presentado a la Serenísima Regencia del Imperio en cumplimiento de sus órdenes y de las leyes por el Prefecto Municipal. Mexico City: Imprenta de J.M. Andrade, 1864.

Memoria de los ramos municipales correspondiente al semestre de Julio a Diciembre de 1866 presentada a S.M. el Emperador por el Alcalde Municipal de la Ciudad de México D. Ignacio Trigueros. Mexico City: Imprenta Económica, 1867.

Memoria del Ayuntamiento que comenzó a funcionar el 5 de Diciembre de 1876 y concluyó el 31 de Diciembre de 1877. Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, 1878.

Memoria del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal correspondiente al período transcurrido del 1 de julio de 1903 al 31 de diciembre de 1904. 2 vols. Mexico City: Talleres de Pablo Rodríguez, 1906.

Memoria del Consejo Superior de Gobierno del Distrito Federal correspondiente al período transcurrido del 1 de enero al 31 de diciembre de 1905 presentada al Señor Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Gobernación. Mexico City: Talleres de Pablo Rodríguez, 1907.

Memoria que el Ayuntamiento Constitucional de 1870 presenta a sus comitentes. Mexico City: Imprenta del Comercio de N. Chavez, 1871.

Memoria que el Ayuntamiento Constitucional de 1872 presenta a sus comitentes. Mexico City: Imprenta de I. Cumplido, 1873.

Memoria que el Ayuntamiento Constitucional de 1879 presenta a sus comitentes. Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1880.

Memoria que el Ayuntamiento constitucional del año de 1868 presenta para el conocimiento de sus comitentes. Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1869.

Memoria que el Ayuntamiento Popular de 1868 presenta a sus comitentes y corresponde al semestre corrido desde el 1 de Enero al 30 de Junio. Mexico City: Imprenta de Ignacio Cumplido, 1868.

Memoria que el Ayuntamiento popular de 1869 presenta a sus comitentes. Mexico City: Tipografía del Comercio de N. Chavez, 1870.

Mendiola García, Sandra C. "Street Vendors, Marketers, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Puebla, Mexico," PhD Dissertation, History Department, Rutgers The State University of New Jersey, 2008.

- Meyer, Jean A. *El Sinarquismo: ¿Un fascismo Mexicano? 1937-1947*. Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz, 1979.
- . *The Cristero Rebellion, The Mexican People between Church and State, 1926-1929*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.
- Meyer, Lorenzo. “El conflicto petrolero entre México y los Estados Unidos (1934-1942).” *Foro Internacional* 7, no. 1-2 (Jul.-Dec. 1966): 99-159.
- . *Mexico y Estados Unidos en el conflicto petrolero, 1917-1942*. Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1972.
- Meyer, Michael C. “The Militarization of Mexico, 1913-1914.” *The Americas* 27, no. 3 (Jan.1971): 293-306.
- Michaels, Albert L. *The Mexican Election of 1940*. Buffalo: State University of New York at Buffalo, 1971.
- Middlebrook, Kevin J. *The Paradox of Revolution. Labor, the State and Authoritarianism in Mexico*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Miranda Pacheco, Sergio. “Conflicto político, finanzas federales y municipales en la Ciudad de México, 1846-1855.” In *De Colonia a Nación: Impuestos y política en México, 1750-1860*, edited by Carlos Marichal and Daniela Marino, 215-245. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2001.
- . *Historia de la desaparición del Municipio en el Distrito Federal*. Mexico City: Unidad Obrera y Socialista, 1998.
- Morales, María Dolores. “Espacio, propiedad y órganos de poder en la ciudad de México en el siglo XIX.” In *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931*, edited by Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, 155-190. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán / UAM, 1996.
- . “Estructura urbana y distribución de la propiedad de la Ciudad de México en 1813.” *Historia Mexicana* 25, no. 3 (Jan.-Mar. 1976): 363-402.
- . “La expansion de la ciudad de México (1858-1910).” In *Atlas de la Ciudad de México*, edited by Gustavo Garza, 64-68. Mexico City: Departamento del Distrito Federal / Colegio de México, 1987.
- . “La expansion de la ciudad de México en el siglo XX: el caso de los fraccionamientos.” In *Ciudad de México: Ensayo de construcción de una historia*, edited by Alejandra Moreno Toscano, 189-200. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1978.

- Moreno, Julio. *Yankee Don't go Home! Mexican Nationalism, American Business Culture, and the Shaping of Modern Mexico, 1920-1950*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Moreno Toscano, Alejandra, ed. *Ciudad de México: Ensayo de construcción de una historia*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1978.
- Mosk, Stanford A. *Industrial Revolution in Mexico*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1950.
- Navarro, Aaron W. *Political Intelligence and the Creation of Modern Mexico, 1938-1954*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010.
- Niblo, Stephen R. *Mexico in the 1940s. Modernity, Politics, and Corruption*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1999.
- . *War, Diplomacy, and Development. The United States and Mexico, 1939-1954*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1995.
- Ochoa, Enrique C. "Reappraising State Intervention and Social Policy in Mexico: The Case of Milk in the Distrito Federal during the Twentieth Century." *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 15, no.1 (Winter 1999): 73-99.
- . *Feeding Mexico. The Political Uses of Food since 1910*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2002.
- Oldman, Oliver, Henry T. Aaron, Richard M. Bird, and Stephen L. Kass. *Financing Urban Development in Mexico City. A Case Study of Property Tax, Land Use, Housing, and Urban Planning*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Oikión Solano, Verónica. "La oposición Henriquisita en Michoacán, 1950-54." *Tzintzun* 29, (January-June 1999): 91-110
- Oles, James. "Noguchi in Mexico: International Themes for a Working-Class Market." *American Art* 15, no 2 (Summer 2001): 10-33.
- Olsen, Patrice Elizabeth. *Artifacts of Revolution. Architecture, Society, and Politics in Mexico City, 1920-1940*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008.
- Olvera Ramos, Jorge. *Los mercados de la Plaza Mayor de México*. Mexico City: Cal y Arena, 2007.
- Orozco y Berra, Manuel. *Historia de la Ciudad de México, desde su fundación hasta 1854. Selección de artículos publicados en el Diccionario Universal de Historia y Geografía (1854) preparada por el Seminario de Historia Urbana del Departamento de Investigaciones Históricas del INAH* (Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública, Septentas, 1973).

- Osorio Marbán, Miguel. *El sector popular del PRI*. Mexico City: Coordinación Nacional de Estudios Históricos, Políticos y Sociales—PRI, 1994.
- Padilla, Tanalís. *Rural Resistance in the Land of Zapata. The Jaramillista Movement and the Myth of the Pax PRIísta, 1940-1962*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Palti, Elías J. “La transformación del liberalismo mexicano en el siglo XIX. Del modelo jurídico de la opinión pública al modelo estratégico de la sociedad civil.” In *Actores, espacios y debates en la historia de la esfera pública en la Ciudad de México*, edited by Cristina Sacristán and Pablo Piccato, 67-95. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005.
- Pensado, Jaime. “Political violence and student culture in Mexico: The consolidation of *Porrisimo* during the 1950s and 1960s.” PhD Dissertation, History Department, University of Chicago, 2008.
- Pérez Hernández, José María. *Estadística de la República Mejicana*. Guadalajara: Tipográfica del Gobierno, 1862.
- Perló Cohen, Manuel. *El paradigma porfiriano: Historia del desajuste del Valle de México*. Mexico City: Porrúa, 1999.
- Perry, Laurens Ballard. *Juárez and Díaz: Machine Politics in Mexico*. DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 1978.
- Piccato, Pablo. “Honor y opinión pública: La moral de los periodistas durante el porfiriato temprano.” In *Actores, espacios y debates en la historia de la esfera pública en la Ciudad de México*, edited by Cristina Sacristán and Pablo Piccato, 145-178. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005.
- . “Introducción: ¿Modelo para armar? Hacia un acercamiento crítico a la teoría de la esfera pública.” In *Actores, espacios y debates en la historia de la esfera pública en la Ciudad de México*, edited by Cristina Sacristán and Pablo Piccato, 9-39. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005.
- . “Urbanistas, Ambulantes, and Mendigos: The Dispute for Urban Space in Mexico City, 1890-1930.” In *Reconstructing Criminality in Latin America*, edited by Carlos Aguirre and Robert Buffington, 113-148. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2000.
- . *City of Suspects. Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

- . *The Tyranny of Opinion. Honor in the Construction of the Mexican Public Sphere*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Pick James B., and Edgar W. Butler. *Mexico Megacity*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.
- Pilcher, Jeffrey M. “Fajitas and the Failure of Refrigerated Meatpacking in Mexico: Consumer Culture and Porfirian Capitalism.” *The Americas* 60, no.3 (Jan. 2004): 411-429.
- . *The Sausage Rebellion. Public Health, Private Enterprise, and Meat in Mexico City, 1890-1917*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
- Pletcher, David M. “The Fall of Silver in Mexico, 1870-1910, and Its Effect on American Investments.” *The Journal of Economic History* 18, no. 1 (Mar. 1958): 33-55.
- . *Rails, Mines, and Progress: Seven American Promoters in Mexico, 1867-1911*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1958.
- Porter, Susie S. “And That It Is Custom Makes It Law. Class conflict and Gender Ideology in the Public Sphere, Mexico City 1880-1910.” *Social Science History* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 111-148.
- . *Working Women in Mexico City: Public Discourses and Material Conditions, 1879-1931*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003.
- Prieto, Guillermo. *Memorias de mis tiempos, 1828 a 1840*. Mexico City: Librería de la Vda. de C. Bouret, 1906.
- Pyle, Jane. “The Public Markets of Mexico City.” PhD Dissertation, Geography Department, University of Oregon, 1968.
- Quiroz, Enriqueta. *Entre el lujo y la subsistencia. Mercado, abastecimiento, y precio de la carne en la Ciudad de México, 1750-1812*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México / Centro de Estudios Históricos Instituto Dr. José María Luis Mora, 2005.
- Ramírez Plancarte, Francisco *La Ciudad de México durante la revolución constitucionalista*. Mexico City: Botas, 1941.
- Rath, Thomas. *Myths of Demilitarization in Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013.
- Recopilación de leyes, decretos y providencias de los poderes legislativo y ejecutivo de la Unión desde que se estableció en la Ciudad de México el Supremo Gobierno en 15 de julio de 1867, formada por la redacción del “Diario oficial.”* Vol. 12 (Jan.-Apr. 1872). Mexico City: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1873.

- Reglamento para el servicio y recaudación del ramo de mercados.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1885.
- Reseña leída por el Presidente Municipal en nombre de la corporación que funcionó en 1882, contestación del Segundo Regidor Lic. Guillermo Valle y discurso del C. Gobernador del Distrito Federal al instalar el Ayuntamiento de 1883.* Mexico City: Imprenta de Francisco Díaz de León, 1883.
- Reyna, José Luis and Raúl Trejo Delarbre. *De Adolfo Ruiz Cortines a Adolfo López Mateos (1952-1964)*, vol. 12 of *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, ed. Pablo González Casanova. Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1981.
- Reynolds, Clark W. *The Mexican Economy. Twentieth-Century Structure and Growth.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Riguzzi, Paolo. "Los caminos del atraso: Tecnología, instituciones en inversión en los ferrocarriles mexicanos, 1850-1900." In *Ferrocarriles y vida económica en México, 1850-1950: Del surgimiento tardío al decaimiento precoz*, edited by eds. Sandra Kuntz Ficker and Paolo Riguzzi, 31-97. Mexico City: El Colegio Mexiquense / Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México / Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco, 1996.
- . "México, Estados Unidos y Gran Bretaña, 1867-1910: Una difícil relación triangular." *Historia Mexicana* 41 (1992): 365-436.
- . *¿La reciprocidad imposible? La política del comercio entre México y Estados Unidos 1877-1938* (Mexico City: Colegio de México/Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 2003).
- Rivera Castro, José. *La clase obrera en la historia de México: en la presidencia del Plutarco Elías Calles, 1924-1928.* Mexico City: Siglo XXI / Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales de la UNAM, 1983.
- Rodea, Marcelo N. *Historia del movimiento obrero ferrocarrilero en México, 1890-1943.* Mexico City: Ex-Libris M. Rodea, 1944.
- Rodríguez Kuri, Ariel. "Desabasto de agua y violencia política. El motín del 30 de noviembre de 1922 en la ciudad de México: economía moral y cultura política." In *Formas de descontento y movimientos sociales, siglos XIX y XX*, edited by José Ronzón and Carmen Valdez, 167-201. Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Azcapotzalco, 2005.
- . "Desabasto, hambre y respuesta política, 1915." In *Instituciones y Ciudad. Ocho estudios históricos sobre la Ciudad de México*, edited by Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, 133-161. Mexico City: Unidad Obrera y Socialista, 2000.
- . "El año cero: El Ayuntamiento de México y las facciones revolucionarias (agosto 1914-agosto 1915)." In *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y*

- conflicto político, 1774-1931*, edited by Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, 191-220. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán / UAM, 1996.
- . “Gobierno local y empresas de servicios: La experiencia de la Ciudad de México en el Porfiriato.” In *Ferrocarriles y obras públicas*, edited by Sandra Kuntz Ficker and Priscilla Connolly, 165-190. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / El Colegio de Michoacán / El Colegio de México/ IIH-UNAM, 1999.
- . “Política e institucionalidad. El Ayuntamiento de México y la evolución del conflicto jurisdiccional, 1808-1850.” In *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, edited by Regina Hernández Franyuti, 2:51-94. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 1994.
- . *Historia del desasosiego. La revolución en la ciudad de México, 1911-1922*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010.
- . *La experiencia olvidada, El Ayuntamiento de México: política y gobierno, 1876-1912*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México/Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Azcapotzalco, 1996.
- Rodríguez, Miles Vincent. “The Beginnings of a Movement: Leagues of Agrarian Communities, Unions of Industrial Workers, and Their Struggles in Mexico, 1920-1929.” Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, Harvard University, 2010.
- Romero, Luis Alberto. *¿Qué hacer con los pobres? Elite y sectores populares en Santiago de Chile, 1840-1895*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1997.
- Roxborough, Ian. “Mexico.” In *Latin America between the Second World War and the Cold War, 1944-1948*, edited by Leslie Bethell and Ian Roxborough, 190-216. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Sacristán, Cristina, and Pablo Piccato, eds. *Actores, espacios y debates en la historia de la esfera pública en la Ciudad de México*. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2005.
- Salazar, Rosendo. *Historia de las luchas proletarias de México, 1923 a 1936*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Avante, 1938-1956.
- , and José G. Escobedo. *Las pugnas de la Gleba, 1907-1922*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Avante, 1923.
- Salmerón Sanginés, Pedro. *Aarón Sáenz Garza: militar, diplomático, político, empresario*. Mexico City: Porrúa, 2001.
- Sánchez Mejorada, María Cristina. *Rezago de la modernidad. Memorias de una ciudad presente*. Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 2005.

- Schell, William, Jr. *Integral Outsiders: The America Colony in Mexico City, 1876-1911*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001.
- Schers, David *The Popular Sector of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional in Mexico*. Tel Aviv: The David Horowitz Institute for the Research of Developing Countries, Tel Aviv University, 1972.
- Scott, James C. *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and subsistence in Southeast Asia*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- . *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: The Hidden Transcript of Subordinate Groups*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Shadlen, Kenneth C. *Democratization without Representation. The Politics of Small Industry in Mexico*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.
- Silva Riquer, Jorge. "El abasto al mercado urbano de la Ciudad de México, 1830-1860." In *La Ciudad de México en la primera mitad del siglo XIX*, edited by Regina Hernández Franyuti, 1: 64-115. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora, 1994.
- Sinkin, Richard N. *The Mexican Reform, 1855-1876: A Study in Liberal Nation-Building*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979.
- Sluis, Ageeth. "City of Spectacles: Gender Performance, Revolutionary Reform, and the Creation of Public Space in Mexico City, 1915-1939." Ph.D. Dissertation, History Department, University of Arizona, 2006.
- Smith, Benjamin T. *Pistoleros and Popular Movements. The Politics of State Formation in Postrevolutionary Oaxaca*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009.
- Smith, Peter. *Talons of the Eagle, Dynamics of U.S.-Latin American Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Snodgrass, Michael. *Deference and Defiance in Monterrey. Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890-1950*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Spenser, Daniela. *Unidad a toda costa: la tercera Internacional en México durante la presidencia de Lázaro Cárdenas*. Mexico City: CIESAS, 2007.
- Stevens, Donald F. "Riot, Rebellion, and Instability in Nineteenth-Century Mexico." In *Five Centuries of Mexican History / Cinco Siglos de Historia Mexicana*, 2 vols., edited by Virginia Guedea and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., 1:344-354. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / University of California Irvine, 1992.

- Téllez Guerrero, Francisco and Elvira Brito Martínez, "La hacienda municipal de Puebla en el siglo XIX." *Historia Mexicana* 39 (April-June 1990): 951-978.
- Tenorio Trillo, Mauricio. "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (Feb. 1996): 75-104.
- . *Artifugio de la nación moderna. México en las exposiciones universales, 1880-1930*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998.
- Thompson, E. P. "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century." *Past and Present*, no 50 (Feb. 1971): 76-136.
- . "The Moral Economy Reviewed." In *Customs in Common*, 259-351. Pontypool, Wales: The Merlin Press, 1991.
- Thompson, Lanny. "Artisans, Marginals, and Proletarians: The Households of the Popular Classes in Mexico City, 1876-1950." In *Five Centuries of Mexican History / Cinco Siglos de Historia Mexicana*, 2 vols., edited by Virginia Guedea and Jaime E. Rodríguez O., 2:307-324. Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / University of California Irvine, 1992.
- Thomson, Guy P. C. "Popular Aspects of Liberalism in Mexico, 1848-1888." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 10, no. 3 (1991): 265-292.
- Tischendorf, Alfred. *Great Britain and Mexico in the Era of Porfirio Díaz*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1961.
- Treviño Rangel, Javier. "Los 'hijos del cielo' en el infierno: un reporte sobre el racismo hacia las comunidades chinas en México, 1880-1930." *Foro Internacional* 45, no. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 2005): 409-444.
- Turrent Díaz, Eduardo. *México en Bretton Woods*. Mexico City: Banco de México, 2009.
- Unikel, Luis. *La dinámica del crecimiento de la Ciudad de México*. Mexico City: Fundación para Estudios de la Población, 1972.
- Valadés, José C. *El Porfirismo, historia de un regimen*. 2 vols. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1977.
- Vázquez Ramírez, Esther Martina. *Organización y resistencia popular en la ciudad de México durante la crisis de 1929-1932*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Estudios Históricos de la Revolución Mexicana, 1998.
- Vergéz, José F. *Recuerdos de Méjico*. Barcelona: Imprenta de Henrich y Cía., 1902.
- Vernon, Raymond. *The Dilemma of Mexico's Development. The Roles of the Private and Public Sectors*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963.

- Walker, David. "Porfirian Labor Politics: Working class organizations in Mexico City and Porfirio Díaz, 1876-1902." *The Americas* 37, no. 3 (1981): 257-289.
- Warren, Richard A. "Desafío y trastorno en el gobierno municipal: El Ayuntamiento de México y la dinámica política nacional, 1821-1855." In *Ciudad de México: Instituciones, actores sociales y conflicto político, 1774-1931*, edited by Carlos Illades and Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, 167-183. Zamora, Mich.: El Colegio de Michoacán / UAM, 1996.
- . *Vagrants and Citizens: Politics and the Masses in Mexico City from Colony to Republic*. Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2001.
- Weiner, Richard. "Battle for Survival: Porfirian Views of the International Marketplace." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 3 (Oct. 2000): 645-670.
- Weis, Robert G. *Basques and Bakers: A Social History of Bread in Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2012.
- . "Immigrant Entrepreneurs, Bread, and Class Negotiation in Postrevolutionary Mexico City." *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 25, no.1 (Winter 2009): 71-100.
- Wilkie, James W. *The Mexican Revolution: Federal Expenditure and Social Change since 1910*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
- Wionczek, Miguel S. *Nacionalismo mexicano e inversion extranjera*. Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1967.
- Womack, John, Jr. "Luchas sindicales y liberalismos sociales, 1867-1993." In *Para una historia de América: los nudos*, 2 vols., edited by Marcello Carmagnani, Alicia Hernández Chavez, and Ruggiero Romano, 1:417-460. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999.
- . "The Mexican Revolution." In *Mexico since Independence*, edited by Leslie Bethell, 125-200. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- . *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.
- Yoma Medina, María Rebeca, and Luis Alberto Martos López. *Dos mercados de en la historia de la Ciudad de México: El Volador y La Merced*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1990.
- Zabludovsky, Jaime. "La deuda externa pública." In *Un siglo de deuda pública en México*, edited by Leonor Ludlow and Carlos Marichal, 152-189. Mexico City: El Colegio de México / Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José Luis Mora / El Colegio de Michoacán/ IIH-UNAM, 1998.

Zebadúa, Emilio. "El Banco de la Revolución." *Historia Mexicana* 45, no. 1 (Jul.-Sep. 1995): 67-98.

———. *Banqueros y revolucionarios: La soberanía financiera de México*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994.