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## GENTRIFICATION MOVES TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMA DE RESCATE, A NEOLIBERAL URBAN POLICY IN MÉXICO CITY'S CENTRO HISTÓRICO

David M. Walker  
*University of Kentucky*, [dwalk2@uky.edu](mailto:dwalk2@uky.edu)

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

David M. Walker

The Graduate School  
University of Kentucky

2008

GENTRIFICATION MOVES TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMA  
DE RESCATE, A NEOLIBERAL URBAN POLICY IN MÉXICO CITY'S CENTRO HISTÓRICO

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Geography in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By

David M. Walker

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Richard Schein, Department of Geography

Lexington, Kentucky

2008

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GENTRIFICATION MOVES TO THE GLOBAL SOUTH: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMA DE RESCATE, A NEOLIBERAL URBAN POLICY IN MÉXICO CITY'S CENTRO HISTÓRICO

This dissertation argues that urban neoliberal programs currently formulating in the Global South are unprecedented in historical México as well as in examined practices of gentrification and globalization. In this dissertation I specifically focus on the Programa de Rescate – an urban policy being amassed in México City's Centro Histórico as a nexus of processes of gentrification, neoliberalization, and globalization. This work re-theorizes how gentrification functions when it is implemented in the Global South – as the neoliberalization of space.

KEYWORDS: Neoliberalism, Gentrification, Resistance, México, Global South

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David M. Walker

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8/1/2008

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By

David M. Walker

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Dr. Richard Schein

Director of Dissertation

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Dr. Richard Schein

Director of Graduate Studies

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DISSERTATION

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This document is dedicated to todos los Mexicanos living on both sides of la línea.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This dissertation argues that urban neoliberal programs currently formulating in the Global South are unprecedented in historical México as well as in examined practices of gentrification and globalization. In this dissertation I specifically focus on the Programa de Rescate – an urban policy being amassed in México City’s Centro Histórico as a nexus of processes of gentrification, neoliberalization, and globalization. This work re-theorizes how gentrification functions when it is implemented in the Global South – as the neoliberalization of space.

I begin this chapter with a description of how I became interested in Mexican cities (I.A.), and I introduce my research site – México City’s Centro Histórico – as an unparalleled place of recent programs of neoliberal gentrification (I.B.). The end of this Introduction (I.C.) maps out the structure and organization of my main thesis as it unfolds in the succeeding chapters. The information given in sections 1, 2, and 3, is fanned out and explored in-depth throughout this work; here I only introduce my objects of analysis and the conceptual frame within which I operate.

### **1.1. A serendipitous field excursion**

There are two border crossings into Tijuana, México; one through San Isidro and the other through Otay Mesa (Profitt, 1996). Most of the college students who visit Tijuana cross through San Isidro and are guided by signs to walk across a foot bridge that spills out onto Avenida Revolución where they spend an average of \$35 and 4 hours imbibing and dancing before stumbling back across the international line into the U.S. (Profitt, 1996). However, on the bus that I took with my college class years ago, we entered México at the Otay Mesa checkpoint where 20,000 trailer trucks cross each day, hauling all sorts of both legal and illegal goods and wares in and out of México. As we crossed the border the bus filled with the smell of diesel fuel and open sewage. The border guards at the Mexican security gate quickly flagged us through and we emerged on to the Otay Mesa—a landscape littered with industrial parks and asentamientos irregulares, also called colonias chicas: shanty towns.

We spent the day touring a maquiladora— a Hyundai assembly plant— and the homes of laborers who toiled at the maquiladora. The workers were mostly women. They lived in shanties built several miles from the maquiladora. Corrugated sheet roofs; dirt floors; pirated electricity; drinking water collected in steel drums; no garbage collection; no police or fire protection—this was life in the shanty in Otay Mesa, Tijuana, at the time the television assembly capital of the world. We stayed at the shanty until night-fall so residents could show us how the water that ran through the Rio Negro glows in the dark – an interesting shade of green. The Rio Negro is a Tributary of the Tijuana River that eventually crosses the border full of heavy metals and human effluent to empty into Imperial Beach, CA.(Profitt, 1996).

After we viewed the light show in the Rio Negro, the bus whisked us down the hill away from the Mesa to the fashionable Zona del Rio—a shocking contrast to the industrial, working poor, shanty landscape where we had spent the day. We went to the Cultural Center—a multi-million dollar event center and museum— to have dinner with academics from the various universities in Tijuana and municipal government officials. Jorge Bustamante, a well known Mexican demographer, told us how the maquiladoras were a boon to Tijuanan society.<sup>1</sup> That night as we crossed back on the bus into the U.S., I felt that while in Tijuana I had visited two worlds in one day—the first a noxious third world of industrialization and the second an opulent setting that exists alongside poverty in many cities of the global South.

In hindsight, I now know that this college fieldtrip to Tijuana was the beginning of a long-standing interest in Mexican cities and the foundational moment of my dissertation research concerning urban socio-spatial transformation in México: the neoliberal gentrification of México City’s Centro Histórico. This first visit to the multiple worlds of Tijuana sparked my interest in the juxtaposition of societies, cultures and built environments found in cities in México—and beyond—and just how it is that these Mexican cities are so lopsided in the urban built environment and in

---

<sup>1</sup> After living in San Diego and Tijuana I would learn that there are indeed positive aspects of the maquiladora sector on Tijuanan society as Bustamante insisted, but at the same time it seemed like false words when compared to the shanties we had just visited.

how they become so socially polarized.<sup>2</sup> That trip helped me to think differently about cities. The visit to Tijuana piqued my interests in the topics of uneven development, shifts in economic models that impact urban built environments, and issues of poverty and resistance within the milieu of Mexican Cities.

## 1.2 México D.F.: a Site of Global Processes and Neoliberal Gentrification

This dissertation focuses on recent gentrification of México D.F. and the distinct actors that have socio-spatially transformed the city since its inception. México D.F.'s implication in the global processes of capitalism dates from the colonial period.

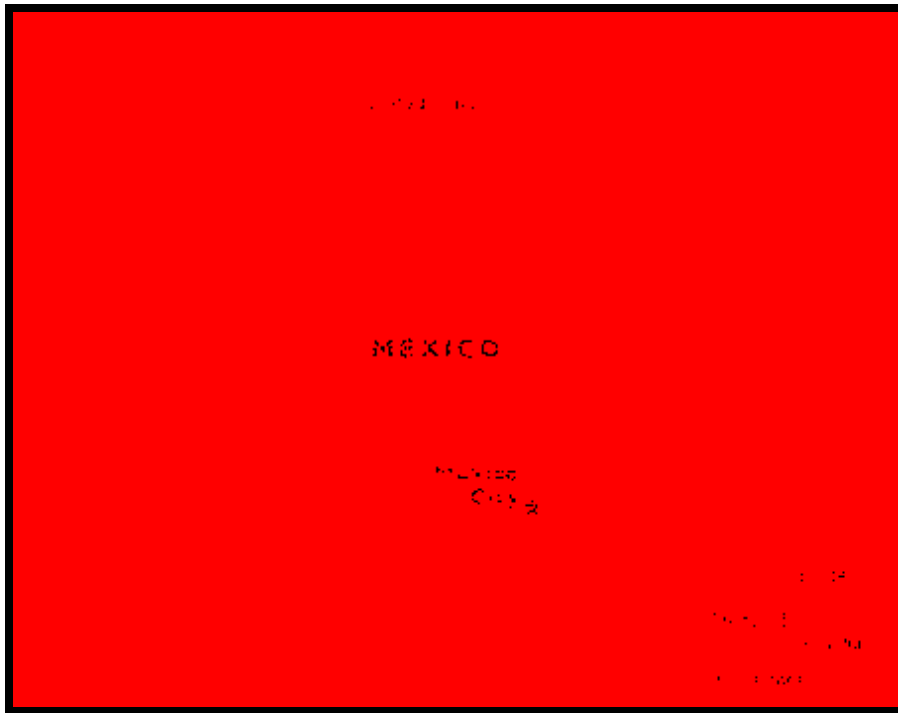


Figure 1. Map of México showing location of México City

Since the vice regal era, the city has functioned as a site where global processes and practices have socio-spatially transformed the urban built environment, demonstrating that México D.F. has been a global city for nearly five hundred years. The production and reproduction of (Todarov, 1984) the city has occurred over the

---

<sup>2</sup> Uneven development and socio-polarization are not uniquely Mexican City experiences; however, heightened forms of these phenomena are found in post-colonial cities. (Shridhar, 2004)

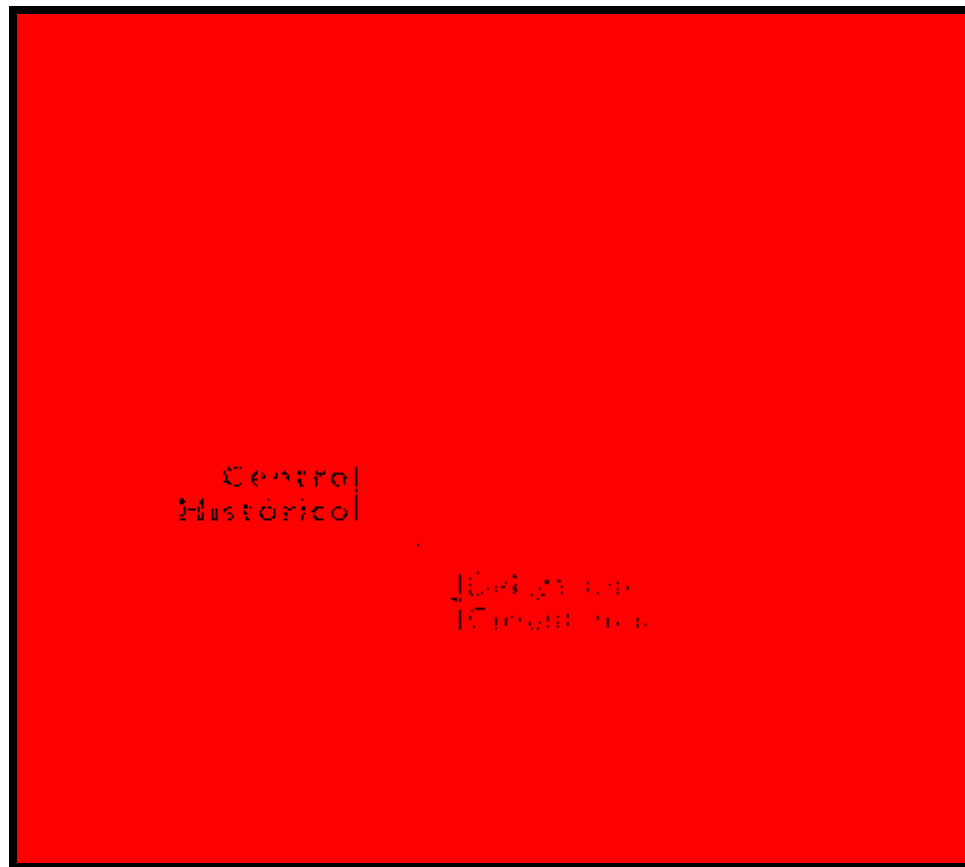
contestations of how the spaces of the city should be used and by whom. Through these conflicts the morphology of México City has steadily been transformed. Scholars have documented these changes in the built environment, such as: pre-Colombian evolution of urban society (Broda, 1987); urban escalation dating from the Colonial period (Espinosa, 1991; Kinsbruner, 2005; Todarov, 1984); socio-spatial transformations during the Porfirio Diaz regime (1871-1910) (Johns, 1997) ; morphological alterations during the Revolution (Piccato, 2001); policies that changed the city in the post-Revolution period (Cymet, 1996; Davis, 1994; Gilbert, 1996; Kandell, 1990; Pezzoli, 2000; Ward, 1998); the impact of the 1985 earthquake on the Tepito neighborhoods of México City's Centro Histórico (Aceves, 2003; N. Canclini, 1989; N. G. Canclini, 2000; Cueva, 2006; Esteva, 1991; Poniatowska, 1995); and the conversion of the Santa Fe dump into an up-scale residential and business center. (N. G. Canclini, 2000; Herzog, 1999). All of these urban socio-spatial reconfigurations of México City have been produced and re-produced through conflicts and negotiations.

The socio-spatial changes taking place now in México City can be more immediately linked to neoliberal economic policies that were first introduced in 1982 and the conflicts over urban space related to the neoliberal paradigm shift in México since that time. The current age of roll-back and roll-out neoliberalization adds another fold in the ongoing reconfiguration of urban space in México City. The trends towards neoliberalization in countries in the global South have generally impacted the built <sup>3</sup>environment of cities (Amin, 2002; Routledge, 2007). The shift from 'roll-back-neoliberalism' during the 1980s in México, which entailed a pattern of deregulation and dismantlement under structural adjustment policies (eg. education, health care services, devaluation, government assistance and government downsizing) to the emergent phase of 'roll-out-neoliberalism', consisting of aggressive intervention by governments around issues such as crime, policing, and

---

<sup>3</sup> Ambulantes have existed in Central México for hundreds of years (Raaf, 1982). However, ambulante has intensified and reconfigured the use of urban space at a greater speed since the introduction, adaptation and implementation of neoliberalism in México City. (Hernandez, 2005)

urban surveillance with the purpose of disciplining and containing those marginalized or disposed by the neoliberalization of the 1980s, informs México City's urban policies. The proliferation of neoliberalism in México has occurred in tandem with the decay of the built environment in México City, the large scale emergence of entrepreneurial street vending, called ambulante, and the subsequent implementation of a neoliberal municipal gentrification program called the Programa de Rescate that functions as a global urban strategy to take back the Centro from the ambulantes.



**Figure 2. The grey area represents the sprawling Megalopolis that is greater México City. Delegación Cuauhtémoc and the Centro Histórico are highlighted**

The Programa de Rescate (PDGGD, 2001) is a municipal policy with aspirations to gentrify México City's Centro Histórico. México City is the capital of México. Greater México City is a sprawling megalopolis of over 20 million in habitants (Ward, 1998). It consists of the Federal District of México and has also bled into 16 municipalities and two states: The state of México (El Estado de México) and Morelos

(Ward, 1998). The Federal district is divided into 13 Delagaciones, or Boroughs. The Centro Histórico is located in the oldest Borough, Delegación Cuauhtémoc (See Figure 2).

The goal of the Programa de Rescate is to catapult México City into the ranking as one of the world's truly global cities. The Programa is an example of a state/corporate piloted gentrification program based on a neoliberal municipal policy to encourage investment in the Centro Histórico, attract middle and upper class residents to live in the Centro, increase tourism, and most importantly for an urban center such as México City, the Programa calls for the 'normalization'<sup>4</sup> of urban space, which entails the removal and relocation of the 30,000 ambulantes (or entrepreneurial street vendors) who live and work in the Centro.

The Government of the Federal District under the leadership of Manuel Lopez Obrador, a charismatic popular politician from the leftwing PRD political party<sup>5</sup> spearheaded the Programa in 2001. The members of this alliance intend to meet their goals by revitalizing and beautifying the Zócalo (México City's main Plaza), the Alameda (a park in the historic center) as well as other squares, the streets, buildings, and infrastructure (See Figure 3). The renovation of the historic center has been implemented in three stages (PGDDF 2001).

The first stage consists of replacing water and sewer infrastructure and razing buildings damaged in the 1985 earthquake in the Historic Center, and the development of a commercial corridor (Zócalo-Reforma) to connect the Zócalo to the Paseo de La Reforma business district.

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<sup>4</sup> The phrase, "normalization of urban space," I lifted directly from the Municipal Planning Document, El Programa de Rescate (Federal, 2002)

<sup>5</sup> Lopez Obrador left his position as mayor in 2006 to unsuccessfully run for the presidency under the PRD—a left of center opposition party to the PAN – the right of center party that currently holds the presidency. Currently, the mayor of México City is Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon the former head of México City security under Lopez Obrador. He is following through with the goals of the Programa de Rescate. Ebrard's carrying over of the Program demonstrates that there is continuity and fluidity to the implementation of the Programa from one administration—a sexsenio as they last six years in México—to the next: a major concern and goal for those who initiated the Programa. This shift in Mayors occurred after I lived in México City in 2005.



**Figure 3. Key Places in México City referred to in this dissertation**

The Programa plans to improve tourist facilities during the second phase. This includes installing modern hotels, a visitor’s center, and constructing Latin America’s tallest skyscraper. The third stage of the Programa concerns improving and renovating buildings and housing into multi-use complexes consisting of retail shops, restaurants and residences. In order to meet the third stage of the Programa, the Government of the Federal District of México City (GFD) announced plans calling for the *uniformización*, or ‘normalizing’ of the Historic Center.

These plans include an increase in the number of green areas, park benches, public garbage bins, public phone booths, an anti-graffiti campaign and increased security in the historic center. The increase in security includes more police presence, surveillance cameras, and “panic buttons”: buttons found at different sites in the historic district linked directly to police departments that bystanders or threatened citizens may activate upon witnessing a crime. The ‘normalizing’ of urban space also requires the removal and relocation of the 30,000 *ambulantes*, or street vendors, who sell their wares in the streets and plazas of the Centro Histórico (Weiner, 2002). Already the Programa has renovated many streets and buildings,



initiating the transformation of the public spaces of México City's Historic Center from a proletariat stronghold into what could be an appealing residential area and a promising site for local and global investors (PGDDF 2001).

The renovation of a global city such as México City requires the participation of many different socio-economic groups, investors, and cooperation between the Federal Government and the Government of the Federal District (GFD) all working at multiple mutually constitutive scales. The current political climate in México City plays a major role in creating the policies that inform the Programa and allow for the program's implementation. The mayorship of México City changed from a political appointment by the Federal Government to a popularly elected position in 1998 indicating the impacts of neoliberalism through political decentralization in México at the federal scale (Middlebrook & Zepeda, 2002). The joint venture between the private investor Carlos Slim Helú, CEO of Grupo Carso S.A., de C.V. (a multinational corporation with investments in three continents) and Chairman of the Board of Directors of TELMEX, and México City officials to craft and put into practice the Programa represents the political and fiscal autonomy that the municipal government currently exercises in México City while also demonstrating the partnership between the Federal Government and México City (Bolaños, 2002). The Programa represents policy planning and investment conducted at the municipal, federal and global scale and the results of the Programa will also reflect input from neighborhood associations and ambulante groups.

The PRD—the left wing Revolutionary Party for Democracy—backed candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, was first elected to office in México City in 1998, and a PRD backed candidate, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador won the mayoral elections in 2001. The PRD ran in both elections as a populist, anti-neoliberal party. México City is the stronghold for the PRD throughout the country. Politically, it is curious that the PRD, a left of center anti-neoliberal party, promoted the gentrification of the Historic Center of México City and has already accepted over \$800 million in investment from the transnational corporation called Grupo Carso— a multination, pro-neoliberal corporation (Bolaños, 2002).

Indeed, what makes the Programa de Rescate so remarkable is the unusual alliance between its two champions, one a popular leftwing mayor, Manuel Lopez Obrador, from the Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD), the other the billionaire investor Carlos Slim Helú, CEO of Grupo Carso S.A., a multinational corporation with investments in three continents, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Teléfonos de México (TELMEX). That a leftwing populist like Lopez Obrador would so vigorously seek out and solidify a cooperative agreement with Slim, a multinational, neoliberal capitalist, to promote and implement the Programa de Rescate, clearly represents a new paradigm of government- and capital-piloted gentrification. Compared to other global cities that have forged municipal and corporate alliances for urban redevelopment, such as those in New York City under the leadership of Rudolf Giuliani (Hackworth, 2002, 2006; N. Smith, 2002), the pairing of Lopez Obrador and Slim is indeed a strange mix.

The Programa's implementation is still in progress. I am presented a rare case study to examine such a massive undertaking that is still in the process of becoming. In this sense, my research in the Centro Histórico differs from other studies that analyze sites as places that have already experienced the neoliberalization of space or gentrification, thus broaching new horizons in gentrification studies. As the Programa is in full swing, I must analyze the socio-spatial reconfigurations at work in the Centro as well as the politics of the Programa as these occurrences are intertwined in post-colonial México City.

The Programa de Rescate also represents a paradigm shift in Mexican and Latin American gentrification and urban renovation indicative of the neoliberalization of space in the global South. The Historic District presents an innovative case study to learn about gentrification in México, Latin America and the global South. México City is the 'crown jewel' of Latin America (Davis, 1994) and the Programa de Rescate aims to renovate an area three times the size of the historic districts of Lima, Peru or even Barcelona and Madrid, Spain, representing the magnitude and scale of the project. Moreover, México City is one of the economic and cultural centers of Latin America and represents urban complexity found

throughout the region. As the Programa de Rescate matures, this municipal policy has the potential to be re-produced in other city centers in Latin America and throughout the global South, making it an even more pertinent research topic.

This dissertation seeks to understand the twining of roll-out neoliberalization and gentrification in México City's Centro Histórico through the Programa de Rescate. The ways these combinations of practices have played out in México City is unprecedented in historical neoliberal processes – as a gentrification, globalization device. In this dissertation I describe how business leaders wielding international capital, intellectuals and the state joined forces to create the Programa in order to 'save' the Centro (but from whom or what?). I also discuss the interworkings of the Programa. The interworkings consist of who funds the Programa, how those funds are implemented, where the monies are spent, and the on-the-ground-implementation of the Programa. In this dissertation I illustrate how ambulantes and neighborhood associations employ vernacular forms of opposition to resist the Programa's efforts to neoliberalize and gentrify the Centro and the subsequent negotiation over the utilization of urban space. Indeed it is not new that conflicts over the utilization of urban space lead to socio-spatial reconfiguration of cities, but, as I explain in succeeding chapters, the examples of neoliberal gentrification in México City's Centro Histórico allows us to view theories of neoliberalism and gentrification in new ways. When gentrification moves south, it manifests distinctly from gentrification in the global north – the resistance to gentrification included. In the following sections I outline the organization of my dissertation.

### **1.3 Chapter Outline**

Chapter 2 engages the conceptual and theoretical foundations of this study. Specifically, the chapter concerns literatures on globalization (and its cultural and economic meanings), neoliberalism and neoliberalization, and gentrification. I begin with a literature review on the theories that inform how I conceptualize and work with the literatures written on globalization. A review of the literatures surrounding some of the globalization debates is necessary in order to understand how gentrification is currently functioning as a global urban strategy. I then discuss how

I theorize neoliberalism and neoliberalization by engaging with some of the theories authors have provided on these concepts. I continue by following the trajectory of gentrification studies. I engage with the literatures and empirical examples, starting with Ruth Glass and following through the history of gentrification studies to the contemporary era to provide an understanding of how the term has morphed to signify such a wide range of socio-spatial urban reconfigurations. In so doing, I offer a conceptualization of how I am working with the term “gentrification” to understand socio-spatial urban transformation in the global South. I end chapter 2. with a discussion of how I intertwine the theories of gentrification, globalization and neoliberalization in order to theorize how gentrification as the neoliberalization of urban space functions as a global strategy that can also be found in post-colonial cities in the global South. Although many studies focus on globalization, neoliberalism, and gentrification, few have intertwined these three as I do in my research.

In chapter 3 I outline the methods I used when conducting fieldwork in México City’s Centro Histórico. In order to gather information concerning urban reconfigurations in the Centro Histórico, I chose interviews, archival research and participant observation as my methodological tools. In the methodology chapter I provide a rationale for choosing these specific methods. I discuss how I obtained the information and data I gathered that informs this dissertation while living, working and conducting research in México City from January - November 2005. I also engage with principals surrounding question of “doing” fieldwork, especially in the global South. I provide insights into some of the difficulties of conducting research in a chaotic, post-colonial city, including problems and questions of violence; transportation difficulties; cultural nuances; and I ask questions about the moralities and positionalities involved when making decisions on how to go about conducting research in the global South as a white male, with institutional support (i.e. the University of Kentucky) from the global North.

In chapter 4, I describe how the actors, timing and place coalesce to allow the scenario of gentrification as the neoliberalization of space to unfold. The current

mobilization of the Programa de Rescate hinges on the combination of this particular moment in time, the place that is México city (which is always in a process of flux) and the actors involved in the Programa that are producing México City's gentrification policy and program. México City has been long involved in cultural and economic global processes – from the colonial period until the current day of the neoliberal state and ambulante (street vending). I begin with a discussion on México City within the milieu of cultural and economic globalism. Highlighting México City's placement vis-à-vis cultural and economic globalism provides a temporal- place-based understanding of how processes of cultural and economic globalism are coalescing through actors that are mobilizing gentrification of the Centro. Then I continue with a historical contextualization of México City followed by a description of the Centro Histórico including specific sites earmarked for gentrification. Twenty years of the neoliberal programs have led to the deterioration of the urban built environment in México City and also impacted the role of the centralized Mexican state—a key factor in the current emergence of gentrification in the Centro Histórico. One of the perhaps unintended consequences México's neoliberalization has been the opening up of democratic processes involving a shift from authoritarian regimes to more democratically elected administrations, a move to transparency of elections, and decentralization of decades-long top-down power structures (Gwynne & Kay, 2004). Free elections, transparency and decentralization modified the political structure of México City providing an increase in fiscal and planning autonomy for the federal district. In chapter 4, I discuss not only how the implementation of neoliberal policies have led to the deterioration of the urban built environment and an increase in ambulante—signifying a distinct change in the way urban space is utilized—but I also discuss how decentralization allowed the different actors to come together in order to create the Programa de Rescate. I describe how the informal economic sector and ambulante in México City emerged in tandem with the surfacing of the neoliberal paradigm shift and “roll-back” Neoliberalization in México. I explain ambulante and discuss how urban primacy, economic collapse and ambulante are intertwined.

In chapter 5, I provide a detailed description of the Programa and unpack this corporate/state piloted municipal gentrification program, describing how it is implemented. I emphasize how the Programa is attempting to change the Centro from a working poor neighborhood into an upper class playground for international tourists and the elite of México City. I explain the specifics of what is known as the *Elitificación* of the Centro Histórico. In this section I provide details on the funding and organization of the Programa and discuss how the promoters of the Programa employ festivals and culture to lure the targeted population back to the Centro.

In chapter 6, I describe particular ways in which the objectives of the Programa de Rescate are materialized in the Centro to convert it into a site that is desirable for elites to live and invest. I discuss the geography of fear as a mechanism that is preventing the Programa from realizing its goals, and attempts to overcome it. I then illustrate how the Programa employs museums, cultural events, festivals, and trendy restaurants and bars to meet the goals of gentrifying the Centro. The festivals are activities intertwined with the geography of fear. I submit a narrative on how the promoters of the Programa attempt to generate more residential forms of gentrification through the unusual transient, “bureaucratic gentrification” of politicians. I describe how the state and transnational Grupo Carso are relocating their offices to the Centro as an attempt to attract white collar workers to live in the Centro. I also provide a description of the closest example of ‘house by house’ gentrification my research led me to in the Centro. I continue to describe the attempts of the Programa to construct the largest skyscraper in Latin American—an early goal of the Programa that has not been realized due to the resistance that elite community organizers raised against the construction of the Skyscraper. I finish this chapter with a discussion of the socio-spatial reconfiguration in the Centro before and after an area has been ‘normalized’.

In chapter 7, I discuss the resistance to and the negotiation over the neoliberalization of space among the residents and *ambulantes* of the Centro vis-à-vis the state and private promoters of the Programa de Rescate. I provide an account of the vernacular forms of resistance I witnessed in the Centro Histórico to the

Programa de Rescate. Various scholars have written on daily acts of resistance (Scott, 1985) the manifold, nuanced forms of resistance that have been employed to confront and negotiate against power-structures (Pile, 1997; Routledge, Sharp, Philo, & Paddison, 2000), and recent literatures have addressed issues related to contesting neoliberalization within the urban setting (Leitner, Sheppard, & Peck, 2006). This section of my dissertation highlights place-based forms of resistance to the neoliberalization of urban space in the Centro Histórico by considering both political forms of resistance and physical or violent forms of resistance. In addition to spatial and political-cum-violent strategies to gentrification in México City I describe how street vendors and residents in México City's Historic Center are using vernacular religion (la adoración de la Santa Muerte) as a mechanism to create alternatives to the neoliberal, teleological utilization of urban space outlined in the Programa de Rescate, and vernacular language structures (Albures) as tools of resistance to thwart the neoliberalization of the city in this locale. I continue with a discussion of how the heterogeneous occurrences of timespaces in the Centro are frustrating the realization of neoliberal gentrification in this locale. Engaging with these vernacular forms of resistance in a city in the Global South also underscore the practices and processes of neoliberalization that exist in specific and multiple forms across the globe.

The gentrification of the Centro Histórico is still at play. In the conclusion (chapter 8) I provide some insights into the current state of the Programa. I revisit the questions of this introductory chapter and evaluate the replicability of such an ambitious gentrification program in other city centers in Latin America.

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## **CHAPTER 2: WORKING THROUGH THE METANARRATIVES: MOBILIZING THEORIES TO UNDERSTAND GENTRIFICATION AS THE NEOLIBERALIZATION OF SPACE**

The socio-spatial transformations under way in México City's Centro Histórico can be understood as constituting a nexus of the processes of the neoliberalization of space, economic and cultural globalization and gentrification. This chapter will describe each of these processes, review literatures relevant to their purchase in México D.F., and establish the conceptual and theoretical assumptions of this dissertation.

In the following sections I review these concepts. It is important to review the literatures surrounding the tropes of globalization and neoliberalization in order to establish how these particular discourses function in tandem with gentrification in the Centro Histórico. It is my claim that discourses of globalization, neoliberalization and gentrification have been, through the operation of language and through the built environment, mobilized into powerful signifiers that possess the capabilities through the organization of specific actors to privilege certain modernizing tropes over particular vernacular and local-based forms of being, producing, and consuming.

This dissertation will contribute to nuanced understanding about how the practices and policies informed by these discourses have direct impacts on the use of urban space and the built environment in cities of the Global South. Indeed, more nuanced understandings of the processes and practices of roll-back and roll-out neoliberalization – and how these processes are intertwined with the practices of globalization – as applied to the changes in urban space in México City's Historic Center contribute to re-theorizations of the neoliberalization of space and the phenomenon of gentrification in cities in the Global South.

The next section 2.1 highlights and outlines how I believe globalization processes function – and how the discourses surrounding globalization can be mobilized to address the global-local dialectic. The following section 2.2 examines



discourses and theories related to how neoliberalization has been mobilized. I outline how these theories have been hoisted upon the economies Latin American countries with a specific focus on México, and how roll-back and roll-out neoliberalization have impacted the built environment of the Centro Histórico. Section 2.3 highlights how academicians have organized theories of gentrification, and discusses the dearth in these theories regarding the Global South. In the final section 2.4 I fan out the main thesis of this work – how and why the Programa de Rescate is being implemented in the Historic District of México City: the manifestation of globalization and neoliberalization as gentrification in the global south.

### **2.1. Theorizing Globalization**

“Globalization,” is embodied in a set of processes and practices that have steadily gained motion for centuries; but the term was coined only in the last forty years, and has gained particular vogue since the mid 1980s (Herod, Tuathail, & Roberts, 1998) The Economist first used the neologism globalization in an article in 1959 that referred to Globalized Quotas when mentioning the export of automobiles from the U.S. to Italy. The word globalization débuts in Miriam Webster’s International Dictionary in 1961, and by the mid 1960s the term was in wide use (Dictionary, March 2008; Herod et al., 1998). Currently, politicians, academics, business people, the media and agents in the entertainment industry constantly refer to the expression globalization to blame, praise, credit, or simply recognize a myriad of occurrences.

Globalization in and of itself is not a thing. It is not tangible. You cannot visit Wal-Mart and purchase globalization. Globalization is a set of processes and practices. To understand the set of discourses labeled globalization requires a perspective of the long duree and a consideration of how the processes of capitalism and consumption simultaneously flow through one another to become what is understood to be ‘globalization as theater’ (Valaskakis, 1999). Harvey argues in Spaces of Hope (Harvey, 2001) that cultural and economic globalization is merely a continuation of a worldwide occurrence called capitalism that has been steadily globalizing since 1492. I would add to Harvey’s definition of this continuation of

globalization that the process combines economic capitalism with cultural consumption patterns. Smith affirms that commodity capital and financial capital are not responsible for this current “new globalizing effect”, thus strengthening the argument that cultural and economic globalization function in tandem.(N. Smith, 2002) He demonstrates how both Adam Smith and Marx wrote about a world market well before the term globalization arrived on the scene (N. Smith, 2002).

Johnston et al define globalization as a result of “time space compression, [which] has so transformed the structure and scale of human relationships that social, political, cultural, and economic processes now operate at a global scale with a consequent reduction in the significance of other geographical scales [national, local etc.]” (Johnston, Gregory, Pratt, & Watts, 2000) I disagree with the definition’s claim that the ‘global scale’ operates at an ‘increased’ significance to the other multiple socially produced scales. Rather, there are heterogeneous flows that are occurring simultaneously in the form of agent produced processes that make up the world (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; S Marston, 2002; Sally Marston, Jones, & Woddward, 2005). A more subtle definition of globalization (Sally Marston, Jones, & Woodward, 2005; R. G. Smith, 2000, 2003) requires an understanding that there exist multiple different gradations of globalization, and these gradations are not necessarily hierarchical, thus the gradations may jump across scales and through flows; not merely from the global downwards, but in a more capillary fashion shooting through compound nodal flows simultaneously. I prefer Amin’s (2002, p. 385) definition to that found in Johnston et al, where globalization, “is centrally about the spatiality of contemporary social organization, about meanings of place and space associated with intensified world level forces (for example through transnational corporations and banks, global consumer norms, world ideologies, international authority structures, consumption patterns) and raised global connectivity (for example through flows of people, goods, ideas, and information aided by rapid transport and communications technologies). The term globalization refers to processes that weave among the different socially produced scales while not privileging the global over the local, or romanticizing or essentializing the local.

In my understanding, globalization stems from the colonial period in the Americas with the coming together of trade from all of the continents for the first time. This first ever experience of a 'global' commerce occurred in tandem with movement of people, ideas and 'cultures', which culminated in the first 'entirely global' form of economic and cultural exchanges (including people, ideas and 'culture' from each continent). Slowly, these processes and flows intensified over the centuries as more and more layers of economic trade and exchange of peoples, ideas and cultures occurred, spurred by technological advances in communications and transportation. Within the milieu of technological advances coupled with the restructuring of world capitalism stimulated by the economic crises of the 1970s, the past thirty years have witnessed an acceleration of socio-spatial changes at multiple levels and gradations. The global spread of economic trade and cultural trade occurred simultaneously and cannot be separated from each other.

Mass global migration, another popular indicator of globalization, is also not a particularly new phenomenon, as diasporic movements, both forced and voluntary have existed 'globally' for centuries (Mundimbe & Engel, 1999). The historical occurrence of mass migration prior to the term 'globalization' came into vogue demonstrates that "long before the 1980s all "national" cultures were more or less hybrid (N. Smith, 2002, p. 432)." The fact that capital flows have historical precedence over the current form of globalization signifies that global forms of consumption patterns must also stem from the pre-"new globalization" era(N. Smith, 2002).

Despite the fact that we can trace the history of globalization to perhaps as far back as 1492 (Harvey, 2001), or as Chomsky insinuates globalization began 5000 years ago (Short, 2001), it cannot be denied that through technological advances in communications and transportation, people are experiencing a compression of time and space that is unique compared to previous eras of globalizations (Harvey, 1989b). This new epoch of globalization refers to the worldwide compression of space and time and the intensification of consciousness about the world as a whole including: economic, cultural and physical aspects of people's lives. The proliferation of this new epoch of globalization has accelerated in waves since WWII. These waves have

included the emergence of the possibility of a U.S. Empire, the surfacing of fordist economic production in the post war era, the subsequent transfer to a post-fordist model of economic production—which has impacted so thoroughly city centers in the Global North—and the different flows of Neoliberalization, both roll back in the early 1980s and roll out in its current form. However, these processes have occurred primarily in Western Europe, the U.S. and Canada, and to a lesser degree in parts of Asia (such as Japan and Singapore) and Australia and New Zealand.

Any economic, cultural or physical phenomenon that cannot be understood exclusively in a local context, but which requires a global perspective to be understood, is considered to be an effect of globalization (Short 2001). Inversely, phenomena that are understood as global occurrences are impacted by the local, thus demonstrating the local/global dialectic. Consequently, as delineated by Amin, globalization is “centrally about the spatiality of contemporary social organization, about meanings of place and space associated with intensified world-level forces...and raised global connectivity.” (Amin & Thrift, 2002 p. 385). Amin’s quote demonstrates that the flows of power work their way through multiple socially produced scales in a non hierarchical mode

Cultural and economic globalization is a combination of actors, an intensification of capitalism and global forms of consumption patterns, and accelerated flows of migration which are leading to the belief that, “the world is becoming culturally globalized by continuous, increasing, and deepening flows of goods, people, capital, ideas, and information across national boundaries.” (Short, 2001, p. 213). Following Short and Amin’s argument Jackson (2002) emphasizes how culture and commerce are embedded in one another. The commoditization and reified use of culture helps commerce by providing cultural purchase to commercial items. Jackson thwarts the dualistic thinking that separates culture and commerce into a clean and tidy binary, to reveal the overlapping of culture and commerce, to recognize the messiness of the two categories, and to identify how the two are mutually entrenched within one another (Jackson, 2002).

Massey writes how world economies and consumption patterns have noticeably changed since the end of World War II. She outlines economic changes and tendencies that demonstrate that the world has become more global in the second half of the twentieth century. She characterizes these changes as a “move from organized to disorganized capitalism, from modern to postmodern, from industrial to post-industrial, from manufacturing to service, from fordist to post fordist” (D. B. Massey, 1994)

While Massey recognizes that structural organizational changes are occurring, she is critical of the phrase globalization and how people carelessly use the term (D. Massey, 1999, 2005). Again, the shifts in production and consumption that Massey list above are events that are mostly taking place in what has become labeled the ‘developing world’ - it seems that Latin American and some Asian and African societies may be experiencing a combination of the occurrences that Massey lists above. For example, México did not experience an industrial revolution like Northern Europe or the U.S. during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Granted, there did exist some rudimentary forms of industrialization in Monterrey in the glass industry that centered around beer manufacturing that eventually splintered off into pharmaceuticals and petroleum in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – however, the dynamism of industrialization experienced in the North did not occur in México.

In fact, it can be argued, as Amin does (2002), that third world cities are continuously in the process of pre-industrialization, industrialization and post-industrialization simultaneously – which is a much more messy – yet perhaps a more precise reality – than the neatly divided categories of fordism and post-fordism that Massey and others refer to when discussing the economy and its impacts on the built environment of cities in the Global North. Just as the phases of industrialization have occurred distinctly in México City from the Global North, so too have the processes of neoliberalization transpired in a vernacular fashion in México City – with the phases of roll back and roll out neoliberalization often overlapping in certain circumstances while impacting the built environment of the City. The linear trajectory that tells the teleological history of industrialization becomes more interspersed with nonlinear

stories and occurrences when analyzing the cultural and economic processes that have shaped the societies of cities in the Global South. The timespace of consumption and production become scattered and overlapped with the pre-Columbian, colonial, and post-colonial all intermingled with different forms of consumption and production. Pre-Columbian forms of organizational production can be found in make-shift factories in the Historic District of México City – thus showing how fordism and pre-Columbian concepts of society may overlap— and post-colonial relationships play themselves out in the distribution of goat milk that is weaned and sold in Tepito— demonstrating another over-layering of the pre-Columbian and post-colonial.

Massey is wary of the blind acceptance of the “material ‘factness’ of the stories (some) economists tell” (D. Massey, 1999, p. 34). Instead of nuanced discussions of (Stiglitz, 2003)changes within the global economy, there exists an unproblematic and undifferentiated acceptance of what constitutes a ‘globalized economy’ (see Stiglitz 2003, but for an alternative economic argument see Ruccio 2001). In other words, economic globalization is uncritically accepted by some economist (but see Ruccio 2001 for a critique of economics and capitalism and (Roberts, Secor, & Saprke, 2003)for a discussion about alternative forms of development)—even though, as Massey points out, economics is a discourse too, one, I would add, that needs to be continuously deconstructed. Economic and Cultural globalization can take a variety of forms and does not necessarily strictly correspond to one particular model of development promoted within global discourses perpetuated by the North (Dezalay & Garth, 2002)(and some in the South). This leads to Massey’s critique of globalization as a meta-narrative, one that she likens to modernity’s story of progress. Globalization and modernization will simply occur over time, and “spatial differences are convened under the sign of temporal sequence” (D. Massey, 1999). The acceptance of globalization as a metanarrative obliterates space over time. This is an aspatial view of globalization that does not take into consideration the different historical trajectories of multiple different places, regions, nations, and so on. Space should also not be privileged over other factors such as time. The two concepts overlap and are intertwined (May & Thrift, 2001). The mantra of globalization is inaccurate. Clearly the whole world is not

already economically globalized along the lines of the Washington Consensus. Cultures have not become homogenized under these same supposedly hegemonic practices. If globalization had truly culturally and economically smoothed over the world, then why would individuals and agencies with capital interests in globalization be pushing countries to continue the 'globalization' process? In the case of México City, there are still promoters of neoliberalization coming from within the country as well as promotion by multi-lateral organizations and foreign countries, such as the U.S. that are promoting globalization, thus demonstrating that cultural and economic homogenization and the entrapment of and control of capital has not occurred. In her writing, Massey also illuminates how discourses of globalization are a highly particular geography of power and knowledge – where hegemonic Northern countries can use the discourses of globalization-cum-development to subordinate countries such as México.

Massey suggests alternative ways to imagine globalization, which differ from the approaches espoused by the promoters and practitioners of globalization discourses, which I see as related to an understanding of the compound global/local dialectic – or how there are multiple processes occurring simultaneously promoted by concrete actors with distinct power relations that are driving the happenings of the world. She advocates the importance of, “always being aware of power relations...and this is meant both in the sense of power relations in the social spheres we are examining, and in the sense of the power relation embedded in the power knowledge system which our conceptualizations are constructing” (D. Massey, 1999, p. 27). Massey recognizes that global changes are afoot, but she is wary of accepting the concept that the processes of globalization simply move across scales and sites homogenizing and 'globalizing' where they may.

Massey refuses to conceptualize the different scalings of time-space as a hierarchical relationship – predating by over a decade recent scholars attempts at de-scaling geography (Sally Marston et al., 2005). She argues that all places are constituted through a “power geometry” where it is not simply a case of the global hovering above, producing, or determining the local. Power geometry frames the

global as an entity realized through the expression of a complex interconnection of an assortment of local relationships, which are always in the process of becoming. The global does not superimpose itself on or consume the local. Understanding the global/local—as well as the myriad other processes going on—within the framework of Massey’s conceptualization of space, requires outlining the processes through which sites are made as “articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings” (D. B. Massey, 1994, p. 154). Massey writes that all places, “may be imagined as particular articulations of these social relations, including local relations ‘within’ the place and those many connections which stretch beyond it. And all of these are embedded in complex, layered, histories” (D. B. Massey, 1994, p. 154). Thus, place is conceptualized as a moment that necessarily reflects the conflation and mutual constitution of varying scales, particularly the global and local – as well as the myriad nodes of flows found hovering/centering around these sites: “[place]...derives not from some mythical internal roots nor from a history of relative isolation—now to be disrupted by globalization—but precisely from the absolute particularity of the mixtures of influences found together there” (D. Massey, 1999, p. 22). It is important to highlight the ways that Massey has re-theorized the discourses surrounding globalization processes when considering the reconfiguration of urban space in México City. There are multiple different actors with different gradations of connection to the global and the local, and all of the socially produced scales that flow around the global and the local who distinctly purport how urban space should be used—and who should have access to its use—in the Centro. For example, there are disparate socially produced scales that contest the utilization of urban space in the Centro: the financiers who envision the neoliberalization of the Centro for business profits and the ambulantes and residents who use the urban spaces as a site to sell their wares.

Swyngedouw (Swyngedouw, 1999) draws on examples of economic crises to demonstrate how the global and the local are intertwined. The illustrations of the global (space)/local (place) dialectic Swyngedouw has unfortunately termed, “glocalization” (an unseemly neologism Swyngedouw lifted from Japanese businessmen who coined the term to refer to the new “world entrepreneur”, see



Canclini, 2000). Glocalization refers to how “local actions shape global money flows, while global processes, in turn, affect local actions....in short, the global and the local are mutually constituted” (Swyngedouw, 1999). The processes of the neoliberalization of space in México City that is the topic of my research in the Centro Histórico provide an equally explicit example of how the ‘global and the local are mutually constituted’ as witnessed by the conflict over the utilization of space among the ambulantes, residents, and the city and corporate agents who aim to transform the Centro Histórico. Later I will incorporate the concepts of the global and the local by highlighting how each one of these actors participates in different gradations through distinct processes and flows across time and space. For example, from ambulantes who have ties in Tepito neighborhood in the Centro and also with businessmen in China who pirate the wares the ambulantes sell in the streets of the Centro—to the investors such as Slim’s corporation , Grupo Carso, which has investments in three continents while having large interests in the Centro.

Ash Amin wants to access a venue for getting beyond the global/local binary, or to “defy a linear distinction between place and space” (Amin, 2002, p. 385) by developing a topology that “overlaps near-far relations and organization of connections (within a) different insight, not a superior one, to scalar thinking” (Amin, 2002, p. 386). Amin is frustrated with theorists who critique economic globalization and still insists upon separating out the local from the global to mobilize their critique. He argues that from a “heterotopic understanding of place we cannot assume that local happenings or geographies are ontologically separable from those out there” (Amin, 2002, p. 386) (also see Foucault (1986) for an explanation of heterotopia).

Amin also disputes that a critique of globalization cannot romanticize place. He argues that the romanticization of place—or the privileging of solely local processes and behaviors en lieu of understanding the interconnectedness of processes and the thwarting of hierarchical considerations— creates binaries between the North and the South, and among different groups in cities at a global level. A romantic notion of place functions as a device to encode global processes as

immoral and individualistic, while the local collapses into the category of respectful of moral order, bounded in a sense of community and correctness. This understanding of place reinforces the global/local binary and provides globalization discourse with the purchase of the inevitableness that 'globalization', as a meta-narrative, is destined to take place. Reinforcing the global/local binary does not allow for a realization that there are multiple forms of resistance to and appropriation of globalization, and that there exists multiple processes, flows and gradations of globalization.

Amin's goal is to reconceptualize place/space relations and to begin to think of "places in nonterritorial terms, as nodes in relational settings, and as a site of situated practices (of presence and absence)" (Amin, 2002, p. 391). Also required is an understanding of places as sites where socio-spatial and economic processes surge. This re-articulation of space/place relations requires an understanding of place as "the embodiment of virtual or immanent forces and as the temporary spatiotemporalization of associated networks of different length and duration...as a contingent and ever-shifting mesh of interactive processes" (Amin, 2002, p. 391). Amin's collapsing of the global/local binary rests in his rejection of "see(ing) globalization in terms of a shift in the balance of power between different spatial scales, or in terms of the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of social organizations" (Amin, 2002, p. 395). As an alternative, Amin associates globalization with an intensification of the blending of processes and connectivity among those processes flowing simultaneously among and through multiple passageways: not merely the local resisting the global, or the domineering global overwhelming the local. Conceptualizing the interconnectedness of processes in this manner refutes the privileging of the global and the local scale in an attempt to understand the multiplicity of flows that shape and are shaped by the world (such as the body, and the home, among others). These flows are intertwined with each other and always socially produced: from the body, the locale, the city and nation to the 'global' (Amin (2002), but also see Marston (2002), and Marston, Jones & Wooddard (2005).

Gibson-Graham has developed two strategies for disputing the power of the global/local binary (Gibson-Graham, 2002). Through a deconstructive critique they believe that the rhetoric surrounding globalization and the discourses that separate the global/local can be decentered. The second strategy involves what they label resubjectivation, a “set of embodied interventions that attempt to confront and reshape the ways in which we live and enact the power of the global” (Gibson-Graham 2002, p. 30), and challenge subjection to forms of globalizations.

To go about the deconstruction of globalization she notices how the global and the local are positioned in a familiar hierarchy, where both terms obtain meaning and power from the other. The creation of the meaning of one term, in the face of the other, leads to an accepted (yet contested) understanding that the global is “represented and sufficient, whole, powerful, and transformative in relation to which the local is deficient, fragmented, weak, and acted upon.” (Gibson-Graham 2002, p. 30).

In the quest to destabilize the global/local binary, Gibson-Graham identify three sign-posts with which scholars are associated. By viewing both sides of the binary as mere moments of processes it is possible to eliminate the ‘objectification’ of the global and the local and to oppose the perception of localness or globalness as essential objects. “The global and the local are not things in themselves, nor are “globalness” and “localness” inherent qualities of an object. They are interpretive frames-scales of analysis, for example” (Gibson-Graham 1999, as quoted in Gibson-Graham 2002, p. 30). Then there are scholars who see the global and the local as the same: “scratch anything global and you will find locality-grounded practices in factories, stock exchanges, retail outlets and communities,” (Gibson-Graham 2002, p. 32) And those that “see both sides of the binary as referring to specific processes that are always in motion.” (Gibson-Graham 2002, p. 33) According to the aforementioned scholars who theorize globalization processes, the local and the global are not predetermined entities. The global and the local are contingent upon each other, each producing the other, and always in a state of re-production, thus never fully stabilized or completed.

Gibson-Graham is discouraged by attempts to deconstruct the global/local binary as the power differential is never completely “eradicated by deconstructive reason and re-presentation.” She believes the strategy to configure the global and the local as the same in order to deconstruct the binary results in the global gaining the upper-hand of the local. Within the framework of enlightenment thinking, the global is reified while the local is left subordinate. Gibson-Graham believes a more successful strategy can be achieved through an understanding of multiple visions of power and through community politics. Gibson-Graham cites the successes of a community in a rural agricultural region and a resource based region in southeast Australia which through local politics developed programs to improve the community in the face of twenty years of economic restructuring. The successes of these communities in southeast Australia demonstrate how local politics draws on a variety of mechanisms at differing scales – and I would add, different flows as well (e.g. community workshops, household strategies) to blur (and perhaps even erase) the global/local binary, while simultaneously producing new power relations.

There are many aspects of economic and cultural globalization occurring in México City. For example, Tepito is neighborhood situated in the Centro Histórico, which – at first glance – does not appear as a site of global practices as they have been categorized by global scholars and detractors (Short, 2001). However, ambulante entrepreneurs who do business with Chinese smugglers, or even travel to Hong Kong themselves to purchase pirated electronic materials participate in informal global economic activities. The cultural ramifications of this economic behavior are wide sweeping in Tepito. Because of the ambulantes’ savvy entrepreneurial actions, electronic equipment—from software to musical compact disks and from music videos to educational programs—becomes affordable for the working poor who live and work in Tepito; thus, changing their consumer patterns and lifestyles.

## **2.2 Theorizing Neoliberalism/Neoliberalization**

In this section I outline theories of neoliberalization. I do this to provide a conceptualization to better understand how neoliberal processes function in order to

grasp inner-workings of the neoliberalization of space in the Centro. The terms neoliberalism and neoliberalization have become quite en vogue in academic and popular literatures. It is important to understand that neoliberalism/neoliberalization is “not a thing as much as a process” (Hackworth, 2006). The processes and practices of neoliberalization take on distinct forms according to where they are implemented. Multiple neoliberalisms will shape urbanization processes distinctly in different locales. My work seeks to situate the neoliberalisms that are taking place in México and to understand how neoliberalization affects socio-spatial urban transformation in the Centro Histórico. The processes of the neoliberalization of space in the Centro are occurring abreast with economic and cultural globalism—and in turn—these occurrences impact issues of governance in México City that has allowed for the partnership of the City and Global capital interests—principally from Grupo Carso—to implement the Programa de Rescate.

The term Neoliberalism comprises a set of discourses and processes espoused in the belief that the market is the guiding mechanism for the organization of social, political and economic life (Marcuse & Kempen, 2000). The emergence of neoliberal policies in the twentieth century is associated with the administrations of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. In Latin America, neoliberal policies are also called neo-classical economic policies—thus differentiating the ideals from the traditional liberalism found in the U.S.

“Traditional Neoliberalism” that surfaced in the late 1970s espoused the overarching belief that less government is better government— however , as neoliberalization matures the role of government working in tandem with corporations has become common (as in the case of the Programa de Rescate in México City). The implementation of neoliberal policies requires the elimination of subsidies and trade barriers, the privatization of national industries, transportation and financial businesses, an increase in interest rates, and the downsizing of government bureaucracy and government employees and membership in ‘free trade agreements’ such as the NAFTA (Cannack, 1989). Neoliberalism entails corroding government institutions to allow for the free hand of the market to run the economy

and government at the most competitive level (Dezalay & Garth, 2002; Leitner et al., 2006; Warnock, 1995). The reasoning is that the free market maximizes human welfare. According to neoliberal dogma, economically the markets efficiently distribute resources while socially individuals will be motivated to maximize their 'individual, political freedoms' and exploit the free-market to meet her/his needs.

Neoliberalization consists of a set of discourses and processes based on the belief that the market is the ideal mechanism for the organization and regulation of social, economic, and political life (Kay, 2004). Grounded on the laissez-faire theories of classic political economy, the more recent emergence of neoliberal policies is associated with the structural adjustment programs of the IMF and the World Bank (Zepeda, Clement, Castillo, Gerber, & Alarcon, 2001) (also see Warnock (1995), and Middlebrook & Zepeda (2002)). These policies include: the elimination of subsidies and tariffs (à la NAFTA); the rationalization of agriculture and the deregulation and privatization of industry; making transparent market exchanges; allowing currencies to float freely; the adoption of austerity measures; the dismantlement of social programs devoted to education, health, and housing; the downsizing of public employment; and the implementation of strict monetary policies to control inflation. Because the state retreats from control under these policies, they are sometimes referred to as elements of 'roll back neoliberalization' (Peck & Tickell, 2002). As Peck and Tickell go on to note, however, there is now an emergent phase of 'roll-out-neoliberalization', consisting of aggressive intervention by governments around issues such as crime, policing, urban policies, and surveillance, with the purpose of disciplining, containing, and relocating those marginalized or disposed by the neoliberalization of the 1980s. Roll-out neoliberalization often involves state collaboration with the private sector to implement urban policies and to gentrify and police derelict areas that were thrown into disarray during the earlier period of roll-back neoliberalization (Barajas & Zamora, 2002; Hackworth, 2006; Portes & Hoffman, 2003; Soederberg, 2001). This new form of neoliberalization underwrites much of the logic behind the Programa de Recuperación.

With the advent of the debt crisis in 1982, the increased presence of the IMF and World Bank in Latin America, and the implementation of austerity measures called Structural Adjustment Policies; the term neo-liberal became increasingly appropriated by political advisors and academics writing from the South (Dezalay & Garth, 2002; Warnock, 1995), effectively demonstrating how multiple neoliberalism(s) exist and have emerged in distinct geographical sites. Indeed, in Latin America, and the Global South the material effects of neoliberal policies have been more poignant than in the North (although neoliberalism has also eroded the welfare state in the U.S. and Britain). Although there are generic neoliberal guidelines promoted by the IMF and the World Bank and enforced by the U.S. and Britain, there are also contingent realities to the way neoliberalization occurs in each region, country, and locale. Neoliberalization is not the same in Bush's U.S., Blair's Britain, Andres Lopez Obrador's México, or to move back historically, in Menem's Argentina. And across cities and locales in each country, the way neoliberalization looks on the ground also varies.

The implementation of neoliberal policies by governments in Latin America has wrought fiscal and social havoc on nearly every country in the region (save Cuba, but perhaps indirectly Cuba has been negatively impacted by neoliberalization and Colombia). In 1982 neoliberal policies were first adapted by Latin American political leaders. The IMF and World Bank began to demand countries in the region implement austerity measures in order to receive desperately required loans. As a result the countries in Latin America have become poorer. After the privatization of national companies and the opening of the economy, which created an initial surge of money that ran through the economy and briefly benefited the minority elite, the economies collapsed (For example, México after the Salinas miracle or the post-Menem economic nightmare Argentina).

Many scholars have noted the affects of traditional neoliberalization in México (Alarcon & McKinley, 1992; Zepeda et al., 2001). For example, the end of inflated oil prices and the restructuring of the Mexican economy ushered in the beginning of the country's debt crisis in 1981 (Roderic Camp, 1996). Following Chile,

México was one of the first countries in Latin America to adopt neoliberal austerity measures and work with the IMF and the World Bank to renegotiate the country's debt with international lenders (Middlebrook & Zepeda, 2002; Minushkin, 2000; Soederberg, 2001). Indeed, the Brady Plan, which allowed for the swapping and selling off of México's debt, was a program first designed to reorganize México's debt burden that was later replicated across Latin America (Cannack, 1989; Minushkin, 2000). The adoption of NAFTA and the 2000 election of President Vicente Fox have furthered the implementation of neoliberal policies.

At the same time, these changes have led to the decay of the built environment in México D.F. (Arregui, 1993; Revenga, 1997; Soederberg, 2001). The material impacts of neoliberal policies reflected in the built environment of México City provide a key example to understand the 'neoliberalization of space' (Brenner & Theodore, 2002) embodied in processes and practices of gentrification. If, as Smith (2002) notes, the age of roll-out-neoliberalization reflects how gentrification has become a 'global urban strategy', then México City epitomizes a major city that has been the focus of both roll-back and roll-out neoliberalization as read in the built environment of the city and outlined above. Changes occurring under post-fordism consists of the different phases of neoliberalization that can be traced through multiple sites and that originate in diverse locations across the globe (Handelman, 1997). The advent of roll-back neoliberalization that began in the early 1980s in México had a distinct impact on urban space in México City as compared to how the early phases of neoliberalization impacted societies and cities in the Global North. In México City, the lack of government funding and the loss of jobs led to the deterioration of the urban built environment through neglect coupled with a re-organization of how urban space was used through the explosion of ambulante in the Centro Histórico (Monet, 2005). The Global North witnessed the near destruction of the Keynesian liberal state replete with the disempowerment of labor politics and a decrease in wages. México had still not developed the liberal welfare state, so in that sense, the elimination of that component of the state in México did not occur. What did happen with the advent of roll-back neoliberalization was the reorganization of the populist state under Import Substitution Industrialization



policies – replete with the elimination of subsidies, tariffs and a protective state over the domestic economy. These two examples show how discourses of globalization and the processes and practices of neoliberalization are maneuvered distinctly in diverse locales.

### **2.3 Theorizing Gentrification**

In this section I review the literature on gentrification studies as a prelude to re-theorizing how gentrification functions as the neoliberalization of space in the global South. There is a dearth of studies concerning gentrification in México and throughout the global South which will be rectified by this dissertation.

Ruth Glass coined the term gentrification in 1964. Glass described how one-by-one, homes were renovated by individual gentrifiers until the new urban ‘gentry’ had converted a run-down, working class, inner-city neighborhood into an upscale, culturally chic, professional community (Glass, 1964). Gentrification as a socio-spatial practice has been so transformed over time and space that the traditional definition first coined by Glass of ‘two-up two-down mews of Victorian houses’ demands further discussion.

Following Glass, some of the earliest studies on gentrification favored the concept that the economy forged the transformation of old neighborhoods (Hamnett, 1973, 1991; N. Smith, 1979) Smith claimed that gentrification was the result of the difference “between the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a higher and better use,” (N. Smith, 1987, p. 462) (also see N. Smith (1979)). The relationship between land value and property value Smith called the rent gap theory (N. Smith, 1979). Smith borrowed from Hoyt’s study of land values in Chicago (Hoyt, 1933) to develop his argument that in the nineteenth century cities had a ‘land value gradient’ highest at the center and gradually diminishing towards the urban fringes (N. Smith, 1979, 1987). As the suburbanization of the population occurred from the turn of the nineteenth century onward, land values in the inner city decreased vis-à-vis the Central Business District (CBD) and the suburbs and a ‘gap’ in the ‘land value gradient’ emerged, which intensified during the Post WWII suburbanization of the

1950s and 1960s (ibid). The fall in land values during this period allowed for subsequent profitable reinvestment with the rediscovery of the inner city by white gentrifiers in the 1970s.

Much of Smith's earlier work insisted that the advent of gentrification was an economic phenomenon. Smith's insistence on a structuralist approach to gentrification contrasted with cultural humanists who argued that to comprehend the practices of gentrification required an understanding of choice, lifestyle, culture, consumption, and consumer demand (Beauregard, 1986; Bondi, 1990, 1991; Ley, 1996; Zukin, 1982, 1987, 1996). Geographers began to argue against the structuralist human binary approach to gentrification claiming that the processes were the result of a multiple hermeneutic inherent in all social science work (Clark, 1994; Hackworth, 2000; Hamnett, 1991; Loretta Lees, 2000; Schein, 1997; Wiley & Hammel, 1998).

Contrasting with Smith's work, Ley identified, provided and explained four definitions of inner-city gentrification: 1) demographic change, 2) housing market dynamics, 3) value of land amenities-dictated by lifestyle choices and the culture of consumption in the inner-city, and the 4) economic base, which is represented by the impacts of deindustrialization in the post-fordist city on the built environment, and diminution of property values in relation to land values, as a set of explanations for inner-city gentrification (Ley, 1986). Even Smith consented that in regards to gentrification the "relationship between production and consumption is symbiotic," but he still insisted, "it is a symbiosis in which production dominates" (N. Smith & Defilippis, 1999)

Hackworth, in a teleological fashion, highlights the complexities of the changing definitions of gentrification in his study on the three waves of this phenomenon (Hackworth, 2000). The first wave he identifies as sporadic gentrification (1968-1978). The process occurs in neighborhoods in cities in the northeastern U.S. and Western Europe. Individual gentrifiers lead the first wave of gentrification mirroring what Glass identified as gentrification in London during the 1960s (Glass, 1964). This supposed first wave of gentrification has yet to occur in the Centro Histórico, although there may be signs of first-wave style gentrification

investment; examples not detailed in this work include transforming two older Porfirian neighborhoods to the west of the Centro: Condesa and Roma.

The second wave of gentrification, what Hackworth calls the anchoring phase, began in the 1970s and lasted until the economic recession of 1989 (1979-1989). Low property values in inner city neighborhoods and counter cultural lifestyle choices spurred gentrification in traditional cities such as New York and London, where neighborhoods were converted into real-estate 'frontiers' (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; N. Smith, 1979), while cities that had not experienced the processes of gentrification began to implement policies to revitalize depressed inner-city neighborhoods. During the second wave the state encouraged gentrification only through 'block grants and enterprise zones' as a form of incentive to invest in depressed neighborhoods, not actual state planning or state investment (Hackworth, 2000). The second wave of gentrification witnessed the processes shifting from individual gentrifiers to large-scale capital investment from contractors and realtors and the emergence of mass resistance to gentrification by original, inner-city, neighborhood inhabitants (Hackworth, 2000; N. Smith, 1996).

After a short hiatus of apparent gentrification during the economic recession in the late 1980s and early 1990s, heralding studies by critics who suggested that the 1990s were witnessing an era of de-gentrification (Bagli, 1991; Bourne, 1993), a third wave of gentrification emerged (Hackworth, 2000; N. Smith, 2002).

In this rip-tide of third wave gentrification, global capital and anti-Keynesian government urban policy led to large-scale gentrification/revitalization programs in cities throughout the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Europe (Loretta Lees, 2000). The third wave of gentrification no longer only represented the revitalization of dilapidated inner-city neighborhoods for residential use but also witnessed the complete revamping of entire areas of cities: from warehouse districts to industrial port facilities, from 'brown fields' and empty urban lots to the removal of entire city blocks and the subsequent construction of condominium style multi-use buildings intended for housing and retail consumption (Bridge, 2001).

Thus the definitions of gentrification include the a) revitalization of neighborhoods on a house by house single gentrifier model, b) socio-spatial transformations of whole neighborhoods implemented by construction companies and estate agents, and c) urban regeneration and reconfiguration as a global urban strategy fueled by a partnership between global capital and city led policy. Gentrification refers to the revitalization of housing units, retail and wholesale infrastructure, or tourism and high tech industry landscape (N. G. Canclini, 2000; Jones & Varley, 1999).

As an important feature of both urban economic and cultural change, gentrification was first recognized and studied in Northern cities. The vast literature of the past three decades has explored both the production and consumption of gentrification, sometimes as part of a class- and/or rent-based analysis of the urban economic restructuring accompanying the transition from fordism to post-fordism during 1970s and 1980s (Beauregard, 1986; Harvey, 1989a; N. Smith, 1979, 1987, 1996, 2002; N. Smith & Defilippis, 1999), and at other times reflective of a cultural transformation with links to gender, sexuality, and the emergence of a new class of consumption oriented professionals (Bondi, 1990; Knopp, 1992; Ley, 1986; Zukin, 1982, 1987). On the basis of these divisions, gentrification became “one of the key theoretical and ideological battlegrounds in urban geography, and indeed in human geography as a whole” (Hamnett, 1991, p. 174). Yet, by the end of the 1990s, it appeared that the debate between gentrification as production vs. consumption had run its course, along with the theoretical perspective of structure and agency that underwrote much of the differences between the two camps (Clark, 1994; N. Smith & Defilippis, 1999; Zukin, 1996).

As mentioned above the term gentrification is traceable to the early 1960s (Glass, 1964) and has become indicative of numerous kinds of urban transformations. My working definition of gentrification recognizes the revitalization of downtowns and postindustrial sites by global capital and large-scale developers and construction companies, and the regeneration of entire cityscapes piloted by local governments, urban policies and transnational capital; it also incorporates house-by-house

renovation and the subsequent transformation of neighborhoods. I agree with Jones and Varley that “gentrification does not... [always] require the occupation of renovated properties by a new residential population, but involves the rehabilitation of deteriorated properties and a change in the social group using the property” (Hamnett, 1991, p. 1548), processes that are central to urban change in México City.

In all of the above referenced work, however, gentrification in the cities of the Global South was ignored. It has only recently begun to attract attention (Grant & Nijman, 2002; Guano, 2002; Jones & Varley, 1999; Low, 2000; Potuoglu-Cook, 2006; Rypkema, 2003; Visser, 2002). There have been studies of urban renovation in Havana, Trinidad, and Cartagena (Scarpaci, 2005), the re-organization of Saõ Paulo’s massive downtown (Becker 1992, Caldeira 2000, Queroz and Telles 2000, Santos 1993), the transformation of Buenos Aires’ dilapidated Puerto Nuevo into upscale shops, restaurants and residences (Guano, 2002), the gentrification of historic districts of Puebla and Lima (Guano, 2002; Jones & Varley, 1999), as well as studies that have focused on the gentrification of coastal areas and tourist sites along the Pacific coast of Latin America and in the Caribbean. Some of these studies highlight similarities to findings from the North (Bridge, 2001; Clark, 1994; VanKempen & VanWeesep, 1994). Others, such as Jones and Varley (1999) and Grant and Nijman (2002), point to exacerbated social and economic cleavages in gentrifying areas of the Global South when compared to the North.

The partnership between the Government of México City and private international capital that has forged the neoliberal municipal policy called the Programa de Rescate provides an example of state/corporate piloted gentrification. However, the subsequent chapters of this work show that the implementation of gentrification in México D.F. under the current municipal Programa de Rescate differs from the corporate/state piloted gentrification discussed above in the global North. The implementation of the Programa is very convoluted as the actors resisting the neoliberalization of space are adept in thwarting the programs goals. These are all issues further explored in this work.

## **2.4 The Centro Histórico: a Nexus of Globalization, Neoliberalization and Gentrification**

I propose that a new form of gentrification is surfacing in the Global South that is an accentuated combination of second-wave, government encouraged revitalization and third-wave global-capital-led gentrification. The enhanced role of the state in this particular place combined with global capital adds yet another dimension to definitions surrounding current gentrification (Lorreta Lees, 2003; N. Smith, 2002). Two decades of neoliberal policies and decentralization of federal government in the global South—an occurrence that is particularly significant in México<sup>6</sup>—has led to a change in the relationship among federal, state and municipal governments and the emergence of a relationship between city wide public planning fueled by private capital. The example of neoliberalization vis-à-vis decentralization is especially salient in the global South where debt burdens and Structural Adjustment Policies have severely impacted governments' ability to manage cities. Neoliberal structural adjustment policies can be read in the socio-spatial reconfiguration of the Centro Histórico. The “amalgam of corporate and state powers and practices” (N. Smith, 2002) in México City and the neoliberalization of space through the partnership of city planners and multinational corporations produce the current agglomeration of government and private led revitalization of the built environment in the Historic District of Downtown México City, witnessed by the Programa de Rescate.

This chapter outlines distinct theories of neoliberalization, globalization and gentrification. My work seeks to weave together these literatures in order to analyze urban socio-spatial transformation in México City. The municipal policy called the Programa de Rescate has as its goal the gentrification of the Centro Histórico. The Programa provides an example of the neoliberalization of space as cultural and economic globalism. The Programa de Rescate demonstrates how gentrification has

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<sup>6</sup> After Chile, México was the second country in Latin America to adopt neoliberal economic policies in 1982. México has thoroughly liberalized its economies, the state, society and its urban space.

become a global urban strategy where city governments and planners utilize urban revitalization programs and gentrification strategies to compete for global city status and recognition. The goals intertwined with the Programa de Rescate have at their core the aim for México City to become a truly global urban center in order to reap the benefits—such as enhanced foreign direct investment; increases in tourism; the relocation and establishment of trans-national corporations to the city—that accompany such a supposed global city ranking. The gentrification of the Centro Histórico is part of the greater municipal plan for México City that includes the construction of the tallest skyscraper in Latin America, improved transportation corridors running along the Avenida Reforma-Alameda-route in order to further link the Centro Histórico with the financial center of the city, and increased security with the objective of increasing investments, tourism and to encourage the wealthy to re-settle to the city center. Focusing upon the implementation of the Programa and upon those groups that intend to resist the Programa shows how the neoliberalization of space-cum-gentrification in cities in the global South is a very messy set of processes.

The circulating concerns of my research center on the neoliberalization of space and gentrification as a form of economic and cultural globalism in the Historic District of México City, in which I analyze the investments in and renovation of México City's Historic Center. Empirically, my case study is México City's Programa de Rescate (Recovery Program), a municipal policy designed to encourage investment in the Historic Center, attract middle and upper class residents to reside in the Centro and to increase tourism with the aim of promoting México City's image to the world as a truly 'global city'. The Recovery Program arose out of a partnership of federal and city authorities, together with international private investors, in August 2001. It aims to renovate an area three times the size of the historic districts of either Lima, Barcelona, or Madrid. An analysis of the Programa de Rescate strengthens understandings of the inner workings and inter-relationships of the processes of neoliberalization of space-cum-gentrification ranging from politics, investment, and the reproduction of and contestation over urban space in México.

The research I have conducted on the gentrification of urban space in the Historic Center shows it to be thoroughly embedded in the neoliberalization of politics, economics, and space in México City, a discrete argument from the post-fordist causal explication of gentrification in the global North, thus representing new forces in inner city revitalization that nonetheless reproduce the socio-spatial cleavages often found in previous accounts. Distinct from the post fordist/post WWII economic processes that negatively impacted inner-city sites in the Global North, I argue that cities in the Global South were thrown into disarray due to the consequences of deregulation under 'roll-back' neoliberal economic processes and practices. Currently, these urban derelict zones are being reclaimed by large scale capital through the processes and practices of 'roll-out' neoliberalization that intend to discipline the bodies (i.e. los ambulantes or entrepreneurial street vendors) that have adapted to these urban de-regularized spaces and reclaim the Historic Centers for large scale capitalist enterprises. The Programa is an example of neoliberal state/corporate piloted gentrification program based on a neoliberal municipal policy to encourage investment in the Centro Histórico, attract middle and upper class residents to the Centro, increase tourism to México City, and most importantly for an urban center such as México City, the Programa calls for the 'normalization' of urban space, which entails the removal and relocation of the 30,000 ambulantes, or street peddlers, who work in the Centro. This Programa, initiated in 2001, was headed by the Government of the Federal District under the leadership of Manuel Lopez Obrador, a charismatic popular politician from the leftwing PRD. It is primarily funded by a transnational corporation called Grupo Carso S.A. whose CEO, Carlos Slim, has been called the richest man in Latin America and has greatly benefited from the introduction of neoliberal policies to México.

In the next chapter I submit my research sites and methods. I also discuss how I collected my information on the neoliberalization of space in the Centro Histórico, highlighting the nuances of conducting research in a post-colonial city in the Global South.



### CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH SITES AND METHODS

In this dissertation I analyze neoliberal gentrification as it is manifested in the Global South—specifically in México City’s Centro Histórico. My case study is the Programa de Rescate, a municipal policy that aims to refurbish and ‘gentrify’ the Centro in order to increase tourism in the Centro Histórico, attract global capital and direct foreign investment to the city and hoist México City to ‘global city’ status. Although in this dissertation I do provide historical background on the urban growth and morphology of México City, by no means is this a comprehensive historical account of urbanization, urban renewal, or gentrification per se of México City.

México City is a very complex, post-colonial urban center. It is a city of supposed superlatives: the largest in the western hemisphere; the most polluted in the Americas; a city full of violence— superlatives which may or may not be true. What is certain is that there are multiple ‘México Cities’ wrapped up in the megalopolis and con-urban area that is the capital of México that collage together the rich and intricate fabric-piece that consists of what has been called La Ciudad de Los Palacios. It would be naïve on my part to believe that I could possibly learn all of the intricacies of how a city with such a large array of social relations and situations truly functions. It would also be arrogant on my part to believe that I have conducted an exhaustive investigation into the creation, implementation, and socio-spatial effects of the Programa de Rescate in the 10 months that I spent living and conducting research in México City.

I have included the chart below compiled by researchers at the PUEC to demonstrate the complexity of the Programa de Rescate.

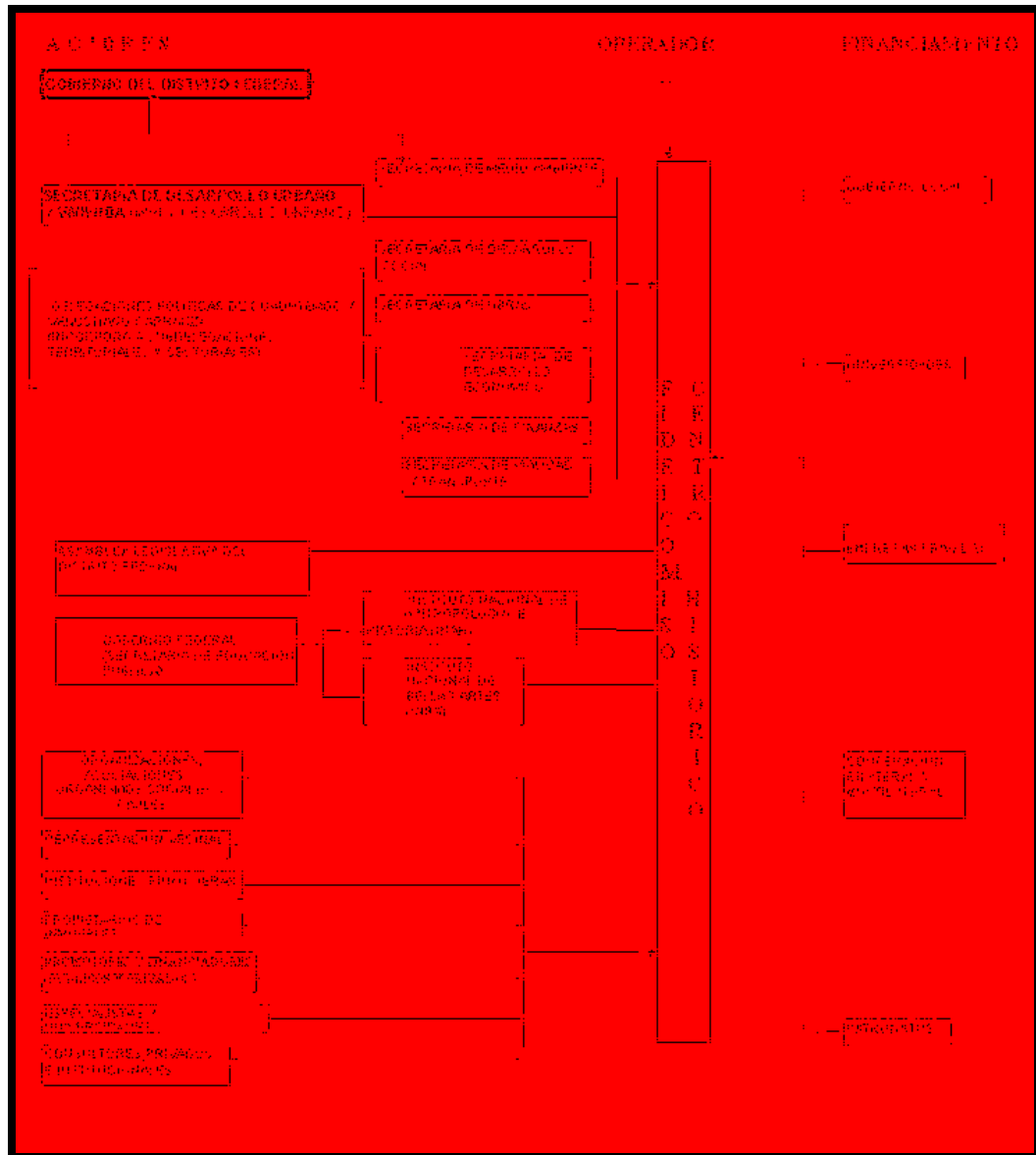


Table 1. Chart delineating the organization of the Programa de Rescate. Courtesy of PUEC

There are dozens of organizations that are involved in the restoration and ‘rescue’ of the Centro Histórico. This chart lists the actors that are involved in crafting and organizing the Programa de Rescate. It provides a visualization of the relationship that Fideicomiso has with the actors—that Fideicomiso has the main power to mobilize the implementation of the Programa.

The chart also shows where the financing of the Programa comes from. What

is not included in this chart is what I have chosen to label the negotiation and resistance to the Programa. There exist ambulante groups, neighborhood cooperative associations, Santa Muerte worshipers and small scale business owners who are mobilizing in opposition to the Programa. It would be impossible to even suggest that I, a single researcher, would be able to exhaustively conduct a study into such a rich socio-spatial phenomenon and provide a hermetically sealed summary on the Programa in the time I spent in DF. I do not wish for this statement to sound like a methodological disclaimer. While living and working there from January to the end of November 2005, I learned an enormous amount about México City and the Programa de Rescate. The information I learned while working and living in DF informs this dissertation. While in DF I attempted to listen to and learn from as many disparate voices as possible and gather information from a wide range of archives in order to develop a narrative about the Programa and its socio-spatial affects in the Centro in order to theorize how neoliberal gentrification functions in the Global South.

The remainder of this chapter delves into the intricacies of my methodological approach in this work, while also detailing the ways I collected the data that inform the remaining chapters below. In section 3.1, I reflect on the main thesis of this dissertation, and bring the Programa de Rescate into focus as my central object of analysis. I highlight the issues I engage within the remainder of this work, relating how each chapter addresses my research questions. III.B. describes my three zones of analysis; these are distinct and diverse areas where the vision of neoliberal gentrification is materializing. In 3.3 I detail the methods I employed in my fieldwork: archival research, participant observation, and interviews. I impart my own theorizations of how and why to conduct these activities. I identify my main sources, and describe how and the number of times I gained access to informants, the archives I chose and when I accessed the archives, and I describe how, where and why I conducted participant observation in section 3.4. After introducing my methods and the rationalization for employing these specific information gathering techniques, I focus the last two sections (3.5. and 3.6) on problematizing the acts of

conducting research in a chaotic post-colonial city in the global South. I talk about my own experiences before conducting research for this dissertation, in which I gained invaluable skills and insights into working across different classes in México (E.). I end with a discussion of violence, communication and transportation, and ethical and moral dilemmas tied to my own positionality as a white, male researcher from the global North conducting fieldwork in México City (F.).

### **3.1 Research Questions and Focal Points of the Programa de Rescate**

The Programa de Rescate is a wide ranging urban municipal policy. The Programa de Rescate aims to gentrify an area of 9 square km covering 668 blocks with 1,500 buildings, 196 civic monuments, 67 religious monuments, 53 museums, 68 plazas, 19 cloisters, 28 fountains and 12 public murals. The implementation and support for the Programa involves many actors and agencies. There also exist many detractors of the Programa. In order to address this mammoth municipal program as the nexus of the processes of globalization, neoliberalization and gentrification in México City's Centro Histórico, the empirical chapters following this one are largely set in three specific zones: 1)The Zócalo; 2)The Alameda; and 3) The Plaza Santo Domingo and Tepito neighborhoods. These serve to exemplify the Programa such that I may analyze the neoliberal gentrification in México City. Each of these zones holds particular significance and functions differently for the residents and workers of México City's Centro Histórico.

My research questions in this work are addressed in the following analysis chapters:

- 4: Why has the Programa de Rescate emerged as a municipal policy to re-convert the Centro Histórico from a working poor neighborhood—replete with ambulante into a play ground for the rich with the goal of attracting international capital, tourists and the targeted wealthy Capitalinos to relocate to the Centro? Why is ambulante prevalent in the Centro? Why is it place-based specific to this locale? In chapter 4., I describe how the 1980s roll-back neoliberalization of politics, the economy, and the state in México City set the stage for the current roll-out neoliberal policy that is the Programa de Rescate

(which has as its goal the neoliberal gentrification of the Centro's urban space). One of the main goals of this revanchist roll-out neoliberal program is the removal and relocation of the 30,000 ambulantes that use the plazas and streets of the Centro as sites of economic production and who also live in the Centro. I also describe how ambulante in the Centro rose in tandem with the neoliberalization of the state and how ambulante has impacted urban space in the Centro.

- 5: The emergence of state and corporate piloted urban renewal programs is a component of the neoliberal state (Hackworth, 2006). The Programa de Rescate—a corporate/state piloted municipal policy— aims to clean up the Centro Histórico, attract international investors, increase tourism and lure the targeted upper-class Chilango population back to the Centro. Why and how have municipal leaders and corporate CEOs chosen to work together to create and implement the Programa? In chapter 5 I provide a description of how the Programa originated and how city and corporate interests aimed to implement this roll-back neoliberal program.
- 6: How is gentrification manifested in México City's Centro Histórico? How do the promoters of the Programa attempt to lure the targeted population to reside in the Centro? In chapter 6 I provide concrete examples of neoliberal gentrification in the Centro.
- 7: Who is contesting and negotiating the Programa de Rescate in the Centro Histórico? In any case-study of gentrification, urban renewal, or the neoliberalization of urban space there exist contrasting actors involved in the production and re-production of space. Indeed, the production and re-production of urban spaces are “formed by contestation, difference and social negotiation among differently situated urban actors, some of whose networks are locally bound and others who span regions” (Linke, 1998). Resistance in the global south does not only consist of political, spatial and violent forms of resistance. In the Centro Histórico, ambulantes and residents employ

distinctive, vernacular forms of resistance to thwart the linear strategies of the Programa de Rescate.

### **3.2 The Geographies of the Programa de Rescate (See Figure 3)**

I chose three zones in my fieldwork to analyze the different ways gentrification plays out within the Historic Center: 1) The Zócalo; 2) The Alameda; and 3) The Plaza Santo Domingo and Tepito neighborhood. Each of these zones holds particular significance and different functions for the residents and workers of the Centro Histórico and México City.

The Zócalo is the symbolic center not only of México City, but of the nation (Kinsbruner, 2005). “No other place concentrates the history, the power, and the peoples of México like the Zócalo. The plaza is, first of all, the symbolic and in some ways the literal repository of México history’(Johns, 1997, p. 8). It holds a special meaning for each visitor, resident, and ambulante in the city (Kandell, 1990). The Zócalo is the largest Plaza in México and is flanked by the national cathedral; the national palace; the municipal palace; and other historic buildings that have been converted into jewelry shops and hotels (Scarpaci, 2005). It is a center for political protest, an important place for commerce and trade, and a site for entertainment (Low, 2000). It is also a key site for the Programa de Rescate’s attempt to “increase the city’s allure for tourists and turn it into an international metropolis” (N. G. Canclini, 2000, p. 59).

Residential housing does not immediately line the Zócalo, but is found in the surrounding streets, which are inundated daily by throngs of well organized ambulante groups. The gentrification of the Zócalo involves the normalization of space by removing the ambulantes from this zone, increasing surveillance and security in the area, improving infrastructure in the nearby streets, and renovating and refurbishing residential buildings (PGDDF 2001). These are main themes addressed repeatedly in this work.

The Alameda is a park located five blocks west of the Zócalo. It is one of the few green areas found in the Historic Center. The Alameda was designated as a park during the colonial period and has gone through numerous transformations (Johns,

1997; Kandell, 1990); none, however, are as far-reaching as the changes under the Programa de Rescate. This is a heterogeneous site where México City residents from different class backgrounds converge to enjoy the verdant surroundings and purchase food and goods traditionally sold by the ambulantes. Under the Programa de Rescate the GFD has improved the infrastructure of the park by replacing and fixing the numerous fountains, inserting more statues to triangulate walking paths, and manicuring the lawns, trees and other vegetation. The aim is to make the Alameda a pleasant respite from the hustle of city life, much like the function of Central Park in New York.

Tenement buildings directly across the street to the west of the Alameda have already been razed and a modern high-rise hotel, named the Sheraton Centro Histórico, has taken their place, thus divesting traditional Historic Center residents of their homes and transforming the socio-spatial fabric of this zone from lower scale residential and recreational use to up-scale tourism. The gentrification of the Alameda also entails an increase in surveillance and security in the park, and the removal of the ambulantes who provide food and refreshments. This 'normalizing' of space under the Programa de Rescate not only deprives the ambulantes of their livelihood but also takes away an inexpensive source of refreshment and entertainment from the residents and tourists enjoying the Alameda. While the infrastructure improvements have been applauded, the uniformización of the spaces of the Alameda creates social cleavages in how, and for whom, those spaces are being used.

The Plaza Santo Domingo and Tepito neighborhood are located north of the Zócalo. The top floors of the buildings surrounding Plaza Santo Domingo consist of tenement housing, while small businesses occupy the ground level. One of the oldest Palaces in México City is situated in Plaza Santo Domingo. This is an important plaza for commerce and socialization for residents of the Tepito neighborhood, a zone harboring many of the historic buildings earmarked for gentrification under the Programa de Rescate. Under the portals flanking the west side of the plaza, modern day scribes arrive with their typewriters and bureaucratic forms. Residents from

Tepito come to the plaza to pay the scribes to write letters that must be typed and notarized to satisfy the Mexican bureaucracy.

Plaza Santo Domingo also has a market packed with ambulantes. Early in the morning food carts emerge in the plaza, offering victuals at reasonable prices to visitors, vendors, shoppers, and residents. Families have occupied the buildings and worked in spaces of Plaza Santo Domingo for generations, creating a strong sense of place and community (Aceves, 2003; Venegas, 1999). Indeed, since the colonial period the Tepito neighborhood has had an informal type of political autonomy within the Federal District. It has become a zone of *Fayuca*: the manufacturing and selling of contraband wares. The emergence of Tepito as a working residential neighborhood, a clandestine market, and the site of *fayuca* production has contributed to its reputation as a fierce politically independent zone within the Historic Center. This independence is registered in frequent protests of municipal policies.

I chose these three zones to analyze the differences in México City's gentrification. More than simply reshaping the urban fabric of the Historic Center, the outcomes of the Programa de Rescate hinges on the social geography found in these zones. The public spaces and buildings in the Historic Center are zones of negotiation, accommodation, and resistance to the Programa de Rescate. The geography of its implementation will, I believe, work itself out in different ways across the three zones. They express not only the spatialization of struggle in the abstract, but the social and political inscriptions of the Programa de Rescate on the geography of México City.

### **3.3 Research Methods**

In this section I elaborate on the advantages of 'triangulating' (Emmerson, 1995) multiple methods when conducting research. Each technique, when considered alone, does not provide a sufficient apparatus to apprehend the processes and practices occurring in the Centro Histórico. Archival fieldwork, participant observation, and semi-structured interviews are the three techniques that complement each other. When combined they allow for a 'fluent' (Geertz, 1983) approach towards understanding the socio-spatial reconfigurations at work in



México City's Centro Histórico.

### 3.3.1 Archives

Archival research is necessary to prepare the researcher to go into the field and is a method that needs to be employed for the duration of the study. The more the researcher understands the sites of study, and the more nuanced understandings the researcher possesses of the socio-spatial, economic and political processes that flow through the site, the better prepared she will be to appreciate and dissect the processes within the site vis-à-vis social relations and the built environment. The archive is indicative of socio-spatial, economic, and political processes and provides a window on the macro-processes that flow through a site, which in turn permits a nuanced understanding of other capillary micro-processes that are inter-connected or intertwined with all other processes.

Conducting archival research allows for a textual analysis of the site, and without which would not allow the researcher to employ additional techniques (in my case participant observation and semi-structured interviews) in order to get at the information, or data, related to the research sites. While archival research is a tool to apprehend 'background' information about the site, I firmly believe it is a method that should be used in tandem with other techniques throughout the length of the fieldwork.

My belief that the researcher should engage with the archive for the duration of the study is indicative of my conceptualization of the archive (Harris, 2001). Archives consist of cartographic, pictorial, photographic, demographic, and written documents (within the context of México, where folk ballads, or corridos, often address socio-political issues, I have added to the archival list the lyrical-musical archive). Archival research must not only engage with historical documentation over the long duree, but also must consider documents from the immediate past, and examination of continuously emerging information from web sites and contemporary media.

Archival research is a form of textual analysis, and therefore privileges the written word. Who produces the archive and who decides what is to be excluded and

included is often determined by the literate voice (or hand). Historically, “writing, urbanism and the state have had a special relationship in Latin America” (Rama, 1996) that has functioned to impose order and maintain hegemonic socio-economic relations. Within the context of México City, those who produce the texts, or the archive, often come from the more privileged positions of society. Oral histories, although perhaps written down by the literati, are seldom directly written by the person doing the telling. Here lies a drawback to the archive. The archive is not complete. It does not tell the full story in relation to the socio-spatial processes occurring in the Centro Histórico. The privileging of the written document and archival research as a methodology does not allow for an all encompassing understanding of the processes and practices that are moving through the Centro Histórico and producing the social relationships and the sites themselves. Archival research must move beyond strict interpretations of the text in order to understand the multiple meanings embedded in the archive. Here, I draw on post-structural theorizations of ‘texts’, in stating that “there is nothing outside the text means there is nothing outside context. No text without context. No event without spatialization and temporalization ... we can call context the entire real history of the world” (Dole, 2000, pp. 2-3). Or, as Dixon and Jones, III (2004) conceptualize it, the ‘text’ is about “the real history of the world, a limitless condition in which there is no outside” (pp. 2-3). This brings me to the next section: a description of my rationale for choosing participant observation as the second of my triad set of methods.

### **3.3.2 Participant Observation**

Geographers understand participant observation as another component of conducting research, or fieldwork (Che, 2005 ). Contrary to anthropologists, Geographers have mobilized the methodological tool of participant observation to not necessarily embed the researcher within the group and become part of the community, but to participate and observe with members of the situations being studied. For example, when Che studied Appalachian prisons, she did not work at the prison where she conducted participant observation, but she did spend time with inmates and prison employees. I am attracted to participant observation as a method

because it enables me to learn about processes going on in my research sites that I would not learn from the archive or conducting interviews. Participant observation is the second link in my triangulated methodology.

As a 'participant observer' the researcher not only physically comes close to members of the group or community being studied, but also allows the group to go about the rituals of their daily lives, and is open to critique, input and participation from group members while never pretending to become a 'member' of the community being studied. Through participant observation I was able to learn about the processes and practices of everyday geographies in the hybrid setting of México City. Participant observation, together with archival work and semi-structured interviews, allowed for a multiplicity of voices to come through in the study of socio-spatial changes in México City.

Geographers interpret participant observation as a component of ethnography. As the Dictionary of Human Geography (Johnston et al., 2000) states, "originating in anthropological research on so-called 'traditional' societies, participant observation is one of the principal qualitative methods for conducting ethnography" (p. 573). More geographers are implementing participant observation as a research technique to study cities (Johnston et al., 2000). I, therefore, follow in the footsteps of many researchers who recognize and attempt to come to terms with issues concerning power, multiple voices, and positionality in regards to socio-economic status, geographical positioning, ethnicity, and gender.

Kearns states that participant observation is an investigative technique that allows the researcher to gather intricate details and descriptions about the everyday geographies of peoples' lives (Kearns, 2002). Each space in the Centro Histórico has a horizon of use, as well as an expectation of use for the site, by those who occupy the space and those who think more conceptually about the space. Participant observation allowed me to get at those spaces.

In anthropology, researchers initially engaged in participant observation within the context of "primitive exotic communities" (Guha, 1989). However, because participant observation allows the researcher to observe and learn from many people

in multiple disconnected groups at once in a spontaneous atmosphere (Kearns, 2002), it is an excellent research technique to employ in an urban, hybrid environment such as México City. Indeed, Jackson (1983) and later Nast et al. (1997) and Dowler (2001) discuss the advantages of employing participant observation in an urban setting because the method allows for the gathering of information in a hectic site replete with multiple non-interconnected scenarios.

Choosing to conduct participant observation at multiple sites allowed me to conceptualize the different degrees of cultural, economic and political gradation that each site represents. Moreover, I did not feel confined by space as I moved from one set of offices to another – and onto the Zócalo and Plaza Santo Domingo—as I might have if I had only worked in limited spaces. Participant observation is an investigative technique that provides the opportunity of the always-existent, wild contingency that anything is about to happen, anything is possible – the spontaneity of conducting participant observation is never bounded by rules. In the case of conducting participant observation in the streets and plazas of the Centro Histórico, I physically moved about with agents from each site and was not bounded by space (Appadurai, 1996). This unlimited physical movement allowed for an unfolding interdeterminancy, similar to everyday life, where anything could happen at any moment. Participant observation provided me the opportunity as a researcher to experience the triangulation with multiple encounters of positionality and different social scenes that are somehow connected yet separate. I am interested in how different processes play themselves out in distinct sites in the Centro Histórico to understand how gentrification emerges and functions within the Global South. Therefore, participant observation not only allowed me to learn about the everyday geographies of peoples' lives, but by framing the observation in institutions and particular sites, I was able to learn about the processes that flow through and contribute to the production of these sites, and in turn, how these sites help contribute to the production of the interactions of the actors in these sites: the socio-spatial dialectic (Soja, 1980).

Participant observation allowed me to move beyond the romantic notion of

ethnography where the good intentioned anthropologist believes she can conduct ethnography of a group or community by completely embedding herself in the community (see more below on the crisis of representation in anthropology vis-à-vis participant observation). I understand that it is not possible for me to become a member of the community that I am studying, while never negating the realization that I am directly impacting the group or community that I study (see more on positionality below). However, participant observation is a method that allows for proximity to members of the groups that I wish to study while simultaneously allowing the members to conduct their 'daily rituals'. A post-structuralist understanding of participant observation facilitates a realization of 'in between-ness', where the researcher can attempt to breakdown the inside-outside binary and contextualize the study from a space of in between-ness (Katz, 2001a; Kobayashi, 2001; Nast, 2001).

Ironically, some of the strengths of participant observation can also be theorized as weaknesses. Conducting in-depth participant observation is time-consuming and therefore the researcher cannot engage with a large sample size. The triangulation of methods, through extensive archival research and interviewing, is an effort to compensate for some of the perceived weaknesses of participant observation.

### **3.3.3 Interviews**

The third layering of my fluid methodology and the final link in the triangulation of my methods consist of interviews. Semi-structured interviews fill gaps in the research, which participant observation and archival research do not cover, while allowing the researcher to develop an understanding of the multiple motivations of the members of each group within the study. This becomes apparent while reading throughout the empirical chapters below – the quoted material from my interviews displays a variety of access points in my fieldwork.

Interviews allowed me to collect a diversity of opinions and beliefs related to the processes of socio-spatial changes in the Centro Histórico—from the ambulante leaders and ambulantes in the streets and plazas, to the director of the Fideicomiso

and Café and restaurateurs benefitting from the implementation of the Programa. Moreover, the act of engaging in dialogue can result in a sense of empowerment for the informant as the interview may provide an opportunity for the informant to reflect on her beliefs, motivations, and experiences. Interviews can lead people from the group or community being studied to learn more about the research project than both participant observation and archival research, and also provides the opportunity for the interviewees to have insight into the research projects, which is a way of showing respect for the people being studied (Dun, 2000). I do believe that certain ambulantes benefitted from discussing their lives vis-à-vis the Programa. Some of the ambulantes I spoke to had ‘aha!’ moments, in which they made realizations about their own positionalities as workers in ambulante groups, and their relation to the state and how they used public space.

I chose semi-structured interviews as a way to guide the direction of the interview and learn what my collaborators had to say about the socio-spatial changes occurring in the Centro Histórico. I believe that open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews allowed the voices of my collaborators to emerge more than questionnaires.

Issues of positionality and influence are ever present when employing interviews as a methodological technique. The researcher/interviewee must be careful not to lead the collaborator to such a degree that the researcher dictates the collaborators’ responses. However, even when conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher should avoid allowing the collaborator to stray from the topic: interviewing, transcribing, memo-ing and coding are time consuming chores, so while it is important for the collaborator to feel empowered by the interview, it is also important from the perspective of the researcher to stay on track. Positionality plays a role in the interview process, especially when considering the multiple levels of power relations. This is where socio-economic, ethnic, gendered considerations must be weighed vis-à-vis the researcher collaborator. Perhaps the collaborator will begin to tell the researcher what she/he believes are the correct answers, or the more ‘culturally’ appropriate responses.

### 3.4 Sources of Information

I gathered data from a number of government and non governmental institutions, and informants from distinct socio-economic backgrounds in order to analyze the Programa vis-à-vis the neoliberalization of space-cum-gentrification in the Centro Histórico. Below I provide three tables that chart: 1) the informants with whom I conducted open ended interviews and had conversations with about neoliberal gentrification in the global south; 2) the archives I accessed and a description for choosing these particular archives; 3) sites where I conducted Participant Observation fieldwork in the Centro.

The first table charts with whom I conducted interviews and provides an explanation of why I chose to speak with and interview these informants, the data contributions of these interviews and precisely when the interviews occurred. While conducting my research in México City I continuously spoke to shop owners, people on the bus and metro, multiple ambulantes, bar patrons, museum goers, Santa Muerte worshipers, security guards, police, street performers, musicians, taxi drivers, hotel consiguire and tourists in the Centro in order to gather opinions from as many voices as possible about the socio-spatial changes afoot in the Centro. However the table below charts informants with whom I conducted open ended interviews.

Informants	Explanation	Data Contributions	Timeline
Director of CET	The director of the CET provided key information on the history the social history of Tepito; the organization of ambulante groups; the adoration of La Santa Muerte; vernacular language and resistance to the	Contextualization of Tepito; Vernacular resistance Section	4 formal interviews between July – October 2005, multiple conversations from April – November 2005

	Programa		
23 Bar Owners	Socio-spatial changes of recreation in the Centro	Elitificación del Centro; El Centro Está de Pachanga; The Festival Speaks to Gentrification	I met a spoke with bar tenders while living in DF from January-November 2005
6 Restaurant Owners	Socio-spatial changes of recreation in the Centro	Elitificación del Centro; El Centro Está de Pachanga; The Festival Speaks to Gentrification	I met and spoke with restaurateurs while living in DF from January-November 2005
Director of the Fideicomiso	The funding schemes behind the Programa ; the implementation of the Programa	The Programa de Rescate; Public/Private Piloted Gentrification; The Description of the Programa; Unpacking the Programa de Rescate	3 formal interviews between April and June 2005; multiple conversation between April and November 2005
Ambulantes	Spatial, Political and Vernacular forms of Resistance to the Programa	Spatial ad Political Resistance to the Programa de Rescate	The first informal, open ended interviews I conducted with ambulantes occurred during the critical geography conference that took place in México City in January of 2005. I continued to conduct open-ended interviews



			with ambulantes throughout the time I lived and conducted research in México DF, from January-November 2005
The leader of Grupo Capitalista (ambulante organization)	Ambulante organization; the relationship between the ambulantes and the state; history of ambulante, Spatial, Political and Vernacular forms of Resistance to the Programa	Ambulante organization; Spatial Resistance	I conducted one formal interview with the leader of Grupo Capitalista in September of 2005 at the offices of the CET
Director of PUEC	This interview provided information on ambulante, the history of the Centro Histórico, and gentrification of the Centro under the Programa	Information for Chapter 4 and VI	I first met the director at the UNAM in January 2005. I met with her throughout 2005

**Table 2. Informants, explanation, data contributions and timeline of the interviews on which the dissertation relies**

To learn about neoliberal gentrification in the Global South my goal was to speak to as many disparate informants as possible about the creation, implementation and socio-spatial implication vis-à-vis the Programa de Rescate in the 10 months I lived and worked in México City. The informants listed above hail from the multiple worlds that exist and overlap in DF. I was treated distinctly by each informant and had different degrees of access to each informant. For example, when I interview the director of Fideicomiso, the director of the CET and the leader of

Grupo Capitalista, they agreed to allow me to tape-record the interviews. When I met with ambulantes—whether at the offices of the CET or in the streets where they sell their wares—the street vendors were distrustful of the microphone and tape-recorder. I do not have a single tape-recorded interview with an ambulante. I would often meet with the ambulantes in the morning and write down quotes and the information they provided in the afternoon, I also would meet with ambulantes at the end of the day as they dismantled their stalls or as they rested back at the offices of the CET and then would take notes on those open ended interviews that evening, but more often the following morning. The bar and restaurant owners I spoke to at their places of employment. The best time to talk to these hoteliers was in the late afternoon after the morning rush and before the evening business would begin. Again, I would talk to these informants at their places of employment. I would use a tape-recorder or immediately write down quotes as they spoke. The restaurant and bar owners were not wary of my questions. However, they were very busy and often interpreted conversing with me about the Centro as a waste of time. This meant that I would quickly speak to them while sitting at the bar, a table, or following them around the establishment. I would transcribe our conversations-cum-open ended interviews shortly thereafter at my apartment or in an internet café.

I have analyzed the following archives in order to investigate the creation, implementation and subsequent socio-spatial urban transformations in the Centro Histórico brought on by the urban municipal policy called the Programa de Rescate: El Programa Integral del Rescate Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México (Federal, 2002); the newspapers La Jornada and el Universal; the magazine Centro: Guía para Caminantes (published by the Fideicomiso); documents from the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños, the Fideicomiso, Fundación, the Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre la Ciudad, and the Government of the Federal District of México City. The second table below charts my archives.

Archive	Information Provided	When archive accessed
Newspaper: La Jornada	The La Jornada provides in-depth analysis of the creation,	I have continually followed coverage of the Programa in this

	implementation and material effects of the Programa from an anti-neoliberal standpoint	newspaper from summer 2002 until the submission of the dissertation
Newspaper: El Universal	El Universal also extensively covers the Programa but from a contrary position to La Jornada: El Universal is very pro-neoliberal	I have continually followed coverage of the Programa in this newspaper from summer 2002 until the submission of the dissertation
El Programa Integral del Rescate Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México	This short (35 pages_ but concise documents delineates the three stage <sup>4</sup> implementation of the Programa. This was published in November 2002. This document provides information of how the government planned to implement this gentrification project in 3 stages. It has been useful to compare what the government stated it would do in 2002 compared to what has currently been accomplished.	I gained access to my own copy of this document from the offices of the Government of the Federal District in April 2005.
Guía para Caminantes <sup>7</sup> (published by the Fideicomiso);	This magazine promotes cultural events and the ‘walkable’ life style that one can enjoy in the refurbished areas of the Centro Histórico. This glossy, photographed filled magazine supplies important information about how Fideicomiso and Fundación envision what a	I learned of the existence of this publication

<sup>7</sup> Revista de Centro Editores, S.A. de C.V. Difunde los atractivos turísticos y culturales de esta área de la metrópoli a través de una agenda de eventos, guía de restaurantes, discotecas, museos, teatros, etcétera; así como reportajes y recomendaciones de rutas de paseo y entrevistas a personalidades destacadas. Su formato es carta con forros e interiores en couché a color, con fotografías.

	refurbished Centro is and should be.	
Documents from the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños, the Fideicomiso, Fundación, the Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre la Ciudad, and the Government of the Federal District of México City.	Documents published by the CET championed the utilization of urban space in the Centro for ambulante over the normalization of urban space sought by the Programa. The GFD, Fideicomiso, and Fundación all are pro Programa. The PUEC produces studies on México City also including the impacts of ambulante on urban space in the Centro. The PUEC held a conference and issued a special journal on El Ambulante en la Ciudad de México: investigaciones recientes, that proved key to understanding this phenomenon as it functions in the Centro.	I accessed these archives between January 2005 and November 2005 while living in and conducting research in México City.

**Table 3. Detailed list of archival information accessed for the purposes of this dissertation**

My archival research on the Programa de Rescate began in the fall of 2002 and has continued through May 2008, the date when I defended this dissertation (I plan, however, to carry on reading both newspapers in order to follow the progress of the Programa). Through the last six years I have followed articles from two México City newspapers: La Jornada and El Universal. La Jornada is a left of center publication while El Universal offers a more conservative, neoliberal economic perspective of the Programa. I chose two politically contrasting publications in order to obtain opposing

views of the implementation and effects of the Programa. This is consistent with my approach to understanding the socio-spatial urban transformations afoot in the Centro: to obtain access to as many voices as possible in order to learn about these changes. I have amassed 743 articles that detail the Programa de Rescate and which have helped to inform me on the creation, implementation, and socio-spatial effects of this municipal policy.

El Programa Integral del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México is the written document that informs this municipal policy and which delineates the three tiered plan the municipality has in implementing this neoliberal gentrification program.



**Figure 4. Cover Page of Municipal Document (2002)**

This document enlightens the section where I highlight how the GFD aims to implement the Programa (chapter 5.2, The Execution of the Programa de Rescate). This document introduces the concepts of the Programa. Such as: assuring the feasibility of investment in the Centro; taking back (*retomar* in Spanish) tertiary economic activities in the Centro in order to provide more employment through the

'normalization' of urban space in the Centro (this involved the removal of the ambulantes); the generation of wider opportunities of employment; and to rescue, renovate and take advantage (*aprovechamiento* in Spanish) of the full use of historic building in the Centro (Federal, 2002). According to the document,

“these actions [the implementation of the Programa to take back the Centro] must follow a modernization principle that guarantees the sustainability, respect the preservation of the Patrimonio Histórico [national history], privilege order [over ambulante] and promote new vitality [in the Centro].” (Federal, 2002, p. 2)

The language of the above quote employs a modernization trope where order and progress—represented by the normalization of urban space in the Centro—will reign over how the working poor, ambulantes utilize urban space in the Centro. The document privileges order and calls for the respect of national history, thus effectively following the trope that the Programa aims to retake the Centro from the working poor and re-create this urban space as a regal playground for tourists and rich Mexicans.

The magazine, *Centro: Guía Para Caminantes* (Mendez, 2005), provided me information on how the Fideicomiso has aimed (and continues to aim) to transform the Centro. This glossy photographed filled magazine published by the Fideicomiso is blatantly pro-neoliberal gentrification. The monthly magazine highlights the Euro-Mestizo, Capitalino aspects of the Centro while not even mentioning the woes that still affect this locale and the working poor who are struggling and negotiating to maintain the Centro as a site of ambulante commerce and a home. This magazine has advertised cultural events promoting the Programa that inform chapter VI.B., *Culturally Induced Attempts at Gentrification: Museums, Pachangas, Bars, restaurants and Cafes*. I own all of the Magazines from the months of 2004 and 2005. Unfortunately, I am not able to receive the magazine in the US. I plan to purchase back issues on Centro upon returning to DF.

I also accessed documents from the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños (CET), the

Fideicomiso, Fundación, the Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre la Ciudad (PUEC), and the Government of the Federal District of México City. The CET produces studies about Tepito and ambulante that helped learn about this locale and provided background information on street vending in the Centro (Obregon, 2004; A. Ramirez, 1989).



Figure 5. Cover for a Centro Magazine (<http://www.centroeditores.com/centro.swf>)

Texts and documents that I accessed from the CET library between April and October 2005 provided information that informs chapters IV. D. The Rise of the Informal Sector and Ambulantaje in México City in Tandem with Neoliberal Agenda and “roll-Back” Neoliberalization, of this dissertation. The PUEC produced a fantastic document released one CD Rom consisting of sixteen papers that were given at a conference on ambulante and the UNAM in 2005 (Ciudad, 2005 ). I purchased the CD ROM in April of 2005 for the prohibitive price of \$80 US. This is very expensive and would be prohibitive for many Mexican national urban researchers, and economic issue that points to my positionality as a funded researcher from the US.

Fundación, Fideicomiso, and the offices of the GFD provided official, governmental documentation relating the creation, funding, implementation and carrying-out the Programa. These documents inform chapter V of this dissertation.

The CET is a think tank public relations office that promotes the folklore and traditions of Tepito and works to preserve the livelihoods of the ambulantes. The CET is located in the heart of Tepito, a ‘war-torn’, crime ridden neighborhood located in the Centro Histórico seven blocks north of the Zócalo. The CET is primarily funded by ambulante groups with whom the directors and other de-professionalized academics are sympathetic. I chose the CET as a research site because the CET represents the ambulantes and the Centro’s residents who are in opposition to the Programa de Rescate.

By no means do all ambulante groups that work in the Centro congregate at the CET. There is a set politics to who associates and funds the CET. The members of the CET include local residents, business owners, entrepreneurial ambulantes who work in the formal and informal economic sector, artists and street performers. By no means does the CET represent a homogenous group. The disparate actors who belong to the CET provide an example of the racial and class diversity found in the Centro Histórico. Each sub-group of the CET has distinct interests in how to utilize the spaces of the Alameda, Zócalo and the Plaza Santo Domingo found in the Centro Histórico. I spent many hours at the CET translating academic journals for the director, conversing with ambulantes, and sharing meals with the members. At the CET is where I met the leader of the ambulante organization, Grupo Capitalista—a PRI affiliated ambulante group. The conversations I had with Grupo Capitalista’s leader—he functions as a liaison between the state and the ambulantes he represents—provided descriptions of ambulante life vis-à-vis the municipal government that confused as much as they clarified the convoluted world of the ambulantes’ relationship with City authorities and the State. There is an air of Mafiosi tactics at the CET performed by the directors and others involved with the institution. Many of the individuals who ‘hung out’ in the offices of the CET were distrustful of me. The only recorded conversations I had at the CET were with the director and another



‘intellectual’ who does public relations for ambulante groups represented by the CET.

The third table below charts where I conducted participant observation in the Centro to learn about the socio-spatial impacts of the program and to learn about the daily livelihood strategies of the ambulantes (Please reference Figure 3).

Site	Explanation for Site	Data Contributions
Offices of the CET	The CET provides a site where ambulantes and residents who are in opposition to the Programa de Rescate congregate. Many of the protests against the Programa originated here. Ambulantes and residents would organize protests at the CET offices. While conducting P.O at the CEY I met the boss of an ambulante group. It is at the CET where I learned about the Santa Muerte	The information I gathered at the CET informs the chapter on the Resistance to the Programa
Zócalo	The Zócalo is not only a site of ambulante commerce; it is the heart of political and religious México. I chose to conduct P.O. on the Zócalo in order to learn if and how distinct classes from the ambulantes and residents were frequenting the Zócalo. The Zócalo is also a site of protest and resistance to the Programa.	The Zócalo P.O. research informs the chapter on how the Festival Speaks to Gentrification, Luring the Targeted Population back to the Centro, and the Elitificación del Centro.
Alameda Park	This is one of the few ‘green’ areas in the Centro. I conducted P.O. on the Alameda to learn how out-of-towners and commuters from other parts of the city are reconfiguring the Alameda by using the spaces differently than ambulantes and the Centro’s residents	I used the data I collected while conducting P.O. at this site in to inform the chapter on the Sheraton Centro Histórico, and El Centro Está de Pachanga
Plaza Santo Domingo And Tepito	The Plaza Santo Doming is an Important site of socialization and economic production and consumption for the	I chose to conduct P.O. at this site to learn how the ambulantes and residents

Neighborhood	<p>ambulantes and residents of the Centro. This is also a site of protest against the Programa de Rescate. Tepito harbors two altars to the Santa Muerte – who has been a mobilizing agent for the ambulantes and the Centro’s residents to resist the Programa. Tepito is the residential area of my geographical study of the Programa in the Centro.</p>	<p>resist the Programa, are displaced by gentrification under the Programa, and how the Santa Muerte and vernacular religion functions to thwart the neoliberalization of space cum gentrification.</p>
<p>Street adjacent to the Alameda, Brazil St. running from Zócalo to Santo Domingo, Cinco de Mayo Street Running from Zócalo to Alameda</p>	<p>These are the sites of ambulante commerce that are the bread and butter of the street vendors.</p>	<p>I conducted P.O. at these sites to learn how the Programa aims to remove and relocate the Ambulantes, and how the Ambulantes resist these homogenizing efforts of the Programa.</p>

**Table 4. Participant Observation (P.O.) Research Sites**

While in México City, I conducted participant observation in the morning and late afternoons to study a wide variety of activities the ambulantes engaged in. The ambulantes would often sell distinct wares in the morning as opposed to the evenings according to the population of the commuters coming and going through the streets and plazas of the Centro. I would study the ambulantes often without a notepad to avoid appearing conspicuous. I wanted to fit-in with the ambulantes so I did not want to jot down what they were saying. Immediately following these studies in the plazas and streets I would retreat to my apartment or an internet café to type up notes on what I had studied throughout the day. This method lent itself well to learn about how the ambulantes dealt with working in the Centro with all of the multiple threats they had to endure. Indeed, Dowler (2001) writes how participant observation is a good method to employ when conducting fieldwork in a violent setting such as the Centro Histórico. She states that there “are obvious dangers in conducting

participant observation in a violent social context. However, the researcher not only observes the behavior of the group that she is studying but also participates as much as possible in the daily lives of the community members” which she claims can lessen the likelihood of a violent encounter (p. 48). Indeed, by embedding myself in the offices of the CET I was able to gather a particular cache among ambulantes that parlayed itself into maneuvering in and around ambulantes in the streets and plazas outside of the CET offices. México City is renowned for its violence. The roll-back of the state under the implementation of neoliberal economic policies that has led to the increase of the informal economy has occurred in tandem with the emergence of surreptitious security forces to monitor the millions of dollars worth of pirated and contraband materials that move in-and-out of Tepito. Violence is therefore often planned rather than indiscriminate, gratuitous violence.

I was able to negotiate the violent spaces of the ambulantes because I had first conducted participant observation in the offices of the CET. Once the ambulantes had seen me conversing with the leader of Grupo Capitalista and the director of the CET, they felt comfortable enough to let me converse with them as they worked. If I had not made the connection at the CET, I surely would have been harassed by ambulantes in and around the Plaza Santo Domingo. Indeed, when attempting to talk to ambulantes one evening at the Plaza Garibaldi in order to effectively engage in an interview and make contacts with a new ambulante group—an area popular with *Maríachi aficionados* who flock to the plaza to hire groups to sing on the spot or to travel to private homes, etc.—the entrepreneurial ambulantes were extremely wary of my presence. After accusing me of working for the municipality or of being a spy from an adversary ambulante group, I was threatened with my life if I did not leave them alone. Similar stories as this anecdote occurred around the city when I was not conducting participant observation under the patronage of the CET or Grupo Capitalista.

At the CET I was able to interview the director, the head of the ambulante group, Grupo Capitalista and ambulantes. The CET has a small library where it archives the publications written by the director and other de-professionalized

academics associated with the CET. These provided me information on ambulante, Tepito, La Santa Muerte, and efforts to preserve the culture and traditions of the Barrio.

While conducting participant observation in the Centro I not only met ambulantes and informants who opposed the neoliberalization of space, but also shop owners who were pro Programa de Rescate. The information I discuss on cafes and restaurants emerging in the Centro Histórico as cultural magnets for gentrification came from meeting the owners of these establishments while conducting participant observation in the Centro.

Each of these sources of information gathered through interviews, the archives and conducting Participant Observation provided details on the Programa de Rescate from distinct political and class positions. The documents produced by the CET are distinct from documentation produced by the GFD, or made public by Fideicomiso, entities with interests to remove the ambulantes through the neoliberalization of space-cum-gentrification of the Centro Histórico. Indeed, Carlos Slim is the CEO of Grupo Carso and is by far the largest investor in the Programa de Rescate and primarily funds the Fideicomiso. Slim is one of the major gentrifiers in the Centro, owning more property than any other entity except for the Church, thus representing one of the pro-gentrifying actors at work in the Centro (Sanchez, 2007).

### **3.5 Illustrated Adventures of My Own Position**

In the next section, I address issues of my own positionality vis-à-vis my research project and research techniques. Before I move into a more detailed analysis of positionality, I want to emphasize the role that my methodology and personal experience played in allowing me access to diverse information. The application of my three pronged methodology vis-à-vis my informants and sites where I conducted research—the state under the guises of the Fideicomiso, the CET, Santa Muerte worshipers and ambulantes, business owners, the plaza Santo Domingo, the Zócalo, and Alameda park—functioned as a triangulation of disparate information on socio-spatial transformations in the Centro Histórico. The triangulation of these distinct groups and sites—coming from and representing different positionalities within

México City society—provided an extremely diverse picture and a ‘triad’ insight on the theatre of the neoliberalization of space in the Centro Histórico and the complicated politics associated with the Programa de Rescate. The spaces of the CET, the sites where the ambulantes peddle their wares, and the offices of the Fideicomiso are three worlds that do not characteristically overlap. By having conversations, interviews and conducting participant observation at these three disparate sites, I gained access to a unique combination of voices: from the upper echelons of México City Society—the director of the Fideicomiso who is Carlos Slim’s personal secretary—to the Mafiosi characters that run the CET, to the ambulantes who actively resist the neoliberalization of the spaces of the Centro Histórico while simultaneously negotiating the power structures of the ambulante organizers and thwarting the state, to café and restaurant owners who are pro-Programa de Rescate. I acquired information from informants in alternative institutions and on the ground who are opposed to the Programa, and who participate in *ad hoc*, entrepreneurial, organic production of space in the Centro. I participated in land use workshops concerning the utilization of urban space in the Centro. It is not usual in México City for one individual person to engage in these separated, often conflicting, spaces.

The way that I was able to access these diverse spaces and disparate sites is imbricated in my positionality, as well as it is bound by my training and education, and by the past work I have carried out in México. In 2000, I conducted research for my Master’s Thesis with communal farmers, or Ejidatarios, in Tijuana, Baja California; they were part of a unique power structure juxtaposed to government agencies, campesinos, and the working urban poor (Walker, 2000). Through that experience I acquired a nuanced understanding of my own institutionalized position in relation to the different groups involved in that study. For another project in 2004, I spent a year living and working in Oaxaca de Juarez, Oaxaca—a geographically, place-based locale that is distinct from Tijuana. While in Oaxaca I volunteered at NGO offices and conducted interviews with members of autonomous indigenous communities in the Chimalapas region—a rural area in the southern part of the state that is in many ways equally as dangerous and violent a locale to conduct fieldwork in as barrio Tepito in the Centro Histórico. The sites where I conducted research in

Oaxaca were very dissimilar from one another – one formal and urban—another more organic and rural. These provided me the training to become skilled at negotiating different spaces in Mexican urban and rural society. Although I am a foreigner in México, I have developed a heightened understanding of the cultural and political contexts of the country because of the background knowledge I have gradually accumulated over the years via academic studies, work, living experiences, and travel. Through these engagements I have developed an awareness of theoretical and practical delicacies, and potential landmines within the milieu of Mexican society. I have developed a near native fluency in Spanish, and through my experiences working and living with Mexicans, I have built up an understanding of Mexican vernacular and linguistic idiosyncrasies, which enhance my cultural awareness of the country and aided me in gaining access to both the formal and informal spaces where I conducted research in the Centro Histórico. I do not highlight these experiences to paint myself as an “expert,” but rather it is important to contextualize the acquisition of information used to formulate this dissertation and to reflect on the way it all came together. I, the researcher, was clearly an agent in this theater of México City.

I conducted multiple interviews with both the director of the Fideicomiso and the director of the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños (CET). To illustrate field practices, let me begin with a narrative of how I gained access to the director of the Fideicomiso. This was a difficult interview to secure, as the director is also Carlos Slim’s personal secretary and a member of the elite society in México City. I obtained access and secured interviews with the director of the Fideicomiso through contacts that I made at the Autonomous National University of México (UNAM, as it is known by its Spanish acronym). While attending and presenting at the AAG in New Orleans in 2003, I sat in on a session organized by a geographer from the UNAM on demographic changes in Mexican cities (attending conferences pays off). After establishing initial contact with him in New Orleans, I wrote him when I was preparing to begin my fieldwork in México City. He offered me office space in the department of geography at the UNAM in exchange for providing lectures on urban geography in a senior seminar course. I gladly accepted the opportunity to embed myself in an academic

institution with the possibility to meet people studying urban space in México City and to establish further contacts with people that may be involved in the Programa de Rescate. For a full semester I traveled three days a week to the UNAM. At the start, I was excited to have suddenly become a commuter. Now I was with the proletariat riding public transportation to work! The mornings I traveled to UNAM—I had to arrive at University City<sup>8</sup> by 9 a.m.—I would leave my one room flat at 7:30 a.m. I lived in Colonia San Rafael, in the Centro, near the el Monumento de La Revolución. The metro ride took about forty minutes—significantly shorter than the above ground morning commute of 2- 3 hours, depending on traffic. The initial excitement of riding the metro to work quickly diminished. In the morning the metro wagons are suffocatingly packed. The wagons are segregated by sex in order to prevent female harassment and even rape on the cars. The security issues were paramount. People were constantly pick pocketed, often I would be literally squeezed out of the car by the other riders while frantically holding my computer bag against my chest only to wait for the next metro and repeat the process.

Fortunately, my commuting efforts were a successful endeavor as the people I met at the UNAM put me in contact with a land use NGO that organized a workshop and conference sponsored by The Association of Mexican Banks, The National Commission for the development of Housing (CONAFOVI), and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy on land use in the Centro Histórico. I attended the week long workshop they held in the BANAMEX<sup>9</sup> (the Bank of México) building that is situated in one of the restored palaces in the Centro. The workshop consisted of how to finance the refurbishment of Historical buildings. Each day we lunched in the beautifully restored colonial courtyard. The workshop was geared towards real estate developers (basically, the Fideicomiso functions as a property developer), government officials

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<sup>8</sup> 120,000 students attend the UNAM. The campus is called University City. It is located in the far south of the Federal District.

<sup>9</sup> Carlos Slim also has interests in the banking industry in México. His cousin, Alfredo Harp Helu bought out BANAMEX when it was privatized under the neoliberal agenda in 1991. On a side note, Helu spends a lot of his money sprucing up Oaxaca City. He paid for the construction of the Baseball stadium, refurbished the pedestrian street that connects Oaxaca's Zócalo with the Santo Domingo church that he also refurbished. Slim and Helu are doing similar things in different places.

from the municipality, CONAFOVI, and other offices. It was very formal—lots of suits, good food and imported wines. Attending the workshop ricocheted into meeting the secretary of the director of the Fideicomiso. She put me in contact with Adrian Pandal, the director. After a good four months of beleaguering Pandal for an interview, he finally conceded. This is how I made many of my contacts from the upper echelons of México City society in the Centro Histórico. There occurred a domino or ricochet effect where one contact would place me with another.

Embedding myself in the CET and talking to ambulantes occurred differently from gaining access to the Fideicomiso. It was also a time-consuming venture to be allowed entry into the world of the CET—it took me four months to secure the interview with the director of this think-tank and finally gain his confidence to allow me to conduct participant observation at the CET's offices. I contacted the director of the CET many times via email to no avail. Finally I gathered the courage to go into the heart of Tepito and walk into the offices. Perhaps not the safest thing to do, but I think the director appreciated the gall of such an act—plus he realized that I could be useful as a translator.

The CET offices are located on “Bread Makers” corner on Jesus Carranza Street in the middle of Morelos neighborhood in Tepito. It is called bread maker's corner because it was an original site of a bakery that provided goods for the whole neighborhood. Now it is overrun with drug dealers and prostitutes but still goes by the nick-name bread maker's corner. It is a nefarious site. If you tell people in the Cantina that you are on your way to bread maker's corner they genuflect. The offices of the CET consist of a large warehouse, a kitchen and banquet room and the library with computers, a printing press, photocopy machines and computer-printers. The director dresses casually while the head of Grupo Capitalista wears a suit and the ambulantes coming and going don pirated garments manufactured in Tepito. The site of the CET is not a comfort zone such as the offices of the geography department at the UNAM, the restored palace where the workshop took place, or the offices of the Fideicomiso. The director of the CET, the head of Grupo Capitalista, and many ambulantes are Mafiosi that are making a lot of money by pirating expensive



consumer items and selling them on the streets in the Centro Histórico. They are gangsters that are making enormous profits in the streets for the working poor by participating in *Fayuca*, the black market. At the CET I am 10 blocks from the BANAMEX building—the restored 17<sup>th</sup> century palace—that hosted the land-use workshop, but I could be a million miles away. More than once, I would stay late at the CET offices, drinking and conversing with the director, the head of Grupo Capitalista and others. I would leave the offices to get to the safe zones of the Centro in and around the Zócalo. Upon leaving the offices, I would walk towards the Zócalo choosing a path in the middle of the street between the two lanes with cars whizzing past either side of me. This manner of walking late night around Barrio Bravo of Tepito was recommended by the director of the CET to prevent getting robbed, stabbed, or suffering from a *sequestro-express* robbery<sup>10</sup>.

I felt I had to visit as many worlds as I could in México City in order to comprehend the multiplicity of voices involved in the production of urban space in the Centro Histórico. The worlds of the archive, the ambulantes, the café owners, government officials, and the Mafiosi: worlds that live side by side, seldom overlapping, but are enveloped in multiple dialectic. My positionality allowed me to get at dialectical processes of these worlds. There is a dialectical relationship among all participants in the research where, “government officials, nongovernmental organizations...have a direct impact on both researcher and researched. Work in one sphere impinges empirically and socially on the other”—and in the case of the Centro—the dialectic includes ambulantes, Mafiosi, café owners and restaurateurs (Nast et al., 1997, p. 62).

### **3.6 Reflections on My Positionality**

Now let me discuss how I view positionality and some of the drawbacks to doing research in the Centro. Feminist theorists have been at the forefront of debates concerning positionality in relation to theory and methodology (Hartsock, 1997; Katz,

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<sup>10</sup> *Sequestro* is kidnapping and *express* is quickly. This term signifies when thugs—often times off duty cops—take you from ATM to ATM machine emptying your account then force you to drink large amounts of grain alcohol before they drop you off unconscious in the street.

2001a; Kobayashi, 2001; Nast et al., 1997; Rose, 1993). Theorists developed the argument that positionality is the concept “where we are located in the social structure as a whole and which institutions we are in...have effects on how we understand the world (Hartsock, 1997, p. 188, as quoted in Johnston et al, 2000).” When conducting fieldwork, this requires the researcher to consider her own opinion, as well as those that are the focus of the research, and somehow ‘write this understanding of positionality into our research practice’ (Rose 1993). Attempting to write the researched and the researcher’s experience into the text require reflection on power relations and how,

relational qualities between researched and researcher inform research agendas and knowledge claims, how our work affects and is affected by the communities and places that we study, and how immersion in particular cultural (including economic and political) frameworks and academic and theoretical traditions informs research goals and methods. (Nast et al., 1997, p. 54)

I interpret this to mean that a researcher cannot merely state her ‘position’ from the way she interprets herself within societal relations: for example as a fixed subject such as a Latina-lesbian Marxist, a white-male, middleclass, humanist, or an Afro-American-male culturalist. An understanding of positionality requires that the researcher recognize the changing subjectivities involved in different research contexts. Acknowledgement of the fluidity of the subject can mobilize the possibility that “all participants in the work-can appropriate this knowledge in ways that strengthen us in our encounters with (these) structures, and allow us the possibility of connecting across class, race, or gender to confront their manifestations in daily life” (Katz, 2001a, p. 70). Such an understanding does not negate the politics of knowledge production or the fact that the researcher is unavoidably embedded in a powerful position due to affiliations with institutions, and her role in framing and interpreting research data.

Positionality, understood in this vein, is key to understanding the

mobilization of any qualitative research project, especially those which include fieldwork. The 'field' in fieldwork is always "politically situated, contextualized, and defined and that its social, political, and spatial boundaries shift with changing circumstances or in different political contexts" (Nast et al., 1997, p. 60). The academic researcher is always imbued with power. As a 'first' world academic researcher conducting field work in the 'third world' I cannot completely escape the power differential in my quest for a fairer playing field. In fact, some academics believe that a 'self-awareness' on the part of the researcher when conducting research in the 'third world' is a difficult obstacle to overcome. "When Western feminists enter developing settings, they cannot escape the power relations that exist between those societies or between themselves as academics and their research subjects....Western researchers are in a position of power by virtue of their ability to name categories, control information about the research agenda, define interviews and come and go as research scientists" (Lawson (1995) as quoted in Rose (1993, p. 307)). I prefer Katz's attempt to understand power differentials by questioning such elements as: where one's fields exist; the displacements within research; and, the ways in which the work (of academics and collaborators) deploy and confront power. I believe that through a nuanced understanding of power, researchers can move beyond the romantic notion of 'becoming' a member of the community, or the cynical approach that the 'scales' of power are always in the favor of the researcher (so the researcher must throw up her/his arms and remain on the outside), and confront socially constructed power differences by seeking out the spaces in between.

Positionality, as methodology, is a heightened awareness that the researcher is always already involved in the situation, research and the processes that flow through the sites of research. By recognizing the researcher-researched within this 'positioned context' the researcher can begin to separate the outside from the inside, and look for the spaces of in-between-ness where "all participants can appropriate (power) and knowledge" (Katz, 2001b). Indeed, the narratives in the above section highlight how I needed to negotiate with the agents embedded in distinct power structures. The actors at the Fideicomiso and the CET—where I conducted interviews

and participant observation— are imbricated in particularly place based power structures. These informants hold their own exacting power that is imbued in their positionalities. Therefore, it is not only the first world academic researcher that is instilled with power when entering the field to gather research. Each agent involved in the reconfiguration of space found at different sites in México City wields distinct gradations of power vis-à-vis her positionality. My abilities to engage with ambulantes, the director of the fideicomiso and the director of the CET held no more or less sway in establishing those contacts and learning from their own voices about the reconfiguration of urban space in the Centro as the decisions made by each informant to engage with me and tell their own stories. This is clear from the stories of violence and avoidance I tell above.

My positionality when conducting research in the México City is not only a product of the fact that I am a white, middle-class male from the ‘first world’. Understanding that we all come from “a particular place, out of a particular history, a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position” (Hall, as quoted in Johnston et al. (2000, p. 605), signifies that just being white and middle-class does not mean that I cannot move beyond that ‘position’. If it did mean that, I would have been unable to engage in communication with the ambulantes who eventually gained my trust and allowed me to converse with them in their spaces. Positionality relates to the power structures and institutions embedded in social relations. Some of the defining characteristics of my positionality when conducting research in México City are: 1) the fact that I am a member of the academy, embedded in a knowledge producing institution (this is a position that is imbued with power (Rose, 1993)); 2) I speak Spanish as a second language; 3) I am a foreigner within the context of México; 4) I exist outside the sphere of familiarity with the internal workings of the offices and institutions where I conducted my research, 5) and strictly speaking, I am an outsider within the socio- cultural context of México City.

Sensitivity and awareness about my positionality in México in relation to the cultural politics of the country vary from site to site and according to which method I

employed. During interviews, in order to get a sense of the class-base I was engaging with in México City and to learn more about their social perceptions in order to garner an insight about their opinions on the Programa de Rescate I would ask indirect questions. Rather than asking what class they were in, I would ask them where they socialize, where they shop, or how often they travel outside of the country.

Within the realm of the archive, negotiating my positionality was more difficult. Just by demonstrating awareness and sensitivity to my positionality in México City vis-à-vis my research does not help me understand nuanced intertextuality that I am not familiar with when engaging with the archive. Or for that matter, it was difficult to negotiate my positionality when conducting participant observation and not change the behavior of the subjects through my presence.

Intertextuality in the archive and my presence on the plaza speak to how my sensitivity and awareness did not manifest itself in the research project. We can recognize our positionality as researchers, but how do we write this in to the text so that all voices are heard? Rose cannot manifest McDowell's plea that "we must recognize and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, and write this into our stories" (McDowell, as quoted in Rose (1993, p. 305)). Rose found this level of reflexivity an impossible task to incorporate. In fact she continues her essay by describing the attempts of this reflexivity as 'transparent' in "its ambitious claims to comprehensive knowledge" (Rose, 1993). Rose's frustration with attempts to recognize and negotiate the positionality of Western researchers is indicative of the general challenges within qualitative research. The attempts by the researcher to include herself in the text not only is a task difficult to accomplish—as Rose (1993) has indicated—but, the inclusion of the researcher in the text reeks of arrogance. It is impossible to conduct research and interview subject without impacting the individuals and processes that are the object of analysis—hence, the difficulty of finding the in-between space (Rose, 1993). However, the researcher needs to be sensitive to the informants' positionality and the events at work in order to have minimal impacts on the informants, processes and practices that are

intertwined and/or are producing the object(s) of analysis. Perhaps the goal of methodology is to realize that it is impossible to be disengaged. The researcher should aim to stay engaged with the research but not to the point where she is impacting the processes and practices of analysis such that she is required to be written into the text.

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## CHAPTER 4: CONTEMPORARY MÉXICO CITY: HISTORICAL PATHS LEADING TO NEOLIBERALISM AND THE RISE OF AMBULANTAJE

In chapter two I set the contextual framework for how I organize my study of gentrification. I highlighted three sets of knowledge bases concerning globalization, neoliberalization, and gentrification literatures. I provided a synthesis of these literatures in order to demonstrate how I am mobilizing my study in the Centro. Although there has been extensive research conducted on globalization, the processes of neoliberalization, and gentrification— few studies have intertwined gentrification with neoliberalization and globalization (for the latest discussion of neoliberal gentrification see Hackworth (2006), within the context of Istanbul see Oyku Potuoglu-Cook (2006)). In chapter three I explained how I conducted my research, the methods I chose and the information-data generating-gathering techniques in this dissertation.

In this chapter I begin formulating the results of the research I conducted in my fieldwork. The following four sections outline México's political economy in relation to urban transformations of México City. Each of the four disparate narratives overlaps and is intertwined to provide an understanding of México City's histories: from colonialism to the rise of neoliberalism and ambulante. In section 4.1, I discuss the importance of urban command centers, such as México City, during the formation of global economic and political organization since the era of conquest and colonization. I highlight how the importance of urban political and economic command centers have resulted in urban primacy, a phenomenon that has had continued reverberations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in political and economic decision-making-processes. I trace a history of morphological and social changes to the Centro Histórico from colonialism through to the contemporary city and its emphasis on neoliberal governance, which has led to urban decay. In section 4.2, I sketch the shifts from Import Substitution Industrialization to the neoliberal paradigm that occurred in twentieth century México City as these structural economic changes parallel the Centro Histórico's urban deterioration and subsequent neoliberal renewal efforts encapsulated by the Programa. I debate a variety of

theories on the actors involved in these neoliberal practices, and I maintain that local elites were as complicit in adopting and applying neoliberal policies as the IMF and World Bank. In section IV.C., I explain how the shift to neoliberal economic practices also led to the loss of hegemonic control and the decentralization of México's traditionally centralized state system. These events each contribute to the subsequent intensification and rise of *ambulante*—the focus of section 4.4., I conclude the chapter with a brief discussion on the history of *ambulante* (the act of street vending, *ambulantes* are the vendors). The increase and intensification of *ambulante* in the Centro has paralleled economic structural shifts from ISI to neoliberalism in México. The rise of *ambulante* has led to the reconfiguration of how urban space is produced and used in this locale.

It is important for me to trace these histories of México City to show the practices that inform the current Programa. Although México has been a global city for 500 years, the current practices of neoliberal economic policies, globalization processes and gentrification are unparalleled in México City's History, but yet there are historic ties for each process.

#### **4.1 From Colonialism to Urban Primacy to Decay**

The processes of economic and cultural globalization have gradually transpired in México City over the last five hundred years. These processes have produced and reproduced the spaces of México City so that the built environment has become one of Massey's now famous examples of all places constituted as open, porous and hybrid with its varied architecture revealing layers of global Spanish and Indian Historical connections (D. Massey, 1999). As a nexus of cultural and economic global processes, México City provides an excellent site to study economic and cultural globalism as gentrification.

Cities in Latin America, especially the colonial command cities such as México City, have played an important role in global economic and political organization since the era of exploration, conquest and colonization by the Spanish and Portuguese (Gilbert, 2004). During the period of colonization, México City functioned as a political and economic node in the organization of both transatlantic and



transpacific trade. Other cities, such as Guanajuato or San Luis Potosi, carried out subordinate roles within the urban hierarchy of the colonies as manufacturing and mining centers.

The centrifugal processes that occurred internally in Latin America—with inter-urban regional dependencies around cities such as México City and Guanajuato— happened in tandem with the advent of urban primacy, which is itself an indicator of global economic integration (Gilbert 2004). The economies surrounding México City involved the extraction of natural resources that were sold in Europe—further integrating México and its largest city with the burgeoning global economy. With independence from Spain in 1822, the command centers, which were the primary cities of the regions, became the economic and politically dominating hubs of the newly liberated countries (Johns, 1997). The extractive agricultural and – to a lesser degree – manufacturing economic regions in post independent Latin America centered around the traditional colonial cities, such as México D.F. (Kinsbruner, 2005). Urban primacy continued to be a marked feature of Latin American urban systems throughout the twentieth century with the advent of increased urban primacy during the period of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI)<sup>11</sup> (Gilbert, 2004). The largest cities contained the populations who consumed the domestically produced consumer goods during the period of Import Substitution Industrialization (Gwynne & Kay, 2004). Therefore, many of the tariff protected industries that were established during this period expanded in and around the major cities—thus further contributing to urban primacy. This period of ISI occurred in México City from roughly the early 1950s with an abrupt ending to tariff driven domestic manufacturing in 1980 (Gwynne & Kay, 2004). Thus, México City’s highest economic growth rates took place in the 1960s and 1970s coinciding with rapid levels of population growth (Ward, 1998). México City’s population continued to mushroom during the 1980s—called the lost decade—due to economic crisis brought on by the end of overpriced oil and increases in interest rates. Rural to urban population

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<sup>11</sup> ISI, an economic strategy practiced in México (and throughout Latin America) from the 1940s-1980 aimed at encouraging national industrial growth so as to reduce imports of manufactured goods.

swelled México City's population during the lost decade as government directed agricultural assistance dried up and agricultural production decreased leaving peasants few option but to migrate to the cities—or increasingly—north of the border to work in the U.S. labor markets (Ros, 2000; Ward, 1998).

México City has always been a city divided by class and race; categories that over-lap and are intertwined in post colonial Latin America, and especially in the country of México that displays high levels of indigeneity dispersed throughout its population. Pre-Colombian Aztec México City was segregated according to religious hierarchies with a head priest enjoying his own segment of the city, called a *calpulli*, replete with religious temples, palaces, sacrificial alters, and an independent fighting unit (Anawalt, 1982; Todarov, 1984). Each *calpulli* was spatially separate, occupied a particular neighborhood, educated its children and dedicated itself to a particular trade or functions (Ward, 1998).

During the colonial and postcolonial period the city's hierarchy was reproduced in the built environment as Spaniards, Criollos, and indigenous groups each resided in spatially separate areas of the city (Arron, 1985; Rama, 1996). Until the reign of Porfirio Diaz, the Peninsular and Criollo elite occupied the current Historic District of Downtown México City, while distinct castes based on trade or employment resided in the fringes of the *traza*, or Colonial city (Piccato, 2001; Rama, 1996).

Beginning with the French occupation of México (1862-1866) the elite began to move to new suburbs outside of the colonial city, especially towards the west and south (Kinsbruner, 2005). By the time the Porfiriato arrived, many elites no longer lived in the colonial city opting to live in new upscale neighborhoods such as Condesa, Chapultepec and Polanco. The Porfiriato marks the beginning of urban modernization based on a Euro-aesthetic for México. México followed the example of other cities in Latin America through the Haussmanization of the built environment in the construction of wide boulevards, French architecture, and ornate monuments and fountains (Benjamin, 2000). Unlike the Haussmanization of Paris, which occurred in the old medieval part of the city (Lefebvre, 1987, 1991), the construction of these

symbols of modernization in México City were built outside the colonial city, thus creating a class cleavage in built environment between the Criollo elites to the south and west, juxtaposed to the Mestizo and indigenous working poor who moved into the colonial city as the city-center lost its cultural cache with the elite, and became affordable for the masses.

In the Post-Revolutionary<sup>12</sup> period Mexican society reproduced the spatially classed correlation of elites residing outside of the colonial city while the colonial city housed the working poor (Piccato, 2001; Ward, 1998). The intricacies of racial and class divisions embedded in the built environment add to the untidy nature of the gentrification of the Centro as witnessed in the private and city led revitalization program intended to gentrify the Historic District of Downtown México City. Private company pamphlets and México City's web page implement discourses of poverty to promote the gentrification program demanding that 'decent people' must reclaim the Historic District (Programa de Rescate 2001). As the reproduction of economic and cultural globalism as gentrification in México City occurs at the local scale, represented by the Programa de Rescate of the Historic District of Downtown México City, class will be imbricated in determining who will participate the processes and who will benefit from the results of gentrification. México has long been a place of urban primacy, which has helped maintain economic, cultural, and political centralism within the confinements of México City (Ward, 1998). When Cortez and the Spanish Conquistadors arrived to capture Tenochtitlan, the Aztec City where México City currently lies, they encountered a city many times larger than any urban centers found in Europe at the time (Davis, 1997; Low, 2000). México City's 'biography' crosses a greater range and intensity of history and actors than any other city in the world: from a pre-Colombian Aztec urban center, to colonial capital of New Spain for the Spanish Viceroyalty, through independence, civil war and occupation in the nineteenth century, through social upheaval, Revolution and religious wars for

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<sup>12</sup> The Mexican Revolution was a period of political, social and military conflict and turmoil that began with the call to arms made on November 20, 1910 by Francisco I. Madero and lasted until 1921.

nearly two decades in the first part of the twentieth century (Ward 1998, Kandell 1990). The post-Revolutionary period in México witnessed the economic policy shifts from Import Substitution Industrialization to neoliberalism, which impacted both controlled and spontaneous growth in México City, and added more layers to the built environment of the urban center (Weiss, 1999).

México City is a palimpsest of these past occurrences, and to a greater or lesser extent, these experiences remain embedded in the built environment of the spaces and places of the city today as I found in my field research conducting participant observation in the city. As a post-colonial city, México City is also inherently hybrid: representing aspects of pre-modernism, modernism and postmodernism that can be read in the built environment of the city (Bhabha, 1990; N. Canclini, 1989).

Until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the urban area currently referred to as the Centro Histórico comprised of the entire urban tract of México City. The Centro Histórico consists of 668 blocks and covers an area of 9.7 square kilometers. In the 1890s this district had a population of 250,000 people. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the “original México City”, or Centro Histórico, began to lose its relative importance in comparison to the expanding urban areas of the city. México City began to spread out enormously in the post revolutionary period (1921) and even more so in the post WWII era.

The city took on the morphological extension of a southern California style city. The city grew out flat and wide—especially among some of the lower class neighborhoods—in lieu of imitating a more urban morphological development with high rises and skyscrapers á la Manhattan.

The skyscrapers found in México City often represent modernization efforts such as the Torre Latina built in the early 1960s and located between the Alameda and the Centro Histórico (see image above), or the current effort to construct Latin America’s tallest skyscraper as one component of the Programa de Rescate (see Figure 3).



**Figure 6. La Torre Latinoamericana. Photo by author**

Other large office buildings constructed in the vernacular post-modern style of Mexican late twentieth century architecture are found along the Avenida Reforma. More recently, a new financial center has emerged replete with postmodern building on the former municipal dump in Santa Fe. In attempts to become a ‘global’ city a component of the Programa de Rescate includes the construction of Latin America’s tallest skyscraper.

The Centro Histórico for years was the financial center of the city (Piccato, 2001). As the morphology of the city grew into multi-nuclei financial centers – such as the Reforma/insurgents corridor or the development of the ex Santa Fe dump into

a financial command center for international corporations – the Centro began to lose its importance as ‘the’ financial center of the city – which by the early 1980s had grown to a population of 17 million people.

The patrimonial, religious symbolism and its logistical site as the center of both federal and city politics connotes that the Centro Histórico still holds caché for the residents of México City, and indeed for Mexicans across the 31 state republic.

Today, the Centro Histórico consists of only 1% of the overall land mass of México City with a population of just under 200,000 people (Bolaños, 2002). Over the last twenty some odd years the Centro has fallen into disarray and has begun to develop many of the negative connotations of inner-city slums found in other areas of the world. These social problems include a decline in the upkeep of residential housing – brought on by the 1981 neoliberal financial crisis – underemployment and unemployment; social exclusion and economically depressed zones; violence and social insecurity; drug trafficking and drug addiction problems; pollution problems associated with motor vehicular traffic jams and clandestine manufacturing; low levels of education among the Centro’s residents; conflicts among different social sectors in the Centro – such as among shop keepers and ambulantes.

The deterioration of the built environment of the Centro is related to the lack of funds from the city to maintain the historic buildings of the Centro, which stems from the advent of the neoliberal economic crisis that began in 1981, coupled with the transformations of the economic base of the Centro (Kandell, 1990). The economic transformation centered around many of the registered manufacturing industries leaving the Centro Histórico and moving to the outskirts of the city. This led to a decrease in employment opportunities that led in tandem to a reduction of the Centro’s population. The corrosion of the urban built environment in the Centro that began in earnest in the early 1980s, the age and lack of investment in the historic buildings and other properties of the Centro, the shift in land use from residential housing to clandestine manufacturing sites and the use of housing stock for the storage of goods sold by ambulantes, and the destruction caused by the set of earthquakes that devastated the Centro in the 1985 have all been factors that led to a

decrease in the maintenance of the urban built environment and witnessed the population of the Centro Histórico decrease while the remaining residents are working poor and ambulantes.

In addition to these factors, political chaos and mismanagement have also led to the deterioration of the built environment of the Centro. Prior to the formation of the Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico more than 20 federal and municipal government institutions, and even larger number of civil society groups, were located and attempted to manage the daily affairs of the Centro<sup>13</sup>. This led to the Centro's built environment to "suffer" from such a chaotic diversity of government intervention. The lack of inter-governmental cooperation and fiscal responsibility in order to manage and maintain some of the most fundamental aspects of city and urban administration was one of the key factors – in tandem with the events mentioned above – that led to the chaos and mismanagement of the Centro Histórico. The decline of the Centro Histórico accelerated and worsened with the advent of roll-back neoliberalization that began in 1981 when structural adjustment policies were hoisted upon México and the state was forced to retreat from activities to maintain the urban built environment.

#### **4.2 From I.S.I. to Neoliberalism: How Global and Regional Actors impellent Neoliberal economic Practices**

The formation of 'actually existing' (Peck & Tickell, 2002) neoliberal spaces of México City is a highly contingent process based on the early period of roll-back neoliberalization dialectically juxtaposed to roll-out neoliberalization that informs the goals of the Programa de Rescate. I draw attention to how the neoliberal shift in México was not only a top down event. Neoliberal hegemony in México coalesced through the actions of actors from both supra-national entities such as the IMF and the world bank as well as domestic politicians involved in policy making who were

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<sup>13</sup> The empirical materials reported here are based on field notes and interviews collected during 2005 with follow-up research conducted in the month of February 2006. To comply with confidentiality assurances made to interviewees, I do not in most cases disclose their names or positions, nor do I reveal the precise dates on which the interview occurred.

complicit in vigorously implementing the transfer from state controlled economy to the neoliberal state in México. Neoliberalization has become pervasive in México, so that even a populist left-wing politician adapts features of neoliberal policies within his agenda to take back the Centro Histórico. Here I submit how México City shifted from a populist ISI run city to a neoliberal site.

In order to comprehend how the implementation of neoliberal practices and policies impacted the Centro Histórico's urban built environment, an understanding of the liberalization of the economy and state in México that led to the socio-spatial transformations is required. Here, I outline how México radically modified its economic course of action from a primarily state-guided ISI economy to a country thoroughly liberalized with an open market. The changes in the economy that México experienced brought on the advent of roll-back neoliberalization replete with the deterioration the buildings, plazas and streets of the Centro.

During the “Mexican Miracle”<sup>14</sup> (1940s-1970s) México's economic paradigm had emphasized industrialization and commercial export agriculture over campesino food production for the domestic market. By the 1960s, this led to the initiation of the collapse of the Import substitution Industrialization (ISI) economic model (T. Barry, 1992, 1994). ISI is a development theory with links to dependency theory. ISI emerged as a trade and economic policy developed in México—as well as throughout Latin America—based on the premise that México needed to substitute products which it imported, mostly finished goods, with locally produced alternatives. ISI was very successful in its initial stages of implementation. Nonetheless, México's balance-of-payments arrangement worsened as exports dropped, coupled with a decline in agricultural production as the population increased, necessitating the importation of food (Labotz, 1995). The ISI model created a disparate form of growth that dichotomized rural and urban life; the ISI economic policies privileged urban industrialization over investments in rural agricultural production. Thus, ISI helped fuel the exponential growth of cities frustrating urban population levels as

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<sup>14</sup> Between 1940-1980, México experienced substantial economic growth that many economists and historians dubbed “El Milagro Mexicano” (Raat, 1982).



campesinos fled to the México City in droves virtually doubling the population in a ten year period. The ISI period witnessed massive rural to urban migration, underemployment, and the polarization of wealth. The institutionalized control the PRI established in post-Revolutionary México could not prevent the intensification of class struggles manifested by the growth of independent union opposition and land invasion culminating in the 1968 student massacre at Tlatelolco (Minushkin, 2000). It is important to mention how urban social unrest surfaced in the late 1960s in México City as these early protests and demonstrations are precursors to current resistance to the neoliberalization of space in the Centro.

Initially, the Lopez-Portillo (1976-1982) sexenio appeared to provide a hiatus in the deterioration of PRI financed corporatism of ISI (Roderic Camp, 1996). The increase in Petroleum revenue spurred by the OPEC embargoes of the 1970s flooded México with revenue in Petroleum sales. México's vast oil reserves coupled with the international banking system awash with petro-dollars (or euro-dollars as they were also referred to), created an optimistic environment and led to México receiving multiple foreign loans (Meyer, 1995). Oil revenues and loans boosted the economy and the Lopez-Portillo administration experimented with México's last foray into populism: the implementation of a food security plan called Sistema Alimentaria Mexicana (SAM), The Mexican Food System (T. Barry, 1994). The Lopez-Portillo administration became alarmed by México's reliance on food importation. The hyper-sovereign administration argued that over-reliance on imports from the U.S. would impact México's sovereignty. Through subsidies, credit, and technical assistance México became food self-sufficient in two years. However, the administration privileged large-scale producers over subsistence farmers and small ejidos. SAM created food self-sufficiency, but did not eliminate agriculture's inequitable bi-modal system. This also inadvertently encouraged rural to urban migration putting pressure on jobs and housing in the city that eventually would lead to the advent of ambulante and the informalization of economic production causing socio-spatial changes to the urban built environment in the Centro Histórico (T. Barry, 1994).

International banks aggressively lent to México based on inflated oil prices. While the price of oil remained high, México was able to finance the loans and maintain food self-sufficiency. The Lopez-Portillo administration spent heavily on SAM, unions, and even invested in universities (T. Barry, 1994).

The election of Ronald Reagan and the break-up of the oil cartel initiated a drop in petroleum prices. The decrease in oil revenues prevented México from financing its debts and continuing to fund SAM. High inflation and a lack of oil revenues helped lead to the devaluation of the peso. As foreigners and Mexican businessmen alike lost confidence in the Mexican economy, the peso devaluation resulted in massive capital flight out of México. Capital flight totaled \$22 billion dollars in just eighteen months (Meyer, 1995). This initiated the peso crisis of 1981 that ushered in an era of roll-back neoliberalization. The city had already experienced a population boom to the years building up to the 1981 peso crisis. With the advent of roll-back neoliberalization that included the retreat of the state away from providing services, jobs, and performing the quotidian efforts to maintain urban services in the Centro Histórico, ambulante increased as the working poor hoisted themselves up from the economic misery that surrounding them and looked to the informal sector for economic sustenance through subsistence informal economic activities.

Lopez-Portillo reacted against capital flight by nationalizing 59 Mexican banks in September 1982, just three months prior to leaving office. In the speech where he announced the nationalization, he scolded the country when he stated, “A group of Mexicans, led, counseled, and aided by the private banks, has taken more money out of the country than all the empires that have exploited us since the beginning...we cannot, with dignity do anything else. We cannot stand with our arms crossed while they tear out our entrails” (as quoted in Meyer (1995, p. 684)). Thus began a new era of the roll-back neoliberalization of space in México City.

The nationalization of the Banks frightened investors and led to the deterioration of the economy. The Lopez-Portillo administration announced that México could pay only the interest on its public foreign debt. In order to reassess the

foreign owed debt, México negotiated a multi-billion dollar loan from the IMF (Cannack, 1989). The loan agreement committed México to strict austerity and structural adjustment, which included economic liberalization and the pauperization of the Mexican state. It is important to highlight the corrosion of the state financed under roll-back neoliberalization as this led to the decay of the built environment in México City.

The introduction of orthodox neo-liberal economic policies is a zeitgeist of how administrators traditionally organized the Mexican economy and state that helped usher in the neoliberalization of space in México City. The policy change from ISI to a neo-liberal export oriented industrialization (EOI) in México was the product of an ideological shift in regards to how the administrators of the de La Madrid and Salinas sexenios<sup>15</sup> understood how the economy should be managed, combined with pressure from the IMF, World Bank, and the U.S. to open the Mexican economy.

Judith Teichman (1992), who provides a top down interpretation on the neoliberal shift in México, argues that changes in politicians' approach to the management of the economy in México were a product of the demands made by the aggressive lending institutions and pressure from the U.S. government within the rubric of a weak Mexican state. She believes that 'constraints imposed' by the operation of the world economy, represented by the IMF and World Bank, placed pressures on state managers to make economic and political decisions that are not always the most beneficial for the country. She describes the implementation of neoliberalism in México as an aggressive act committed by the IMF and World Bank, enforced by the U.S. (Teichman, 1992).

The economic and political climate during the 1982 Mexican Peso crisis was not favorable for Mexican state managers to negotiate the best deal for the benefit of the country, which represents one reason why neoliberal plans were implemented with such fervor in the 1980s. Unfortunately, Teichman victimizes the state managers under the de La Madrid administration, robbing them of agency and portraying them

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<sup>15</sup> Sexsenio is the six year term a Mexican president serves with no possibility of re-election

as weak, uninformed and desperate characters who were not capable of running their own country. She argues that, “(the) Mexican state is a weak state both in its ability to formulate and implement economic policy... international pressures, not the will of state managers, were instrumental in patterning the evolution of the economic restructuring program” (Teichman, 1992, p. 89). This statement essentially infantilizes the technopols who administered the De La Madrid administration and does not acknowledge that certain groups within México were complicit in the creation of a hegemonic neoliberal state.

From the 1930s through the 1980s a ‘bankers alliance’ composed of bankers, export oriented firms, and monetary authorities (which advocated open markets) competed with a populist coalition of domestically oriented manufacturers, workers, and peasants (which favored tightly regulated markets in the form of ISI for México’s economic policy). When the country experienced balance of payment problems, such as the crises perhaps caused by the ISI economic paradigm, the banking alliance would gain more economic control over the direction of the economy. The banking alliance’s influence grew after the 1982 debt crisis and strengthened further with the deterioration of the economy in 1987. Thus, the zeitgeist from ISI to EOI economic policy that occurred in México in the 1980s was the result of a gradual process of the outcome of two disparate ideals on how to run the economy spanning five decades, not an abrupt ideological change forced on Mexican technopols in 1982 with the election of Miguel de La Madrid. These occurrences demonstrate how the introduction of neoliberal policies in México was internally as well as externally motivated, and that the shift was not a zeitgeist, but a gradual move.

Minushkin (2000) believes the division on how to manage the economy is separated into a group of bankers who emerged from the Revolution as the country’s powerful financial elite, and the nouveau riche who began to earn money from the liberalization of laws surrounding the Mexican Bolsa. Minushkin argues that traditional bankers were ambivalent about economic opening because it threatened their oligarchic control of the financial system. The new Bolsa-enriched elite favors the opening of the economy in tandem with the liberalization of the Bolsa. He sites

changes made in the 1970s during the Echeverria sexenio. In 1975 Echeverria enacted the Securities Market Law, partly in response to pressure from a group of independent stockbrokers not affiliated with the banking sector that sought regulatory changes that would create a more vibrant Bolsa (Minushkin, 2000). Minushkin believes this law marked the beginning of México's financial modernization. Therefore, according to Minushkin, the opening of the economy stemmed from internal domestic pressures. Differing from the above argument, it was not the bankers who sought to open the markets, but the nouveau riche stockbrokers that successfully lobbied to open the markets because they had the most to win from liberalization.

These examples demonstrate that the zeitgeist from ISI to EOI stemmed from domestic decisions made by state agents, bankers and stockbrokers, thus deconstructing Teichman's argument that the neoliberalization of the economy was forced onto a powerless Mexican state. Teichman also neglected to look at the changes in the power structure of the Mexican state that coincided with the liberalization of the Mexican economy.

Dezalay and Garth (2002) convincingly demonstrate how the political elite in Latin America shifted their interest from law degrees to sociology and urban planning as a means to prepare for public office. The Ford foundation invested in learning institutions and contributed money to think tanks (Dezalay & Garth, 2002). The Foundation provided scholarships to promising students to earn doctoral degrees in economics in the U.S.—often from the 'fresh water schools'—which emphasized in their curriculum neo-liberal strategies to opening the market and running the economy. The initial investments by the Ford foundation in education and scholarships helped expedite the neoliberal education of México's young burgeoning elite in the school of neoliberal economic thought. The Chicago trained politicians in México did not have a major split with the traditional elite. The elite merely morphed into a neoliberal, educated, ruling class.

The political elite of the Porfiriato lost power with the advent of the Mexican Revolution (Benjamin, 2000). The post-Revolutionary political elite began to amass

their fortunes only after the Revolution. Political families' money and reputation were made in tandem with the solidification of power under the PRI. Each aspect of society, from the court system, to public law, to economic law, and property laws, were imbricated within the PRI (Dezalay & Garth, 2002). In turn, the PRI regulated each sector of society, including education.

The PRI founded the Autonomous National University of México City (UNAM), where many of the post-Revolutionary elite earned degrees in law and urban planning (Benjamin, 2000). Instead of money coming from abroad to finance education and knowledge, the internal mechanisms of the PRI domestically funded the process of educating the up-and-coming politicians, thus insuring their loyalty to the party and México.

In the post-Revolutionary period, México was very cognizant of distancing the politics and, to a lesser degree, the economics of the country from the 'imperialist' reaches of U.S. Mexican politicians and diplomats successfully negotiated with the U.S. over issues such as the nationalization of the petroleum companies, to water and fishing rights, and immigration policy (Bilateral-Commission, 1989). I would argue that the nationalization of the Mexican economy, ISI, intense nationalism and the defense of its sovereignty created a political climate that, during the Mexican miracle, discouraged full integration with U.S. policy makers.

Dezalay and Garth (2002) argue that the 'internationalization' of the Mexican economy, and the practice of sending up and coming technocrats to earn degrees in economics from M.I.T., Harvard, and Chicago, stems not from U.S. investment in education and knowledge, as it did in the southern cone countries. Rather, the technocratic class emerged through the introduction of the importance of human rights organizations in México coupled with the 'internationalization' of the world economies a la Chicago school.

Human rights abuses became overtly salient following the 1968 student massacre at Tlatelolco (Benjamin, 2000). Human rights groups began to organize offices in México to monitor and prevent abuses in the 1970s. The Mexican state reacted to the 'foreign' presence of human rights organizations in México by

establishing the National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) (Dezelay & Garth, 2002). Many of the lawyers working in the CNDH earned degrees in international rights law from U.S. and European institutions. The neoliberal economist, "...relative newcomers to state governance in México, were initially dominated by a state elite built largely on personal relationships [who] needed to build stature and autonomy with respect to the lawyers in the state" (Dezelay & Garth, 2002, p. 39). Initially, the technopols were on the fringes of the government structure working as "technocrats" and not having direct access to power. The economic downturn of the late 1960s and 1970s, brought on by the crisis of the ISI paradigm, caused the "offspring of the existing political elite to invest in legitimate economics" (Dezelay & Garth, 2002, p. 39).

By the time the 1982 peso crisis hit México, the Lopez-Portillo administration included as finance minister, Jesus Silva Herzog, who earned a graduate degree in economics from Yale (Saade, 2003). The De La Madrid administration, held responsible for the full scale introduction of neoliberal economic policy in México, included Carlos Salinas de Gotari, with a degree from Harvard, again Jesus Silva Herzog and Gustavo Petricioli, with degrees from Yale, and Francisco Labastida Ochoa, also a U.S. trained economist (Teichman, 1992).

Teichman reveals in her essay that the de La Madrid administration was predominantly U.S. trained, yet she insists on claiming that the administration was forced by the IMF and World Bank, with considerable pressure from the U.S., to liberalize and open the economy in exchange for the bailout loans (Teichman, 1992). Minushkin (2000) argues that the different styles of financial market opening depend on the bargaining power of the country. Bargaining power can consist of natural resources, dollar denominated deposits, and geopolitics (Minushkin, 2000). Were the austerity measures required by the lending institutions more severe than other countries, and did the de La Madrid administration not have any say how the SAPs would be carried out? México's important geopolitical position and natural resources certainly gave the U.S. trained Mexican economists leverage in the negotiation in 1982 (and in 1995, the economic importance of NAFTA membership coupled with the

other factors certainly provided incentive to the U.S. treasurer to provide a \$20 billion bailout to México). The fact that México received the economic assistance, albeit with strict austerity measures, is a sign that the country had more bargaining power than other countries who have received no such aid in similar times of economic hardship.

The results of the austerity measures produced extreme hardships for the Mexican economy and population leading to the neoliberalization of the state. Cypher (2001) demonstrates that failed neoliberalism leads to the impoverishment of the masses. He writes that,

extreme poverty in México increased 73.3 percent from 1989 to 1996, with 27 percent of the Mexican population living in extreme poverty in 1996. In the first two years of the Zedillo administration, reflecting the dramatic peso crisis of 1994-1995, extreme poverty increased by 52 percent. In 1996, over 42 percent of the Mexican population was classified as living below the poverty line. In 1992, 23.6 million lived below the poverty line; in 1994, the figure was 30 million and in 1996, 40 million. In 2000, after four years of economic growth, 47 million Mexicans were in this category. (Cypher, 2001, p.39)

This is a period of neoliberalism with increased levels of the population being thrown into poverty. This coincides with the augmentation of *ambulante* in the Centro Histórico as more and more laborers sought employment in the informal sector. Even during periods of growth, the neoliberal model produced poverty. The liberalization and subsequent pauperization of the economy was not strictly the result of U.S. hegemony enforcing the wishes of the IMF and World Bank, but was caused by the collusion of Mexican technocrats, U.S. business interests, and the lending administrations. The liberalization of the economy and ensuing neoliberalization of the state and urban space led to the rise of the informal sector and *ambulante* in México City (Cueva, 2006).

#### **4.3 Loss of Hegemonic Control: The decay of the PRI and the Decentralization of**



## **the State**

The previous two sections of this chapter reinforce what Cypher's (2001) study demonstrates – that the liberalization of the Mexican economy during the 1980s and 1990s created more impoverishment among Mexicans. Even during periods of growth in the GDP, the overall population living below the poverty level increased. Largely, the results of México's neoliberal agenda negatively impacted the population.

The technopols who began the full-scale liberalization of the economy in 1982 insisted on integrating the Mexican economy with the U.S. and Canada. Soederberg refers to this process of integration as México's passive revolutions (Soederberg, 2001). She suggests that the neoliberal passive revolutions, or counter-revolutions, occurred in 1982, the year of the peso devaluation and the election of the Miguel de La Madrid administration, and in 1988, the Year of Carlos Salinas de Gotari's election and the inauguration of his pet-project, PRONASOL, The National Solidarity Program (Soederberg, 2001). According to Soederberg, the neoliberal technopols favored the ideology of the superiority of the free market over corporatist political strategies. Essentially, the neoliberal structural adjustments that the technopols carried out between 1982 and 2000 helped lead to the elimination of the corporatist state, the key element in the PRI's vapid ideology of politics. With the elimination of the corporatist state the PRI could no longer maintain its political hegemony through its policies of 'sticks and carrots'. For the Mexican political system, this signified the opening of the controlled state through decentralization.

The Mexican population began to show signs of opposition to the PRI corporatist state. The Tlatelolco massacre, 1970 guerrilla activity, intellectual movements, political opposition from the PAN (National Action Party), and the PRD (Democratic Revolutionary Party), the El Barzon peasant movement, and the Chiapas uprising demonstrate the opposition from civil society movements that questioned the *dictadura perfecta*.

After twenty years of financial crisis, made worse by neoliberal policies and structural adjustments the PRI technopols have introduced to the country, México no longer had the resources to finance the corporatist state and to continue to co-opt

the population.<sup>16</sup> The technopols continued insistence on incorporating México's economic structure with the U.S. and Canada, codified by the NAFTA (North American free Trade Agreement), also led to a certain degree of political transparency and decentralization.

Decentralization prevents the PRI from controlling all facets of Mexican political life. As state and municipal governments gain more fiscal autonomy, they are not as reliant on the federal government.<sup>17</sup> Transparency prevents the PRI from using corrupt tactics to win political office such as ballot stuffing, bribery, and outright violence. Transparency, decentralization, economic and political integration with the U.S. and Canada through the NAFTA, coupled with the pauperization of the federal budget due to twenty years of failed neoliberal policies has led to the withering away of the PRI. The Mexican State—embodied by the PRI—lost hegemonic control over the members of civil society. This paved a path not only for free-market neoliberal practices, but also for resistance, as discussed in chapter 7.

Neoliberalization and the economic and political policies implemented by governments in the global South, constitutes an aspect of cultural and economic globalization and assists in the cultural/economic production of gentrification as the neoliberalization of space in the Global South. As the above section highlights, many scholars have written on how México shifted from a state protected Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) economic policy to a classical neoliberal economic policy. The policy shift occurred as the country eventually could not compete at a global scale with the U.S. and other developed countries that enjoyed the false comparative advantage created by the Post-WWII economic policies that resulted from the Bretton Woods agreement, which subsequently led to the advent of global-neoliberalism (Alarcon & McKinley, 1992; Arnove, 1996; Arregui, 1993; Dornbusch, 1994; Minushkin, 2000; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Ros, 2000).

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<sup>16</sup> México has a saying, *Con dinero baila el perro, sin dinero tu bailas como perro*, reaffirming the carrots and sticks paradigm that has been prevalent since the Porfiriato.

<sup>17</sup> The decentralization of México's fiscal budgets deconstructs the *Ley de Herodes*.

This period of neoliberalization witnessed the privatization of public space in México City and the decentralization of economic and political power (Borja, 2001; N. G. Canclini, 2000; Davis, 1997). As decentralization occurred and industry moved to off shore manufacturing centers along the U.S.-México borderlands, México City experienced an increase in construction of buildings for financial and information services and the development of tourism (N. G. Canclini, 2000). Both the information and financial services and the tourism industry offer examples of information style economic development. Canclini states that both the financial and informational sector and tourism have

changed the urban landscape in a number of areas (for example, the transformation of the Santa Fe dump into a high-tech business center or along the Paseo de La Reforma and the Historic Downtown of the city). The festival of México City and the festival of the Historic Downtown Area, events whose goals include increasing the city's allure for tourists and turning it into an international metropolis, belong to a set of large development projects by means of which México City's current administration is redefining the city's image. (N. G. Canclini, 2000, p. 59)

The 1998-2004 administration of México City was a product of decentralization and neoliberalism. The city's budget is not sufficient to allow for the municipal government to oversee management of the built environment. The weak city government has chosen to work with private capital to decide how residents will utilize the spaces of the city.

The current revitalization program in México City is led by the municipality and a private corporation, Grupo Carso. The changes in the landscape brought on by neoliberalization and the Programa de Rescate—highlighted above by Canclini—represent the impacts of corporatism on the built environment, and the utilization of space in México City. Twenty years of neo-liberal policies in México, the privatization of national companies, and the socio-economic polarization of the population,

witnessed in the built environment in México City, set the stage for the processes and practices of roll-back neoliberalization of space as gentrification to occur. The subsequent ramification of the introduction of roll-back neoliberalization combined with the debt crisis helped stimulate the increase in ambulante and the working poor to shift to the informal economy.

#### **4.4 The Rise of the Informal Sector and Ambulante in México City in Tandem with the Neoliberal Agenda and “Roll-Back” Neoliberalization**

Under the seeming disorder of the city, wherever the city is working successfully, is a marvelous order for maintaining the safety of the street and the freedom of the city. It is a complex order. Its essence is the intricacy of sidewalk [and streets and plazas] use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes. This order is all composed of movement and change..... (Jacobs, 1961)

The largest obstacle to the ‘normalization’ of urban space – one of the key goals of the Programa de Rescate—is the removal of the ambulantes who live and work in the Centro. The ambulantes are embedded in the urban space of the Centro. They play an oppositional role to the actors implementing neoliberal policies in México, discussed in section 2, and they especially are working to thwart the realization of the Programa de Rescate’s goals to gentrify the Centro.

Tepito neighborhood is effectively controlled by the ambulante groups. While ambulante is an urban livelihood strategy that has been practiced in México City since the days of Monctezuma, it has increased exponentially during México’s neoliberal experiment. There are an estimated 30,000 ambulantes working in the Centro Histórico. In order to understand how these anti-neoliberal resistance groups emerged to become a force that is effectively resisting the neoliberalization of space in the Centro Histórico requires a background description of the socio-political reasons why ambulante is so prevalent today in México, especially in the highlands of the central part of the country where México City lies. The following section traces

the history of ambulante, explains how ambulante increased exponentially in tandem with the emergence of neoliberalism in México City, and how the ambulante groups that represent the interests behind resisting the Programa de Rescate have become so politically powerful and aim to resist the Programa in the Centro Histórico.

México City, the oldest continuously inhabited capital in North America, has supported one form or another of ambulante at least since the era of the Aztecs, if not earlier (Kandell, 1990). The practice of street vendors selling wares in the streets of towns and cities can be traced to the advent of the Tianguis, which is a Nahuatl word to describe the spontaneous informal markets of the Mexican Highlands – including México City. The Tianguis have always been “ambulatory” – in the sense that these impromptu marketplaces do not always set up in the same location. The bazaars shift and flow according to where there exists a critical mass of people in the towns and cities who demand to purchase the ambulante’s goods. The mobility and ability for street vendors to relocate according to where the demand exists to buy their wares throughout the twenty-four hour work-day is key to the successful livelihood strategies of contemporary ambulatory urban street vendors of México City – much the same as it was for the vendors in the Tianguis during the reign of Montezuma. It is precisely the urban spatial mobility throughout the Centro Histórico that the ambulantes necessitate and cherish in order to gain their sources of revenue that leads to issues centering around the contestation over urban space in the Centro vis-à-vis government officials and supporters of the neoliberal Programa de Rescate.

The ambulantes I interviewed working in the Centro Histórico stated that they preferred the livelihood strategies of ambulante over working in the formal sector, although they did identify negative aspects associated with ambulante lifestyle. The ambulantes expressed to me that the most negative aspect about ambulante came from police harassment and having to pay-off the leaders of ambulante groups, called Caciques, in order to sell their wares in the streets and plazas of the Centro Histórico. Working outside, setting your own hours and the possibility to earn more laboring as

an ambulante rather than working in the formal sector constituted the most positive aspects of ambulante. The chart below represents some of the pros and cons of ambulante as explained to me.

<b>Benefits of ambulante</b>	<b>Disadvantages of ambulante</b>
Work outside	No medical coverage
Set your own hours	Work outside
Do not pay into social security	No benefits
No taxes	Must pay off cacique
Earn more than in the formal sector	Police harassment

**Figure 7. Data collected by author in 2005**

Even though México City officials claim that it is illegal to sell goods and services in the streets of the city, there are hundreds of thousands of ambulantes found in México City with at least 30,00 ambulantes working in the Centro Histórico . This number has increased dramatically over the last twenty-five years coinciding with neoliberalization of space in the Centro.

During the Mexican Economic miracle (ISI) from the 1950s through the beginning of the Neoliberal Agenda the domestic economic policy privileged investments in urban manufacturing, primarily in and around México City, over land distribution and the encouragement and maintenance of a healthy rural economic agricultural sector (Gilbert, 2004). The ISI economic strategy helped fuel México's demographic shift from a primarily rural country, to a country where by 1970, 70% of the population lived in cities<sup>18</sup>. Between 1950 and 1980, México City attracted more migrants than any other entity in the Republic—with Monterrey and Guadalajara, two industrial urban centers found in the North and the west of the country respectively,

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<sup>18</sup> currently, México, and indeed most of Latin America, is more urban than the United States – however, the urban question begs a clear definition across borders about what is considered a city

following behind the Federal District (Ward, 1998). The logic behind organizing the ISI model around large cities, and México City was the largest city in the nation, centered on the “economies of scale” logic that was thought to be conducive to the rapid growth of enterprise. Economic planners believed that what was needed to fuel the economic miracle of the golden decades (1950-1980) of Mexican economic growth was a pool of educated labor and managerial talent; a concentration of investment capital; a large scale domestic market for industrial and consumer products; transportation and communication facilities; and geographic compactness that made for a more efficient use of energy; as well as water and sewage networks (Ward, 1998). México City offered all of these required ingredients to fuel the Mexican Miracle. While employment grew during the golden decades it initially kept up pace with the inward migration of constantly newly arriving rural migrants (Ward, 1998). Once the economies began to slow in the late 1970s, coupled with exponential increases in migration, the economies of scale in México City collapsed with the advent of wide spread unemployment and underemployment (Gwynne & Kay, 2004). Thus, there was a subsequent emergence of large scale ambulante with economic production shifting to the informal sector, which grew in tandem with the move to the neoliberal experiment (Bebbington, 2004).

Urban primacy, dating back to the colonial era, provides the reasons why México City held all of the necessary components in order to foster and facilitate the Mexican Miracle. All roads lead to México City. In order to get anything done in all corners of the Mexican Republic – from petitioning a business license to receiving a college diploma – entails making a pilgrimage to the institutions that, until very recently<sup>19</sup>, only resided in México City. This centralized bureaucracy created many well-paying white collar jobs in the government sector in México City that disappeared with the advent of the neoliberalization of the country beginning in 1981.

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<sup>19</sup> through the neoliberalization of the state, decentralization and transparency, some of the traditional government offices that have always been located in the capital are beginning to be distributed among the provinces

With the collapse of the Mexican Miracle in 1982 the country witnessed a further erosion of employment security with the introduction of Structural Adjustment Policies implemented in tandem with the neoliberalization of the countries political and economic policies. The economic crisis brought on by the end of government subsidies related to the ISI model led to a loss of jobs for City inhabitants who labored in the industrial and distribution sectors of the economy. The introduction of neoliberal polices also led to the disintegration of well paid jobs that were previously reliable such as those found in the government sector. Part of the introduction of neoliberal processes and practices, especially in the first phase of “roll-back” neoliberalization, is in the re-creation of a hyper-efficient government sector that aims to down-size the government and make the government lean and pliable to the market. In México, government agencies employed large segments of the educated populations providing incomes to the burgeoning middle-class communities of the golden decades. With the elimination of high paying government jobs, in the form of different commissions, to even maintenance, a huge swath of middle class income earners were wiped out from México City’s economic picture. The eradication of high paying jobs in the manufacturing sector coupled with the elimination of government pay-roll jobs reverberated across the tertiary components of the economy: service sector employees were also laid-off as there were no longer the demands to keep them employed; construction diminished; people could no longer afford to send their children to University; and moreover for this study, the México City federal government could no longer pay for the maintenance of the city. Garbage collection became privatized yet less efficient. Street cleaning became unheard of. The maintenance of park and government buildings fell by the way side. This general deterioration of the urban build environment coincided with the augmentation of street vendors in the city center – thus transforming the way the city looked and how the public spaces of the city functioned. With a lack of jobs in the former sector coupled with declining salaries amongst the population able to purchase goods at the new import stores facilitated by the opening of the economy under the auspices of neoliberalization, laborers flocked to become ambulantes and



working poor consumers purchased the cheaper pirated wares in the informal economy.

A major component of the municipal policy, the Programa de Rescate, consists of taking back the streets and plazas of the Centro Histórico from the ambulante who work and live there in order to increase tourism and investment in México City and to draw the rich and upper classes to live in the Centro. Rescate means to save or recover something or someone. The pioneeristic language of the municipal plan goes beyond its title. The document employs aggressive language where it stresses the goals for the “normalization” of space, and the recuperation—or retrieval—of space. The ambulantes who live and work in the Centro Histórico have emerged as the largest resistance groups that are attempting to frustrate the neoliberal urban Programa de Rescate.

Together the above four sections introduce a necessary and relevant story of México’s political economy: from colonialism to independence; through ISI to neoliberal governance; and the intensification and escalation of ambulante. Above, I link these narratives to the urban morphology of the city and relate them to the City’s historical and contemporary social geography such that there is a political and economic socio-spatial context for the following chapters.

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## **CHAPTER 5: THE PROGRAMA DE RESCATE: PUBLIC/PRIVATE PILOTED GENTRIFICATION AND THE RECONFIGURATION OF A WORKING-POOR URBAN SPACE**

In this chapter, the first section tells the story behind the Programa de Rescate and recounts the codification of the Centro Histórico as a place worth ‘rescuing’ that ushered in the neoliberal urban policy. In section 5.2, I provide a discussion on the execution strategies of the Programa. In 5.3, I outline the investment strategies involved in paying for the Programa. I finish this chapter with section 5.4, a description of normalizing the Alameda and its subsequent rescue. The chapter details ways in which the Programa exemplifies a coalescence of gentrification and neoliberalization that is distinctive to contemporary México City.

### **5.1. The Historical perspective of the Programa de Rescate**

Let me begin this chapter by presenting how the Centro Histórico became codified as an area within México City worth “rescuing”. In April 1980, the Federal Government issued a decree declaring 668 blocks in the city center as an historical monument, thereby establishing the formal boundaries of the Historic Center. The area’s importance was underscored by its 1987 decision by The World Heritage Committee (a branch of UNESCO) to designate the Centro Histórico as a humankind heritage protected zone. UNESCO recognition helped bring much needed investment to an area that had been badly damaged by a devastating earthquake in 1985 (PGDDF 2001). At the municipal scale, in 1990 the Government of the Federal District (GFD) established a trust fund for urban development in the Center, with the goal of promoting and financing its restoration, protection, and conservation. In 1997 the mayorship in México City changed from a federally-appointed to a popularly-elected position (Cross, 1998; Ward, 1998), decentralizing political control of the District and directly setting the stage for the Programa de Rescate (Babb, 2001; Middlebrook & Zepeda, 2002). The post-2000 political climate in México City was further influenced by the election of President Fox and the collapse of the Partido Revolucionario

Institucional (PRI), which ended 70 years of the party's control of the federal government – replete with its tight grip over México City (Ribeiro & Telles, 2000).

The Programa de Rescate represents a paradigm shift in Mexican urban policy and presents an innovative opportunity to study urban socio-spatial transformation in what Davis (1994) calls the 'crown jewel' of Latin America. The Programa de Rescate arose out of an agreement among federal and city authorities, together with private investors, in August 2001. Decentralization of the federal government and the emergence of more local autonomy is one of the unintended consequences of neoliberalism in México (Klak, 2004). Due to the rapid neoliberalization of the state in México—heightened by the mayor of México City becoming an elected position en lieu of an position appointed by the Federal Government— the Government of the Federal District now enjoys more autonomy in urban planning and design and fiscal management that at any time in modern Mexican history (Carole, 2008). This new 'relationship' or partnership between México City and the Federal Government has allowed for the crafting and implementation of the Programa de Rescate, which is a municipal, neoliberal, gentrification policy.

The Programa de Rescate aims to renovate an area three times the size of the historic districts of Lima, Barcelona, or Madrid (Paul, 2002). Its mandate covers an area of 9 square kilometers, covering 668 blocks with 1,500 buildings, including all of the sixteenth and seventeenth century colonial palaces still remaining from the vice regal era , 196 civic monuments, 67 religious monuments, 53 museums, 68 plazas, 19 cloisters, 28 fountains and 12 public murals (PGDDF 2001). Already the Programa de Rescate has renovated 13 streets and 615 buildings, initiating the transformation of the buildings and public spaces of México City's Historic Center from a working-class stronghold into an aesthetically and socially more appealing upper middle class residential area and a promising site for local and global investors (Cardoso & Ramirez, 2003; Recuperacion, 2001). The urban transformation of the Historic Center under the Programa de Rescate has cost over \$1 billion to date and has been implemented in three stages over a six year period (PGDDF 2001).

What makes the Programa de Rescate so remarkable is the unusual alliance between its two champions, one a popular leftwing mayor, Manuel Lopez Obrador, from the Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD), who won his election on an explicitly anti-neoliberal platform. The other is the billionaire investor Carlos Slim Helú<sup>20</sup>, CEO of Grupo Carso S.A., a multinational corporation with investments in three continents, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Teléfonos de México (TELMEX). That a leftwing populist like Lopez Obrador would so vigorously seek out and solidify a cooperative agreement with Slim, a multinational, neoliberal capitalist, to promote and implement the Programa de Rescate, clearly represents a new paradigm of left wing government- and capital-piloted gentrification. Compared to other global cities that have forged municipal and corporate alliances for urban redevelopment, such as those in New York City under the leadership of Rudolf Giuliani (Hackworth, 2002; R. G. Smith, 2003), the pairing of Lopez Obrador and Slim is indeed a strange mix. This unlikely partnership has implications for the pervasiveness of neoliberalism.

The Centro Histórico has been promoted by the federal and city governments in different stages in different points of history. The earliest time – at least as recorded in the modern period – that promoters first attempted to protect the urban built environment of the Centro occurred during the phase of nation building and the social construction of a cohesive Mexican national identity. This first phase relied heavily on re-theorizing the Mestizo history under the guise of the *raza cosmica*, beginning in the 1930s (Piccato, 2001). The Federal government took the initiative to preserve the urban built environment of the Centro in 1980 by declaring the present boundaries of the “Centro Histórico”; however, this jurisdictional move did not designate any funding for the preservation or restoration of the 1600 historical palaces located in the Centro. Nor did the 1980 Federal decree establish any specific government agency to oversee the maintenance and refurbishment of the Centro.

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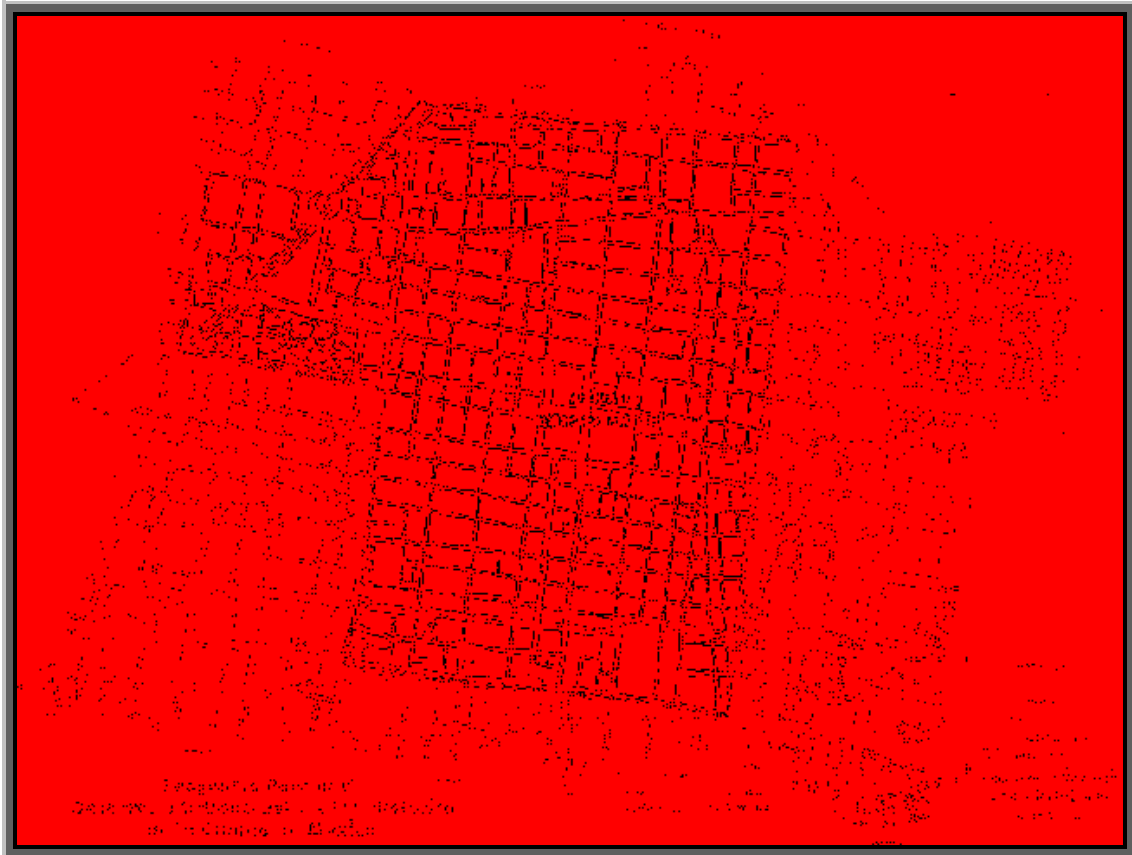
<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Slim made his fortune in the early 1980s through his cozy relationship with De La Madrid and Salinas de Gotari buying up national industries for a pittance and then re-selling them in the international market. . TELMEX was one such business.

The main actor to energetically begin the promotion and restoration of the Centro emerged at the beginning of the roll-back neoliberal period. He argued that a site so charged with national symbolism, replete with grandiose architecture that represents the birth of the Mexican people – a combination of Aztec culture with European Spaniards – required stewardship and guidance in order to “rescue” the built environment from further deterioration and neglect that was occurring during the phase of roll-back neoliberalization that began in México in the early 1980s. Ironically, this first savior of the urban jewel known as the Ciudad de los Palacios – the city of palaces – could not trace his ancestry back to Cuauhtémoc or Netzahualcoyotl, or even to the pig stickers such as Cortez or Bernal Diaz who had abandoned the harsh environs of Extremadura in Southern Spain to successfully seek their fortunes in the new world. René Coulomb, the architect of the first trust fund for the preservation of the Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México, hailed from France. Coulomb is an urban sociologist who came to México in the 1960s to conduct fieldwork for his doctoral degree and then never left. He became a naturalized citizen in 1990, a rarity in xenophobic México that seldom will allow for such a move. He currently resides in the Centro. While he no longer has any affiliation with the Fideicomiso – representing the fractured politics that are so common at many different levels of Mexican public life – he still is a champion for the preservation and restoration of the Centro, what he refers to as the “urban patrimony” of México’s Corazón.

In the Iglesia de San Francisco, a church not far from the famous Torre Latinoamericano on Calle 16 de Septiembre just behind the Palacio de Los Azulejos, René Coulomb first presented his plan to a delegation of politicians, businessman, artists and journalists on how to salvage the urban built environment of the Centro Histórico from further neoliberal decay. Coulomb organized a dinner in the main cloister of the church to promote a program that would be jointly funded by the federal and local governments as well as private investors. The San Francisco Church represented a symbolic location to hold such a fund-raiser/organizational event as the Baroque edifice was in disrepair and in desperate need of investment, thus embodying many of the buildings that were thrown into disrepair in the Centro during the era of roll-back neoliberalization. This event, which Coulomb organized in

1982, signaled the birth of an association whose main purpose was the preservation and restoration of the Centro, something that had not occurred until Coulomb's initiative. Coulomb wished to take further steps to protect and refurbish the Centro than the Federal Government had done with the 1980 decree for the Centro's preservation. Coulomb believed that "the organization of an independent body to direct the restoration and preservation of the Centro will interrupt the social and physical deterioration of this historic place and will lead to the conservation of the magnificent monuments, streets and plazas found in the México City's Centro Histórico". However, he goes on to add that, "the declaration of an entity to guide the conservation of the Centro Histórico as a pure monumental zone did not go far enough so there would emerge an integrated project that would allow for the full social and physical rehabilitation and restoration of the Centro Histórico". Coulomb was right in this sense as the group that he helped form in 1980 had little fiscal control over how to guide the refurbishment of the Centro as the plethora of government and non government agencies working in the Centro led to a set of fragmented policies producing few tangible physical results in their efforts to protect the urban built environment of the Centro.

One aspect of Coulomb's work that has impacted the present day Programa de Rescate is the categorization of the Centro Histórico into two distinct areas. The Centro Histórico was divided into two perimeters or zones: perimeter A consisted of the oldest palaces and buildings holding the most 'cultural value'. This zone of the Centro incorporates the pre-Hispanic part of the city and its colonial extension up until the era of independence. Perimeter A harbors many examples of colonial architecture. Religious buildings and civil and administration structures built between the 16th and 19th century are categorized as historic and are protected within perimeter A. Perimeter B includes monuments and residential housing dating from the 18th century of located in the urban tract prior to the beginning of the Revolution in 1910. I highlight these two geographic categorizations of 'historic space' as the order in which the Programa de Rescate has been implemented can be read along the social-spatial divisions of perimeter A and B.



**Figure 8. Map of Centro Histórico delineating Perimeter A (in green) and Perimeter B (in White).  
Courtesy of the Fideicomiso**

Coulomb's efforts did not reap the benefits he desired: to ensure the preservation of the architectural beauty and the socio-economic improvement of the Centro Histórico. However, it did put into motion a set of policies aimed at the renovation and conservation of the Centro, with the most institutionally inclusive of the programs emerging with the creation of the Programa de Rescate del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México in August of 2001. Other plans to promote the upkeep of the Centro, such as Hecha mi una manita that lasted from 1991-1994 under the Camacho Solís administration, still suffered from political and fiscal fragmentation. In 2001 the political and economic climate coalesced after nearly 20 years of the implementation of neoliberal policies in México<sup>21</sup>. This coalescence

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<sup>21</sup> Political transparency is one of the unintended consequences of the implementation of neoliberal policies in México (Gwynne & Kay, 2004). This transparency, coupled with governmental decentralization, allowed for the GFD to

allowed for the formation of the politically and fiscally transparent Programa de Rescate— a form of corporate-government piloted urban renovation-cum-gentrification occurring under the auspices of roll-out neoliberalization.

Today the Programa de Rescate is a municipal policy of the Government of the Federal District that is primarily funded by the Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico – the trust fund for the Centro Histórico (hither forth, the Fideicomiso). Adrian Pandal, the director of the Fideicomiso, describes the goals of the Fideicomiso as,

first we have a social program of education, health, micro credit program and cultural activities, there is also a link between other institutions and the Fideicomiso, we have a group of volunteers that work in the area, and they are the ones that feed us the information about the projects of historic change. One group of people – made up of entire families or individual persons, we either help them ourselves or we channel them to the proper institutions to gain the support that they need. If we do not do it we get them to the people that can help them.

The social improvement aspect that the role the Fideicomiso plays in the Centro reflects Slim’s ambition to incorporate social programs that will function in tandem with changes to the built environment of the Centro. In the words of Pandal, “we have people in the area that are the contacts with the community. We communicate to them what kind of programs we have and what the Foundation can do for them. They are our contacts in the community. They go to the Foundation (Fundación del Centro Histórico) to get help from the offices .” This “social ambience” that Slim wants to promote the Centro also includes supporting nutrition programs for poor families and single pregnant women, and child health programs. Slim’s health care and “social ambience” goals function as mechanisms to create a caring façade of neoliberalism that the Programa de Rescate can tout in regards to critics who believe that Slim intends to control the whole of the Centro and that he

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supervise the fiscal implementation of the Programa through the Fideicomiso rather than have the funds flow through the federal coffers.



has political aspirations to control not just the city , but the country of México (Amador, 2008).

In 2001 the then president of México, Vicente Fox, and the populist mayor of México City, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, created a Consulting Council for the Rescate del Centro Histórico (Consejo Consultivo). The council consisted of Carlos Slim; the Cardinal of México City, Norberto Rivera; the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church, Antonio Chedraui; the historian Guillermo Tovar y de Teresa; the director of the influential newspaper, El Universal<sup>22</sup>, Juan Francisco Ealy Ortiz; and the renowned journalists Ricardo Rocha and Jacobo Zabudovsky .

I highlight this eclectic list of council members in charge of administering the “rescue” of the Centro as it speaks to the vernacular form of urban renewal-cum-gentrification occurring on the ground in México City. Although the pattern of investment and government cooperation reflects trends in 3rd wave corporate/state piloted gentrification found in many urban centers in the global North, the inclusion of religious and social leaders to decide how the socio-spatial urban restoration and preservation of the Centro should occur shows a uniquely México City gentrification phenomenon – and indeed has impacted how the actors involved have chosen to implemented the Programa de Rescate.

## **5.2 The execution of the Programa de Rescate**

The first stage of the Programa consisted of replacing water and sewer infrastructure, razing buildings damaged in the 1985 earthquake in the Historic Center, and developing a commercial corridor to connect the Zócalo to the Paseo de La Reforma business district (see Figure 3).

The Programa de Rescate plans to improve tourist facilities during the second phase. This includes installing modern hotels, a visitor’s center, and constructing Latin America’s tallest skyscraper. The third stage of the Programa de Rescate involves improving and renovating buildings and housing into multi-use complexes consisting of retail shops, restaurants and up-scale residences. In order to meet the

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<sup>22</sup> El Universal is a right of center newspaper published daily in México City that is in part owned by Slim.

third stage of the Programa de Rescate, the GFD announced plans calling for the uniformización, or ‘normalizing’ of the Historic Center (PGDDF 2001). In order to normalize the urban space of the Centro this third stage requires the removal of the 30,000 ambulantes who sell their wares in the Centro. The Programa also calls for increasing the number of green areas, park benches, public garbage bins, public phone booths, an anti-graffiti campaign, and augmenting security in the Historic Center. As of my last visit to the Centro Histórico in February of 2006, none of these stages are complete. Rather than implementing the Programa systematically, according to the three-staged plan, the GFD has instead renovated streets and buildings where there has been the least resistance, policing areas that have the largest concentration of tourists, and not applying the Programa in residential areas within the Centro where resistance is greatest to the program—thus demonstrating how the resistance to the Programa dictates how gentrification occurs in México City. Each stage is overlapping with other municipal programs that have been twinned with the Programa de Rescate. Each stage of the Programa’s implementation occurs where the least resistance is met by ambulantes.

The Programa de Rescate forms part of a larger set of strategies concerned with the image of México City. In the last decade, key institutions in México City have developed strategies to promote the city to both local and global audiences. Key to this promotion is the slogan, La Ciudad de la Esperanza. The promotion of the capital as the “City of Hope” aims to overcome bad publicity and to newly represent the city as a good, safe place to visit, live, and invest (Sanchez, 2003). The backers of the Programa de Rescate are attempting to re-invent urban space in México City by developing a nostalgic, imagined, ‘regal’ colonial history, which will be materialized through the renovation of colonial buildings, streets, and plazas in the Historic Center. Below is an image of a street filled with the practices of ambulante juxtaposed with an image of the Cinco de Mayo Street that has been renovated and restored to its colonial regalia, albeit with McDonald’s sponsorship (photos by author).

The first image displays the appropriation of urban space by the ambulantes. The streets, sidewalks, and plaza function as an outdoor bazaar. The ambulantes are at work selling their wares while their costumers congregate around the stalls, talk, eat street-food, and shop. The streetscape replete with ambulantes is a site of economic production and consumption where the ambulantes earn their livelihood while the working poor are able to make purchases of necessary goods that they would not be able to afford in department stores. While the 30,000 ambulantes that live and work in the Centro Histórico are not uniformly united, as there exist multiple ambulante groups that work in the Centro, their collective act of street vending and appropriation of urban space reframes this locale. The activities along the streets have multiple functions – notice that there are also non-ambulante, or, formal (as opposed to the informality of ambulantaje) businesses that are found along the street, thus representing the functional dualism that exists in México City in regards to street vendors and shop owners.



**Figure 9. Calle Brasil filled with informal economic activities. Photo by author**



**Figure 10. McDonald's-Sponsored Trash Bin amidst Colonial-style Cinco de Mayo Street**

In the second image, the Programa de Rescate has “rescued” the city area. The Programa has normalized this street through the removal of ambulanteaje. The

façades of the church and palaces have been refurbished and the street now enjoys a trash bin. U.S. tourists find the second streetscape to be more inviting for observing the colonial architecture. The street filled with ambulantes and their working poor patrons startled the U.S. tourists I spoke with as they perceived the street-scene to be dangerous due to so many people clustered in one spot (yes, you can get pick-pocketed along these busy streets, but you are not likely to get knifed or robbed in broad daylight). Even U.S. and European college students living and studying in México City expressed similar reservations about streets filled with ambulante and preferred the 'recovered' and normalized streets and plazas of the Centro.

From the above examples I infer that the implementation of the Programa occurs in a systematic strategy where there is the least resistance to the Programa – in the perimeter A zone that harbors the majority of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century colonial architecture. Next I submit the funding strategies behind the Programa's implementation.

### **5.3 Investment strategies: paying for the Programa de Rescate**

The majority of the funds that are used to “rescue” the Centro stem from Carlos Slim's company, called Grupo Carso. The Fideicomiso administers the funds for the recovery of the Centro. The Federal-Municipal Council for the reconstruction of the Centro Histórico oversees the on-the-ground projects. According to the Director of the Fideicomiso, Adrian Pandal, who also is a personal assistant to Carlos Slim,

many of the funds come from TELMEX (TELMEX is Slim's corporation that later became Grupo Carso), all of the funding originally came from TELMEX, now the Fideicomiso is an independent organization with the goal of recuperating, and recovering the historic center – with the idea of encouraging people to live and work in the historic center, that they have proper living conditions and proper health care conditions, good job opportunities, education.

Here, Pandal is referring to efforts being made to encourage the targeted population to move to the Centro while openly stating that Carso is sporting the bill for this restoration program.

In the early stages of the Programa Slim, the EU, and UNESCO solely provided funding for the gentrification of the Centro. Five years after the implementation of the Programa de Rescate, individual investors began to emerge with small scale projects, such as bars, restaurants and galleries, in the Centro.

The Programa de Rescate is a municipal policy that aims to renovate/gentrify the Centro Histórico at three tiers: the Fideicomiso, which is the trust fund; the Fundación, or private real-estate company; and the Government of the Federal District (GDF) that has all of the responsibilities that a city government would have but also oversees how the municipal policy is implemented. (see Table).

Entity	Function	Funding
Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico de La Ciudad de México	Private Trust fund of the Centro Histórico	Primarily Grupo Carso
Fundación del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México	Private real estate agency that is a branch of the Fideicomiso	Grupo Carso, Direct investors
Gobierno del Distrito Federal (GD.F.)	Implements and Oversees the municipal policy: Programa de Rescate del Centro Histórico	The GD.F. is funded at multiple scales, but the money it funnels to oversee the Programa comes from Grupo Carso, the EU, Unesco, and private investors

**Table 5. Organizations that supervise the implementation of the Programa de Rescate. Compiled by author**

Adrian Pandal, the director of the Fideicomiso explains that

there are two things—which are: there is the private company called the Fundación Centro Histórico that has acquired over 75 buildings and those buildings are being renewed – and we have created more than 5,000 jobs in the area and have created more than 1,000 apartments in the area – and brought in restaurants bars etc. That is the private side.

Then there is the Fideicomiso: it was created to work with the people in the area. So we have created hospitals we have equipped hospitals with some things they do not have, we make many cultural events. There are two instruments, the Fideicomiso, which is to improve the social economic level of the people, and the Fundación, which is also private, but functions to recuperate the private building and make them more alive, with better use.

Both of these entities described by Pandal were created and funded under the auspices of Grupo Carso. However, in order to see the continuation of these programs from one sexenio<sup>23</sup> to the next they have been linked, indeed monitored or overseen, by the GD.F. (Government of the Federal District).

The Fundación is playing the role of the private gentrifier through the guise of a private company cloaked in governmentality. Pandal explains how,

the Fundación is a real-estate company, so there are two instruments that we have in order to improve the area - the Fundación alone is only working - we have scholarships and micro credit programs, which give you management and legal marketing for small businesses that want to improve - so that your businesses goes better, or to start your business, and a group of psychiatrist that can help you if you have been abused or have a drug addiction. We offer many different programs through the two entities.

For Grupo Carso, the image of improvement not only had to be those of the facades of the buildings in the Centro, the restoration of the Centro also carries with it a modernization trope. Slim wants to modernize the Centro Histórico - to bring it up to par with first world settings - Slim's initiative is to accomplish the modernization trajectory of the Centro (if not all of México), under the rubric of a neoliberal paradigm .

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<sup>23</sup> A sexenio is the six year terms of office that federally elected and municipally elected officials serve in México

The inter-workings of the urban renewal program in México City, which consist of paying for and implementing the Programa, are opaquely convoluted in a way that is consistent with the Mexican political traditions (T. Barry, 1994). Juxtaposed to the baroque inter-workings of the Programa, the organization for funding and implementing the Programa is being carried out under the guise of neoliberal transparency; thus, demonstrating how there are multiple neoliberalisms at work each functioning separately around the globe. The chart below highlights objectives of the Programa.

<b>Objectives of the Programa de Rescate</b>	<b>Implementation of Objectives</b>
<i>Improve the built environment of the Centro Histórico</i>	The renovation of urban infrastructure (replacement of sewage lines, water lines); The improvement of roads and pedestrian walkways; Renovation of Historical Buildings; Construction of Parking Structures
<i>Increase Security in the Centro Histórico</i>	The sanitation and increased safety of streets; CCTV systems; Special Centro Histórico Police Force funded by Fideicomiso; New urban lighting systems (overlaps with “built environment” category—but is implemented in the name of safety)
<i>Encourage Economic Reorganization in the Centro Histórico</i>	The consolidation and maintenance of economic activities (retail, restaurants, bars, clubs, discos); The normalizing of urban space through the removal of "ambulante"
<i>Increase Tourism in the Centro Histórico</i>	Bilingual Tourist Police; An increase in Tourism Sights (tourist buses etc.)
<i>Increase residential gentrification in the Centro</i>	Encouraging the targeted upper-class capitalino residents to Move to the Centro

**Table 6. Source: Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México. Compiled by autor**

Even for the director of the Fideicomiso, Adrian Pandal, the inter-workings of the fiscal organization of the program are convoluted. Pandal explains,

in the project of recuperating the historic center there is an executive committee consisting of 30% of the local government, 30% from federal



government, and 40% of social society, all the planning is done in these executive committees, and Fundación is a private foundation that works in the same direction in the health and social services that are needed. So it is a parallel work that we are working in the same direction, even the federal government has given money, grants for projects in the historic center – the money goes through the Fideicomiso del Centro Histórico, not the Fundación.

The initial investments in the built environment of the Centro Histórico have been in the perimeter A zone, which houses the majority of the historic palaces and religious buildings. Perimeter A harbors fewer residential buildings so there has been less need in the A zone to conduct expropriations of property and relocate residents – aside from the reconfiguration of housing stock along the south flank of the Alameda into upscale tourist facilities – and therefore less resistance to socio-spatial change, except the resistance from the well organized ambulante groups.

One way the Fideicomiso offers fiscal incentives to would-be investors and gentrifiers is through investment tax initiatives to promote the rehabilitation, construction and maintenance of properties in the Centro. According to Liliana Cepeda, the current director of Fundación, “the Federal Government agrees to offer 100% renters’ tax reduction and a forty percent rental reduction in the transfer of properties in the Centro”. Cepeda outlined how through the Federal Government’s tax incentives the Fideicomiso wants to “offer a window of opportunity to investors to purchase older buildings and refurbish them in ways that will attract people to live in the Centro” Aside from the huge incentives mentioned above, new property investors in the Centro Histórico will not be required to pay property tax for the first ten years of property ownership and will be given major discounts in what they will pay for water, which is paid to the federal water company, CONAGUA. While new owners will also be given major discounts on investment in regards to local taxes paid to the Federal Government property protection service, called Catastro.

The implementation of the Programa de Rescate since August of 2001 has attempted to provide a continuity of other urban renewal programs that had been

put into practice by previous administrations. The continuity of urban policies, or other governmental policies from the three tiered Mexican Political system for that matter, from one administration, or sexenio, to the next has been something that has never functioned successfully at the municipal, state or federal level in administration. This phenomenon of inconsistency from one sexenio to the next perhaps occurs because the election laws allow for the president, governor or mayor only to serve one six year term. The following administration often wants to make its own legend and seeks to graft as much as possible during the administration's tenure as it may be the only time within the politician's life that she or he will be in a position to embezzle funds. This is a phenomenon that perhaps can be traced back to the colonial period when Viceroy and Corregidores were sent by the Spanish crown in six year segments to oversee the administration of the colonies. Since the Iberian born colonial officials knew that their time in the New World was counted, or their days were numbered, the administrators often attempted to bilk as much money from their daily activities as possible. Not to privilege historical determinism, although it becomes difficult to consider how contemporary processes occur outside of a historical context (M Foucault, 1986), but the non continuity of administrative policies from one sexenio to the next at the three levels of the Mexican political system may be a product of México's colonial legacy.

In an attempt to avoid the reproduction of non fluidity-cum-continuity between and among sexenios, which is one particularly neoliberal aspect of the Programa de Rescate, the Fideicomiso tried to achieve the stability of the Programa from one administration to the next. Part of this effort is the Programa's attempt to continue with, or rather incorporate, the Proyecto Alameda, which consists of the refurbishment of the Alameda Park and the conversion of the surrounding residential areas of the park in to upscale restaurants and hotels. This part of the Programa has been practically achieved; save the normalization of the Alameda's green space through the complete containment and removal of the ambulantes.

Many of the buildings that flanked the south side of the Alameda were low income residential buildings badly damaged by the 1985 earthquake and still in

disrepair by 2001, the year the Programa got off the ground. However, although the buildings were structurally unsafe, many of the structures flanking the south side of the park still functioned as homes for the working poor residents of the Centro. The successful continuity of the restoration of the Alameda Park under the Programa de Rescate meant the loss of homes for the working poor in this area.

#### **5.4 'Normalizing' The Alameda**

The urban renovation of the section of the Centro adjacent to the Alameda is hailed by the Fideicomiso as one of the great successes of the program—and provides a clear demonstration of the normalization of urban space under the Programa de Rescate . Through the tax incentives, the Fideicomiso, in cahoots with the Government of the Federal District, were able to attract large scale investors to the area. Aside from the moneys invested by Grupo Carso, Slim's corporation that is practically carrying the Fideicomiso, the largest investments in the Centro Histórico that have led to the most far-reaching socio-spatial urban transformations have come from the Sheraton Corporation. The Sheraton corporation, with its main offices in Canada, worked directly with the Government of the Federal District, the Fideicomiso and a local México City architectural firm called, Pascal Arquitectos. The Sheraton Centro Histórico Hotel was the first new edifice constructed in the perimeter A zone of the Centro Histórico in the last forty years and the first renovation in the Alameda to occur since the seismic activities of 1985. The impressive hotel holds multiple restaurants, bars, and an event-cum-business center that can hold more than 5,000 people. The hotel complex occupies nearly half the southern flank of the Alameda Park: clearly three to four large city blocks. The hotel displays a postmodern flare, which is a major break from the historical architecture of the area. The construction of a post-modern edifice along the Alameda provides architectural fluidity to the imaginative postmodern buildings found along the Avenue Reforma that connects the Centro Histórico with the financial district of the Zona Rosa. According to Pandal, the director of the Fideicomiso, the building was financed entirely by Sheraton at a cost of more than 50 million dollars.

The residential buildings adjoining the Alameda Park were razed in order to make room and facilitate the construction of the mega-hotel. The Government of the Federal District expropriated the buildings, and since no property taxes had been paid on the buildings in years, the owners did not come forth and no redemption payment was required to be paid by the GFD. The residents that were still living in the buildings when demolition began had not paid rents in decades, if ever. They did not have leases and could not appeal for ownership under the vacant building laws of México City as they had been pirating both electricity and water: a common enough practice among shanty dwellers but something I did not realize occurred in city centers until conducting research for this dissertation<sup>24</sup>. According to Alfonso Hernandez, the director of Centro de Estudios Tepiteños, the residents who lost their homes along the Alameda in order to normalize the urban space and make room for the construction of the mega-hotel, with prohibitive tariffs for most local residents, were not paid any money for their inconvenience nor were they relocated by the authorities (the Fideicomiso or the GDF) to new housing.

The example of the construction of the Sheraton Centro Histórico provides a very lucid example of how global actors and capital are actively transforming the city's urban space: the neoliberalization of space represented by urban renewal-cum-gentrification. The example of the Sheraton shows that the practices of neoliberalization and the neoliberalization of space are inseparable in Latin America from what is being grouped as “Elitificación”, or gentrification as it is called in English. The removal of residents and the construction of a mega-palace-cum-playground for the mega-wealthy shows that gentrification in México City does not only require the occupation of renovated properties by a new residential population, but also involves the rehabilitation of deteriorated properties and a change in the social group using the property.

The continuation of the Proyecto Alameda under the rubric of the Programa de Rescate demonstrates the fluidity of neoliberal urban gentrification in México City

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<sup>24</sup> Indeed, this is very common in the Tepito and Merced neighborhoods further to the north of the Centro in the perimeter B zone.

from one sexenio to the next. The example of the continuation of urban policies through various sexenios demonstrates the neoliberalization of urban and economic policies in México, as well as México City. The implementation of the practices and policies of roll-out neoliberalization in the current political climate in México, as exemplified by the tax incentives given to global capitalist to invest in the Centro, the razing of buildings that had been neglected since the era of roll-back neoliberalization, and the 'normalization' of space through the disciplining and removal of the residents and ambulantes who sell their wares in the park without social economic aid or housing help from the authorities, clearly demonstrates the material effects in the built environment of the city in relation to the implementation of roll-out and roll-back neoliberal policies by the state, often using funds by major capitalists as Slim or the Sheraton group.

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## CHAPTER 6: MANIFESTATION OF GENTRIFICATION IN MÉXICO CITY

In this chapter my purpose is to describe particular ways in which the objectives of the Programa de Rescate are materialized in the Centro to gentrify and convert the Centro into a site that is desirable for elites to live and invest. The Programa seeks to catapult México City into Global City status with the goal of creating an ambience that will attract direct foreign investment and international tourism (Federal, 2002). I begin the chapter VI.A. discussing geography of fear. Fear functions as a mechanism that is preventing the Programa from realizing its goals. This geography of fear prompted the Governor of the Federal District (GFD) to contract the Giuliani Group to conduct a study on crime prevention in the Centro. I discuss language and the use of CCTVs and panic buttons that have been put in place in the Centro to assuage the perception of danger in the Centro and to alleviate the geography of fear with the hopes of luring the targeted population to the Centro. In section 6.2, I describe how the Programa employs museums, cultural events, festivals, and trendy restaurants and bars to meet the goals of gentrifying the Centro. The Leysian attempts at gentrification in the Centro are not funded by private capital and thus differ from similar actions in the global north. In the Centro capital investment in the upscale bars and restaurants—a la Leysian gentrification—are funded by the public entity Fideicomiso (through Grupo Carso). The Festivals are activities intertwined with the geography of fear. They function as attempts to frame the Centro as a safe place for the elites to play and thwart the perception of fear held by the elites of the Centro. In Section 6.3, I discuss the Fideicomiso's efforts to attract residential gentrification in the Centro. I submit a narrative on how the Fideicomiso attempts to generate more residential forms of gentrification through the unusual transient, "bureaucratic gentrification" of politicians purchasing a *piéd à terre* in the Centro where they stay throughout the week while conducting their state duties. I describe how the state and transnational Grupo Carso are relocating their offices to the Centro as an attempt to attract white collar workers to live in the Centro. I also provide a description of the closest example of 'house by house' gentrification my research led me to in the Centro. In section 6.4, I submit a narrative of white

elephants and the Programa. Here I describe the attempts of the Programa to construct the largest skyscraper in Latin American—an early goal of the Programa that has not been realized due to the resistance that community organizers raised against the construction of the skyscraper. This discussion on the resistance to the skyscraper comes as a precursor to chapter 7 concerning resistance to the Programa. It also points to the resistance of elites in the Centro: not all elites are complicit with the Programa. I finish this chapter in section 6.5 with a reflection on combined effects detailed in the previous four sections of this chapter. I discuss the socio-spatial reconfiguration in the Centro before and after an area has been ‘normalized’. Despite the use of CCTVs, panic buttons, refurbished palaces, cultural events, the establishment of up-scale bars and restaurants, skyscrapers and the like, large-scale residential gentrification still has not occurred. Nonetheless, there have been socio-spatial changes in the Centro through the shifts in classes using urban space.

### **6.1 Geography of fear**

A geography of fear (Madge, 1997)<sup>25</sup> is prevalent in Latin American urban centers and is especially noticeable in México City (Radcliffe, 2007). The geography of fear is an important component on who will and will not participate in certain leisure activities, and in the case of the Centro it is a factor that is prohibiting the collusion of the elite to participate in residential gentrification (Hubbard, 2003; McIwaine & Moser, 2007; Pansters & Berthier, 2007). The geography of fear affects certain groups using urban spaces more than others. For example, women are less likely to frequent urban public spaces after dark than men (Rachael Pain, 2000; Rachel Pain, 2001). In the Centro, while there does exist a gendered component to the geography of fear, what I am concerned with are the elites who are not participating in residential gentrification due to this prevalently imagined fear of what is becoming a more and more policed and upscale playground for the rich. The geography of fear has gripped the upper classes in México City. (Koonings & Kruijt, 1999) The elites have become paralyzed by both real and actual acts of violence and crime in the megalopolis. But

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<sup>25</sup> For a discussion on the urban built environment and the ecology of imagined fear by the wealthy see Davis (1999).

more acutely, the geography of fear among the elites is greatly one of imagined terror as statistics show that crime in and around the Centro Histórico is at its lowest level in the last twenty years (Bolaños, 2002). Depictions of both real imagined geographies of fear are frequently found in urban centers (D. Massey, 2005).

Writings on Cities have outlined two principal discourses about urban life that speak to the imagined geography of fear: the first, a romanticized pro-urban myth; the other, a strongly anti-urban discourse (Lefebvre, 1991). The romanticized version of the city depicts urban life as a relief from the idiocy of the provinces, a respite from the quotidian panopticon where anonymity provides certain freedoms not offered in the confinements of the rural and where justice and democracy reign. The anti-urban discourse portrays the city as a space of immorality filled with temptation and danger. The contemporary neoliberal urban landscape in México City has been socially constructed as an immoral landscape of fear that prevents the elites from residentially gentrifying the Centro. This concept has been shaped by, among other things, the Western geographical imagination that equates the unknown as hostile vis-à-vis the metropole and locates identity relationally, in this case, in the face of the other.

The dominant language used by the promoters of gentrifying projects often portray inner-cities as “frontiers” or “hostile zones”, and first wave gentrifiers as “pioneers” that are pacifying the uncouth inner-city dwellers (N. Smith, 1996). This divisionary language works as a dichotomizing discourse establishing an us-and-them narrative to justify the removal of people to meet the goals of gentrification projects. Moreover, the geography of fear is exploited and inflated by the media. In the hands of reporters, the language used to describe México City’s violence—both real and fictitious—becomes the center of the news and turns into a spectacle that nourished the population’s geography of fear of aggression and vulnerability. The material effects of the geography of fear result in zero tolerance crime policies and attempts at the giulianification<sup>26</sup> of space in the Centro Histórico.

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<sup>26</sup> This term refers to the zero tolerance policies that other cities—both in the global North and South—have adopted imitate the policies implemented by Rudolf Giuliani



The language deployed in the Programa in México City functions similarly. The Programa de Rescate is the ‘recovery’ or rescue Programa. The suggestion is that it is rescuing the regal, vice royal, colonial landscape from the hands of the ambulantes, the Tepiteños, the working poor, who have been thrown into poverty by the implementation of roll-back neoliberal policies of the 1980s only now to find themselves disciplined by the current practices and processes of roll-out neoliberalization.

In México City, the urban geography of fear has historical antecedents in the colonial era where social and economic polarization was the defining character of urban life—the hangover of which has been heightened by neoliberalization. Currently the urban geography of fear is accentuated by opportunistic politicians and hyperbolic, sensationalist media. Class and race, categories that overlap and are intertwined in post-colonial, heterogeneous México City, are the basis for the production of this geography of fear. Although statistics show that assault, robberies, car theft and other violent crimes have decreased in Delegación Cuauhtémoc—the borough where the Centro is located—to their lowest levels in the last twenty years (GFD archive accessed by author 2005)<sup>27</sup> there still exist discourses based on class and race differences produced by the upper classes about the dangers of the Centro that keep certain people away from this newly gentrifying area (Amador, 2008). For example, the upper classes who reside in Polanco, Lomas de Chapultepec, or Santa Fe to the west and south of the Zócalo often refer to themselves as Capitalinos—or citizens of México City, people born in the capital city. The working poor residents of Tepito are referred to pejoratively as chilangos. Chilangos are traditionally first generation México City residents whose parents were born in the rural zones of the provinces. There is a race component to this nomenclature: Capitalinos are light skinned mestizos while chilangos are darker skinned with more indigenous features. The La Universal newspaper employs this racially charged language when it refers to “Chilango protests in the Centro” and “Chilango ambulanteaje” (Amador, 2008).

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during his tenure as mayor of New York City.

<sup>27</sup> crime in México City often follows economic cycles.

So strong is this geography of fear that the head of GFD's (Government of the Federal District) security Marcelo Ebrard contracted New York City's Rudolf Giuliani's consultant company at a price of \$2 million to conduct a study on how to decrease crime.



Figure 11. Police dressed as Charros patrol the Alameda. Image downloaded by author

The Giuliani groups developed 140 recommendations to lower crime and improve the quality of life in México City – of which over 100 off the recommendations were already in implementation while the remainder was not economically feasible for financially strapped México City.

In the local press Ebrard was chastised for hiring Giuliani as the study produced few results – save following Giuliani's recommendation. However, to the international community, the hiring of Giuliani was meant to convey that the City is seriously addressing crime issues and is a safe place to visit, invest, and live. After all,

the GFD now has mounted police (a Giuliani recommendation) on horseback that patrol the Alameda park donned with large charro sombreros, creating the sensation of a theme park or a ‘Disneyfication’ of this part of the city’s built environment.

The initial investments of the Programa in the built environment of the Centro did not involve the restoration of any of the buildings or other sites, but rather centered on safety issues regarding the Centro. This geography of fear has bolstered the local government in México City to increase its network of surveillance over its residents and visitors. Hundreds of closed-circuit televisions (CCTV) monitors have been installed in the streets and plazas of the Centro to create an ambience of safety and comfort for upper class Capitalinos and international tourists.

The Fideicomiso paid for the installation of CCTVs on the corners of the main historic streets found between the Alameda park and the Zocolo. According to the Fideicomiso, it is difficult to produce accurate and significant figures relating the surveillance cameras. At the same time the CCTVs were believed by the director of the Fideicomiso to be an effective tool in targeting members of the general populace who did not fit the stereotype as a new gentrifier, tourist, or cultural-goer and those who were considered problematic in the Centro Histórico. This applies to ambulantes, beggars, prostitutes, drug dealers and the like. According to the Fideicomiso’s director, the CCTVs proved valuable to keep certain elements out of the Centro Histórico when authorities, “know who we are looking for”. The director appears to be using the CCTVs to monitor only certain members of society—as the CCTVs in and of themselves do not actually control the population.

The presence of CCTVs in the Centro speaks to the neoliberal agenda being pushed through México City and how neoliberalism impacts urban space in the Centro. The neoliberal state “seeks to employ forms of expertise in order to govern society at a distance, without recourse to any direct forms of repression or intervention” (A. Barry, Osbourne, & Rose, 1996a, 1996b). In the Centro Histórico, the CCTVs have been installed and financed by the Fideicomiso—a supra-governmental agency that is funded primarily by Grupo Carso. The state is being robbed of its policing duties. The CCTVs placed in the Centro increase the “quantity and rapidity

of the flow of information between spatially dispersed points” (ibid). In the case of the Centro Histórico—from the streets and plazas of the Centro to the newly formed police force whose goal is to normalize urban space in the Centro – the supervision is being carried out without, “the need for an extensive system of surveillance controlled by the state” (ibid). The surveillance cameras are geared to primarily keep the ambulantes off certain streets that have already been recovered under the Programa de Rescate. The privatization component of the neoliberal paradigm speaks to the privatization of monitoring urban space in the Centro while the material, discursive and psychological effects of hyper surveillance and the way in which they prescribe how public space is used, is only beginning to be understood by urban scholars. (Coleman & Sim, 2000)



Figure 12. Example of 'Panic Button'. Photo by author

Another purely cosmetic security measure that the Fideicomiso oversaw included the putting in place of intensive lighting systems and the installation of “panic buttons” throughout the Perimeter A zone of Centro.

The panic buttons are intended to be used by victims or witnesses of a crime. The apparatus has a camera and a button fixed into its body. Ironically the apparatus encourages the victim or witness to press the button and then wait for the authorities to appear. Many of the panic buttons founding the Centro Histórico have been vandalized, have been decorated with graffiti marking, or are difficult to access as they are surrounded by ambulantes (see above image). The panic buttons are the brunt of locals who mock their presence and point out their ineffectiveness (participant observation). What are the possibilities that a crime will take place just in front of a panic button? Why would someone suffering from a crime, especially a violent crime, want to remain in the area and wait for the securities to arrive instead of fleeing from the would-be thief, mugger or rapist? While conducting participant observation in the Centro Histórico as the image above reveals, I saw the panic buttons employed as a stand to support ambulantes’ stalls and as a recipient of graffiti.

The intention of the CCTV systems, over illuminated areas and the panic buttons are to make the cultural-goers, the upper and middle classes, and especially the tourists feel safe and encourage them to travel to the Centro to consume. These security measures are just one component of the Programa de Rescate that include conveying to consumers, would-be gentrifiers and tourists that México City is serious about becoming a world class city that is safe for investment, that cares about the safety of its residents and is a safe place to visit and play. The panic button and CCTVs projects do nothing to help improve the deplorable housing stock that currently exists in the Centro or in any way are they giving fiscal incentives to would-be gentrifiers to move to the Centro – all of which might be much more effective at making an area more safe and encourage a permanent residential shift while also improving the lives of the working poor who currently reside in the Centro.

## **6.2 Culturally Induced Attempts at Gentrification: Museums, Pachangas, Bars, Restaurants and Cafes.**

In addition to the illusion of safety, the Government of the Federal District (GFD) and promoters of the Programa, have employed cultural events to encourage the targeted population (i.e. the upper middle class and elites who have fled the Centro in waves over the last decades) to reside and invest in the Centro (Arango, 2005 ; Mendez, 2005). Indeed, according the statistics produced by the Fideicomiso, over sixty percent of the moneys spent in 'recovering, saving and rescuing' the Centro have gone towards the renovation of existing museums and the creation of new museums, theaters and the financing of cultural events in an attempt to replicate what the Spanish geographer Lorenzo Vicario has dubbed, the Guggenheim effect (2003)<sup>28</sup>.

According to the statistics generated by the Fideicomiso, since the implementation of the Programa in 2001, only 14% of the municipality's budget for the 'recovery' of the Centro under the first stages of implementation has been spent on housing while the remainder has gone to repairing infrastructure, such as sewer systems and street repairs, and on tourist facilities and cultural events (Fideicomiso). Public relations documents produced by Grupo Carso disclosed that in 2004 Slim's company spent \$200 million dollars on renovating murals and historical buildings in the Centro (archival research at the Fideicomiso).

An example of this is the Museo de La Luz (figure 13). This museum is located in an early colonial structure that was built between 1578 and 1610. It has had many uses throughout its history eventually becoming the offices of the secretary of education in the post Revolutionary period.

While the secretary of education was headed by José Vasconcelos, Roberto Montenegro, a famous revolutionary muralist, adorned the inner walls of the building with murals depicting the proletariat overcoming the yoke of capitalism.

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<sup>28</sup> The Guggenheim effect refers to the gentrification of the post-industrial Spanish of Bilbao that occurred after the construction of the Guggenheim museum along its then dilapidated waterfront.

Slim's company paid for the restoration of this building and its murals (rather ironic to consider that a neoliberal business man would front the money for the refurbishment of a piece of didactic revolutionary art). Meanwhile, the streets surrounding the museum have not been 'recovered' nor has the urban space surrounding the 'rescued' colonial building been 'normalized', to use the language of the Programa.



Figure 13. The Museo de la Luz, in the Centro Histórico. Photo by author

Who is using this 'saved' colonial building and is the Guggenheim effect playing itself out in this locale? I have visited the museum on multiple occasions and have found it virtually empty- except for a smattering of foreigners who come to see the refurbished mural (participant observation). The example of this museum, which is one of many, is replicated by the restoration of a colonial building that has become the Museo de La Ciudad. Indeed, many of the museums in the Centro are restored colonial ecclesiastical and governmental buildings. The Fideicomiso has paid for their

restoration. I have visited these museums on multiple occasions and have conversed with employees from the museums. The museums are mostly frequented by tourists and Mexican elites. The ambulantes who are working in front of the Museum (see image above) are certainly not paying the entrance fees to go inside these cultural nodes. The continued presence of ambulantes working adjacent and in front of the museum is preventing the investment in culture in the Centro from materializing: the goal to lure the elites to reside and consume in the Centro. The director of the PUEC (Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre La Ciudad), Juliette Bonet believes that the continued presence of ambulantes in the Centro is the largest deterrent to the gentrification of this locale

Cultural events in the Centro have succeeded in attracting the targeted upper class populations. Venues such as the Teatro de la Ciudad and the Palacio de Bellas Artes, among others, attract national and international artists who demand high fees that are reflected in exorbitant ticket prices. An opera performance or an international ballet can cost from \$25 to \$100 dollars. These prices are not feasible for the working poor (minimum wage in México is forty dollars a week). However, international performers play to sold out crowds at events in the Centro- primarily to wealthy México City residents and international tourists.

One way in which urban change has transformed is through the widespread use of festive promotions by local and federal governments to manage cities. Festivals represent an extension in the ways government agencies, often in tandem with private industries, aim to change the marketing functions in order to produce the images of certain cities as safe places to play, visit, and hopefully invest in. The use of festivities to promote cities can function as a mechanism to: win back some of the localness of place that many perceive as having been lost through the experiences of the deleterious impacts of economic and cultural globalization on certain city centers (Hughes, 1999); improve the economic standings of the cities, especially city centers that have been thrown into disarray by macro-economic changes that have occurred (primarily in the global north) due to the shifts from fordism to post fordism; and as a social strategy aimed at regenerating a sense of



security in public places that, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, have been deemed as dangerous zones of the city through the proliferation of an geography of fear that has emerged to become so prevalent in many cities both in the global North and South.

Here I explore the use of festivals to transform the Centro as a manipulation of the geographies of fear. The festivals promoted by the Fideicomiso in México City are an attempt to thwart the geography of fear in the Centro. The GD.F. and Fideicomiso promote festivals with the final goal of improving the image of the Centro – especially that the area is safe and that people need not fear to live, invest, visit and play in the Centro. There are three major festivals that take place each year: the Festival of the Centro Histórico lasting for over four days in April; Por La Noche de Primavera – an all night celebration where the city “stays up” to party from dusk to dawn; and the Festival of México City – where many events occur in the Centro. Canclini highlights how the GFD wants to use festivals to promote the Programa de Rescate:

the festival of México City and the festival of the Historic Downtown Area [as well as the event Por la Noche de Primavera], events whose goals include increasing the city’s allure for tourists and turning it into an international metropolis, belong to a set of large development projects by means of which México City’s current administration is redefining the city’s image. (N. G. Canclini, 2000, p. 59)

During the Por La Noche de Primavera, the GD.F. arranges for bandstands to play at different locations around the Centro from dawn to dusk. The metro runs for free, hotels offer promotions to out-of-towners and even Capitalinos, and restaurants stay open through the night also providing food and beverage promotions. This is a unique festival: an all night party paid for by the local government. That the GD.F. chooses to host a nocturnal all night festival is indicative of how the Programa aims to communicate to the targeted population that the Centro is not only a secure zone for museum goers and architectural buffs to visit in the daylight hours and theatre and music aficionados to call upon in the evening—but that the Centro also functions

as a safe and fun place to revel throughout the night. The Por la Noche festival screams, “Look! México D.F. is a 24/7 city too, just like New York and Tokyo (London and Paris not so much) and therefore we are truly a global 24/7 city”.

I conducted nocturnal, all night participant observation<sup>29</sup> at the Por la Noche de Primavera festival in 2005. The musical acts included folkloric music from the provinces of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Veracruz; Electronic and Heavy Metal music from México City; and international sensations and artists as well. In 2006, during Por la Noche de Primavera, the largest crowd to ever amass in the Zocolo – surpassing any political rally the square has witnessed—gathered to dance and listen to Los Tigres de Norte, a Norteño/narco-corrido band. Its members are all from Sinaloa – a drug infested state in the northwest of México. The group’s members formed the band in San Jose, California, where they were working as undocumented migrants. Several of the group’s members are now U.S. citizens (they wrote a song about it). It is quite the global phenomenon that uneducated workers from the provinces could command such a large crowd in a site that holds such national/symbolic importance and is being so vigorously promoted under a neoliberal policy to have the Centro converted into a playground for the rich.

The Festival de Primavera has turned into a very successful event for the Centro Histórico. Initially, the acts and jubilee did not attract large numbers of partygoers. Since its inception in 2002, it has gradually drawn more people to the Centro attracting 300,000 partygoers in 2007 (Luara Gomez Flores, 2007). The secretary of Cultura del Distrito Federal explained that the 2007 image of a naked women running while proclaiming – the birds are singing and the clouds are rising – used to promote the Por la Noche de Primavera Festival in 2007 shows that, “in the Centro we are in a new circuit, a new epoch, one that is modern, open, liberal, friendly (simpatico), and happy.” (as quoted in Luara Gomez Flores, 2007) The trope of modernization emerges when referring to the changes that the Centro is

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<sup>29</sup> The research I conducted at Por La Noche de Primavera festival is one example of hours of Participant Observation that I conducted in México City’s Centro Histórico. Please see chapter three on methods and the values of participant observation as a tool for conducting research in urban environments.

experiencing through the gentrification program. Although in the case of the Por La Noche de Primavera event, the modernization trope is being attached to an ideal of openness and tolerance that is supposed to relate to everyone getting along under the stars in D.F. “Everyone” meaning those deemed appropriate to meander the streets throughout the night under the gaze of the CCTVs and the increased police presence in the Centro.

Municipal promoted festivals under the auspices of the Programa de Rescate are attempting to thwart the geography of fear that has strangled Mexican society with the advent of neoliberal piloted poverty in the Centro. Until the GFD et al began to offer fiscal incentives to purchase and renovate buildings and to invest in the Centro – with the advent of the emergence of the Programa de Rescate – few new establishments had recently opened in the historic zone. In the past five years the Centro has witnessed a slight renaissance in bars and restaurants establishments as several new places have opened in the Centro. Some of these new locales are keeping with the trends of traditional Fondas and Cantinas, while others are forging a more cosmopolitan trendy image in the Centro.

The emergence of new galleries, bars and restaurants offer examples that there are socio-spatial urban transformation stirring in the Centro. Establishments such as Las dos Naciones on Calle Bolivar, or what is considered the oldest restaurant in México just off the Plaza Santo Domingo, called Fonda Santo Domingo, are old haunts of the Centro and have special meanings to the people who still come in from the wealthier neighborhoods to frequent these old time favorites. Indeed, cantinas like the Gran Corona and México Querido are renowned throughout the country – at least amongst a certain population – as they became sites escalated to fame by famous Mexican authors. Carlos Fuentes and Juan Rulfo have often centered their plots around the aforementioned eating and drinking establishments in their novels and short stories (Fuentes 1966, Rulfo 1967). But as newer more posh neighborhoods surfaced in the west and the south of the city, such as Colonia Condesa, Polanco, Satellite, and Ciudad Universitaria, hot spots shortly gained fame in these trendy new

zones and the older haunts in the Centro lost their vogue among the chic cliques that were re-making new fashions outside of the Centro.

The new trendy spots in the Centro were not established with private capital. Providing another peculiarly vernacular form of gentrification-cum-neighborhood revitalization in the Centro Histórico is the role that Fundación played in initiating the move to promote trendy spots – the kind that attract the gentrifying types to come to the Centro (a la David Ley, (1996)). The Fundación has financed a very popular bar that is now gaining national and international fame. The bar is located on one of the “rescued” pedestrianized streets in the Centro. The place is called, Pasagüero. Interestingly it is managed by Adrian Pandal’s brother, Ricardo Pandal.<sup>30</sup> Pasagüero opened in 2002 – and has set the stage for other fashionable places to follow.

Fundación embraces the urban revitalization logic espoused and promoted by cultural gentrification scholars such as David Ley (1996) who purport that a major cache to attract targeted populations to move to the Centro hinges on supplying the type of consumer options associated with stylish inner-city neighborhoods – a la gentrification rubric found in many cities in the U.S. and Canada. Ley argues that lifestyle choices and the culture of consumption in the inner-city represented by upscale bars, restaurants, theatres and the like are what attract gentrifiers (see chapter two on the culture/agency debate related to gentrification- Ley (1996)). This ‘Leysian’ form of U.S. and Canadian gentrification embraced by the GFD, Fundación and Fideicomiso eliminates a huge swath of the Mexican population. The Fundación out-and-out owns Pasagüero—as opposed to the many privately owned bars and restaurants that attract gentrifiers in the U.S. and Canada (Bondi, 1991). Any profits that the bar produces are fed back into the Fideicomiso to be redistributed into further “recovery” efforts in the Centro.

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<sup>30</sup> This nepotism in regards to how Adrian is one of Carlos Slim’s assistants and his Brother, Ricardo runs a bar/restaurant/niteclub in Centro that received its funding from Grupo Carso in order to get off the ground and running speaks to how business often occurs in México City.

The success of Pasagüero has caught on. Now there are many bars surfacing in the Centro. Often times the capital comes from ex-patriots who have chosen to do business in México. Seeking to remove assets out of Argentina prior to the full financial collapse in 2002, many Porteño<sup>31</sup> business men opened up businesses in México. These Porteños chose to invest in México as the country has the most stable economy in Latin America, it was easy to obtain a visa and, naturally, there were no language barriers (although many chilangismos<sup>32</sup> have adopted a peppering of Buenos Aires' slang).

In addition to the Porteño invasion of México City, many Spaniards have relocated to México from the Iberian Peninsula. As the Spanish market for new bars and restaurants becomes saturated, newly trained hospitality entrepreneurs search for new markets. The reproduction of capitalism in the form of consumption brings them to México City to open bars and restaurants. Again, it is relatively easy for them to obtain visas and work permits – especially if they are making major investments in some form of infrastructure – and the language barrier does not prove itself a problem.

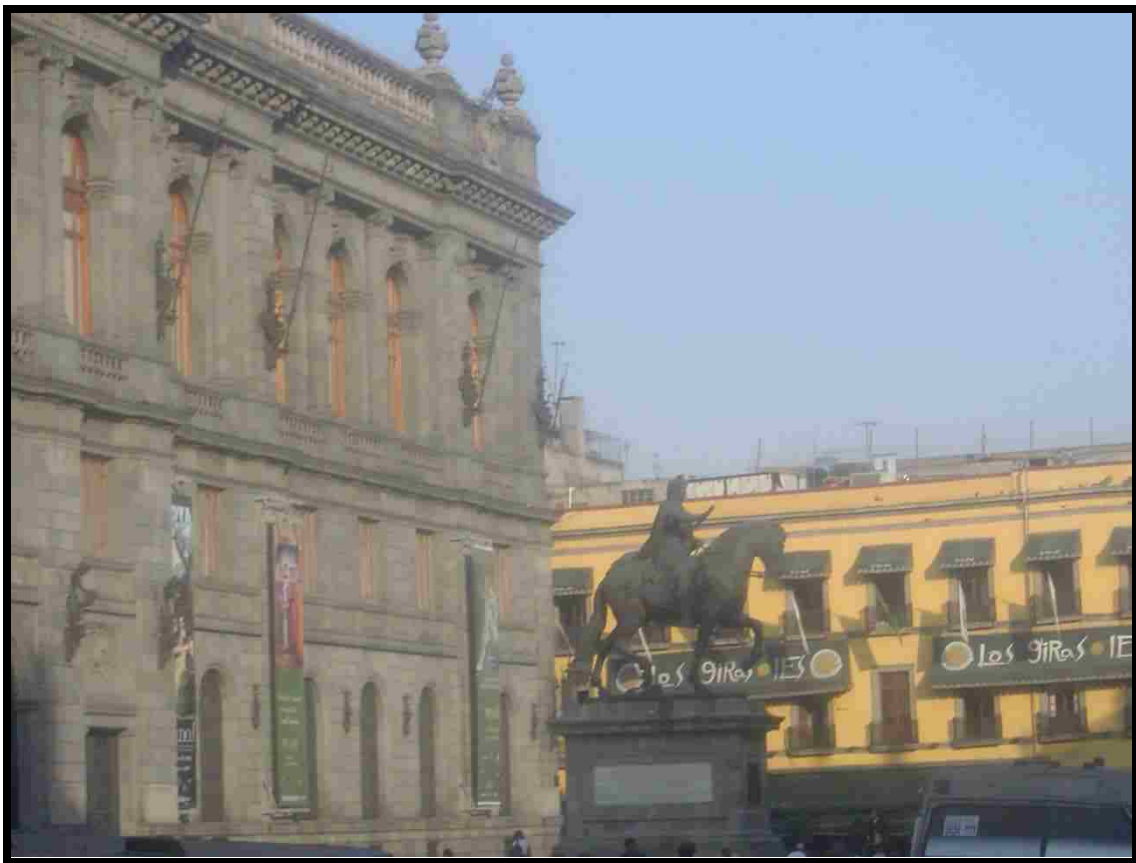
The Hispano-Iberian investment in the hospitality industry of México City does not limit itself to the Centro Histórico. However, several places have opened in this zone. One successful Café/bar/Restaurant that opened in the Centro is called, Abelenda Café, on Pasaje Iturbide – another pedestrianized street in the Centro running perpendicular to Bolívar that has been rescued by the program. The Spanish immigrant owner, Darío Cortes Iglesias explained why he chose the Centro Histórico as a site to open his business. He said this area of the city, “is becoming a classic location in terms of upper-end restaurants, cafes and bars and the Centro is also becoming quite fashionable”. . Iglesias' perspective on how the Centro has become a lucrative site for investment in the hospitality industry is a general trope replicated by investors and owners in other newly opened bars, restaurants and cafes in the Centro.

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<sup>31</sup> Porteños are people that hail from the capital of Argentina: Buenos Aires.

<sup>32</sup> These are distinctively México City inhabitant s' (chilangos) ways of expressing yourself through language

The existing old style cantinas and the opening of trendy new bars in the Centro provided multiple oases of relief to a weary participant observer/urban researcher during the arduous days that turned into long nights while conducting field work in México City. The emergence of these trendy bars begs the questions: are the Fundación's efforts in investing in Pasagüero and the Fideicomiso's tax relief investment plan attracting the targeted population to buy property, invest in the Centro, and refurbish homes? Is there a gentrifying class being drawn to the Centro by the presence of these "first world" Leysian gentrifying magnets (i.e. upscale bars, restaurants, boutiques, and coffee shops)?



**Figure 14. Restored Colonial Plaza de Armas. Note the Restaurant, Los Girasoles, is a refurbished palace that once functioned as housing for the working poor. Photo by author**

Interviews and participant observation prove the socio-spatial transformations in the Centro are Cosmetic, have attracted culture goers, all night revelers, bar hoppers and elite restaurant consumers while not attracting the elite to

reside in the Centro. There are notable changes to the built environment in the Centro. For example, the restaurant Girasoles is located in an elegant 17<sup>th</sup> century palace on the Plaza del Caballo.<sup>33</sup>

The plaza, located in the Perimeter A, has been rescued by the Programa. According to the director of the CET, for years the palace was a tenement housing structure called a “vecindad” in vernacular Mexican Spanish. The owners of the Palace had not paid rent for years. The working poor residents who had divided the palace into multiple living spaces (as many as 30 families lived in the palace) had not paid rent since the earthquake of 1985. According to the director of the Fideicomiso, as the owners did not come forward and pay the past property taxes on the plaza, the GFD seized the colonial building, removed the residents. The building was refurbished, almost to its original splendor, and rented to a restaurant consortium owned and operated by Patricia Quintana, famed restaurateur and celebrity chef. The Restaurant offers superb Alta Cocina Mexicana (Haute Cuisine Mexicain) – reviving many of the traditional dishes that are fading away under the globalizing food trends in México City D.F . The prices are quite prohibitive to the working poor who work and reside in the Centro. The example of Los Girasoles and the other nocturnal spots of the Centro show that gentrification does not only require the occupation of renovated properties by a new residential population, but involves the rehabilitation of deteriorated properties and a change in the social group using the property. Despite these alterations, there has been very little permanent residential shift (Fideicomiso).

### **6.3 Generating residential gentrification in the Centro**

One of the main goals of the Fideicomiso is to encourage targeted populations to reside in the Centro. Once the Fundación has refurbished buildings then it does try to get people to purchase them, but the permanent residential shift from working poor to elite has been a challenge for the GFD. Adrian Pandal explains that the goals consist of,

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<sup>33</sup> This Plaza is named for the equestrian statue of Carlos IV on horseback: one of the only statues of a Spanish monarch found in the country.

trying to do as much housing as possible, but sometimes it is impossible, like the house of tiles [yes, the house of tiles is owned by TELMEX]. It would be too expensive to live there, or if you have a house that is a formal palace it would have to be divided into several different apartments etc. and it would not be economically viable, because who can afford an apartment in an 18<sup>th</sup> century palace. Unless a very wealthy guy comes in and says I want to live in a 3 million dollar house, which has happened before... As much as possible we want to make apartments because they are the backbone of the project. We want as many people to live in the area as possible because – the more people who live in the area the better, because it is those people who are going to make it alive and they are going to take care of the area. What happened is that it was an abandoned area so nobody thought it was theirs and no one was going to take care of it. People would throw garbage and they did not clean it – people would go to work or to buy things, but there were no neighbors. We want to create a society of the historic center – that is more or less the idea – and the people that have been living there [i.e. the original 90,000 inhabitants of the Centro Histórico]. We want them to remain and have proper conditions for living there. We do not want them to go to other areas, because people have left the Centro because of a lack of schools, jobs or because there were no hospitals. We want to have the infrastructure so that the people who move in are happy.

Pandal contradicts himself several times in this quote. No one was living in the Centro, yet someone was throwing garbage in the streets. Then, he states that he wants to accommodate the people that already live there. It is true that population levels in the Centro have slowly declined over the last century, but by no means has the Centro ever turned into a ghost town. When Pandal discusses how the Programa intends to populate the Centro and encourage housing for people in the Centro he is specifically speaking to a particular targeted population. The refurbished places that have been divided into luxury apartments in the Centro can only be paid for by the



working elite that currently reside in the south and the west of the city. In order for the conversion of the Centro to occur – the way that Slim envisions changes to occur: a la post-regal colonial – the targeted population, which consist of the upper classes that have gradually left the Centro, must come to re-populate the Centro.



**Figure 15. The House of Tiles. Photo by author**

So far, one of the largest purchasers of the reformed buildings has been the out of town politicians who spend the workweek in México City, then return to the provinces on the weekends. The Federal District is the office of the federal executive, legislative and judicial powers of all of México. These offices are located in the Centro Histórico. Camara de diputados –similar to the U.S. Senate – and the Representatives from the individual states have their offices in the Centro. According to Pandal,

we have the phenomenon of many politicians, senators, diputados buying apartments in the Centro because it is close to the chamber of deputies and the courts – they have their families out in the country – say in Puebla or something – but they work all week in México City, so they rent an apartment close to the office. From the provinces we have a building full of diputados who live here during the week and then on the weekend they are out with their families in the provinces.

Thus, presenting a distinct form of gentrification – the transient elite politicians are literally changing the residential class of the Centro, albeit only ephemerally.

The example of politicians gentrifying the Centro will not create the type of vibrant community that is needed to meet the goals of the Programa de Rescate, or create what would be considered a vibrant community required to experience any sort of gentrification or urban renewal. Single men spending the workweek in the Centro Histórico will not produce the type of tertiary economic activity and other ripple effects called for in order for a more well rounded community to emerge in the Centro. If one of the priorities of the Fundación is to ensure that there are employment opportunities and that the schools are full, then surely only single men cannot accomplish this. Without the children present to attend schools the education facilities in the Centro will continue to deteriorate. With people coming and going from the provinces to the inner city, it will become difficult to build a sense of community.

Another attempt by the committees organized to promote the growth in the Centro is to provide incentives for federal agencies and private businesses to relocate their offices and employees to renovated buildings in the Centro. In an effort to create more economic vibrancy in the Centro Histórico, as Cepeda (the director of La Fundación) explains, “the federal government is also active in moving federal offices to the centro: BANMEX has more functions now in the Centro, and Hacienda (the housing authority) and TURISMO have all moved offices to the Centro Histórico.” The GFD and others anticipate that this will have a domino effect. Their hopes are that

federal employees will begin to 'gentrify' the Centro out of convenience. The theory is that if federal and private employees are working in the Centro, out of commuter expediency they will move there. México City is a difficult city to traverse. Many commuters can spend one to three hours each morning attempting to arrive at their place of employment.

Currently, the middle and upper middle class neighborhoods, where the majority of federal employees and upper middle class white collar workers with jobs in the private sector, are located in the far south or far west of the city. This is a difficult commute for these employees to get to the Centro, especially during the peak commute times in the morning and afternoon. I personally experienced a reverse commute while conducting research in the Centro Histórico. Three days a week I commuted from a neighborhood called San Rafael that is adjacent to the Centro Histórico to the National Autonomous University of México, called UNAM, in the south of D.F. in what is called the University City. In the offices of PUEC, an urban/city studies program that are housed in the geography department of the UNAM, I volunteered to teach in exchange for information about the Programa de Rescate. The commute on the metro was shorter than if I insisted on driving a vehicle or traveling on a bus, but the circumstances were treacherous. The Metro in the morning would be packed to the brim with commuters. The metro wagons were divided between the sexes to prevent sexual assaults. It was a brutal experience – one that I only endured for one semester. If the commute proved to be a permanent fixture in my daily activities, I surely would have relocated closer to my place of employment as an alternative to traversing México City on a daily basis. Due to the arduous commutes in the colossal city, the relocation of government offices and companies to the Centro may prove to be a strong incentive to attract the white collar laborers who work at government agencies such as Turismo, INEGI and for private corporations such as BANAMEX.

The data on how many targeted residents have moved to the Centro is nebulous. The figures among the different entities differ greatly. Discussions with Pandal indicate that the sales of very upscale, refurbished palaces are selling well as

second homes to the extremely rich. The house-by-house gentrification has not taken hold as of yet. However, my research led me to the discovery a German national living in the Centro who buys, restores and rents properties. The German property speculator speaks German, English, Spanish and French and has lived and worked as a journalist in México for more than 20 years. She recognized the movement of gentrification in the Centro early on. She says, “When authorities began to spruce up the decaying Centro Histórico six years ago, I bought two apartments on the top floor of a stately building between the Zócalo and Bellas Artes” (research interview). The building was located within the 16 streets of the Centro in the perimeter A zone where the Programa de Rescate has recovered the most amount of buildings. She has continued to purchase, refurbish and rent apartments. She mostly rents to wealthy businessmen from both México and abroad who need to spend extended periods in México City and are looking for something more comfortable than a hotel and are also seeking somewhere to stay that will impress clients: a place to do business that clearly demonstrates how the Centro Histórico is a world class city. She has also rented to a smattering of tourists but prefers to rent to people with long term business interests. If the goals of the Programa succeed, more house-by-house gentrifiers may emerge adding an additional component to state/corporate piloted gentrification in the Centro. The German investor is an example of the amalgamation of different actors who are at work transforming the socio-spatial urban fabric of the Centro Histórico.

#### **6.4 Gentrification and White Elephants: Elite Resistance in the Centro**

One of the over arching goals of the promoters of the Programa de Rescate is to convey to the wealthy of México and to the rest of the world that México City has finished its modernization period; that the country is no longer an economic backwater; that the Centro is a fun place to live and play and is a safe place for investment; to attract global finance and capital; to increase foreign direct investment to the city; and to promote México City— à la Saskia Sassen— as a truly “global city”. The project hopes to catapult México City into the ranking of one the world’s truly great cities. I have already discussed the disconnect between this vision

and the non-elites living in the Centro, but in this section I also discuss how this vision is not uniformly shared by elites, either.

Countries in the global South have often employed architectural projects to communicate to the world their power and opulence. Both Brazil and Nigeria relocated their respective capitals partially as a development scheme to encourage investment and to gain world-wide recognition. Countries in the Far East have elevated massive skyscrapers in order to attract attention from around the globe. Within this vein of logic—that municipal construction projects will help advance the global standing of cities—the Programa de Rescate has one such modernization ‘white elephant’-mega-structure project—whose cost for construction is perceived to not be its worth in value—that the promoters hope will hoist the city to become on par with urban command centers around the world. Since its inception, the Programa de Rescate has included the construction of Latin America’s tallest skyscraper. The current mayor of México City now plans to see this component of the program through. For the leftist mayor, this project will hurl México City to the forefront of modernization as “no other city in Latin America will have a tower of this size now”, which signifies to the mayor that, “we’re [México City] ahead of everyone else” (Mayor Ebrard as quoted in Malkin 2007). A communiqué promoting the construction of the tower furthers the developmental discourse voiced by the mayor conveying, “the decision to build the Bicentennial Tower shows that there exists political and economic stability in México... the symbol of stability that the Tower invokes will increase direct national and international investment in development projects, which will increase México’s competitiveness” (<http://www.torrebicentenario.com/>, translation by author). The promoters of the tower believe that, “with the construction of the Bicentennial Tower, México City will rise to the same level as the great capital cities of the world. The construction of this project will bring benefits in terms of competitiveness to the city, which will allow for the creation of more wealth and the potential to confront the social and infrastructure barriers [in México City]”. (ibid) Much developmental cache is being placed in the Bicentennial tower. The digitized image created by the architecture firm indeed portrays an ominous specter of development in the city.

For many countries in the global South, modernization schemes have proven to be costly while not always meeting their intended goals (however, see Vicario 2002 for a discussion on the construction of Frank O’Ghery’s designed Guggenheim museum and its impacts on greater Bilbao, Spain).



**Figure 16. Digitized image of would-be Torre Bicentenarios**

In the case of post-colonial, heterogeneous México City, the promoters of the construction of the skyscraper may not even have the chance to see their finished product produce the successes that they anticipate, or the failures that have come from other such white elephant projects from around the globe. Just as the ambulantes frustrate the neoliberalization of space in the Centro Histórico, upper class residents in Polanco and Lomas de Chapultepec neighborhoods are mobilizing to resist the completion of the skyscraper. The upper class residents are employing high paid lawyers and working through institutional channels to historically preserve the site where the tower would be erected, thus adding an additional

nuance to the negotiation and resistance to urban socio-spatial reconfiguration in post-colonial, heterogeneous México City.

The majority of the municipal projects organized under the framework of the Programa de Rescate are located in the Centro Histórico and the Alameda-Reforma corridor. This project is situated outside the Centro Histórico but is still receiving financing from Grupo Carso and others who back the Programa de Rescate. Latin America's tallest skyscraper will be christened the Bicentennial Tower as planners hope to complete construction of the tower by 2010 in time to celebrate México's two hundred years of independence from Spain. The seventy story skyscraper would be built in the Polanco neighborhood—about nine miles west of the Zócalo—and hover above the Chapultepec Park. The park is home to the Chapultepec Castle— an important historical site that represents Mexican nationalism and resistance against Yankee imperialism. The world renowned National Anthropology Museum is also in the park. The Castle and museum are the dominant structures in the park. Critiques claim that the seventy story monstrosity would be an eye-sore for residents and cultural-goers alike. Situated on the proposed skyscraper site there currently exists an example of mid-twentieth century functionalist architecture. INAH, the Nation Institute of Anthropology and History, prompted by local residents, rushed through and upgrade of the building's protected status with the goal of slowing the construction of the Tower.

The land where the tower is to be built was purchased for a mere \$18 million dollars. The overall investment in the construction of the tower is estimated at \$600 million – just over half of what has been spent on the 'recovery' of the Centro Histórico (Fideicomiso). The promoters of the Programa chose a foreign architect over the well qualified Mexican architects who have gained world-wide recognitions (for example, Legorreta has designed museums and civic buildings in the U.S., México and Europe). The promoters of the Programa look towards foreigners to help 'recover' the México City and design the buildings that make up part of the Programa; this is a precedent that was set when the mayor hired the Giuliani group to determine how to lower crime in the city. Many Mexicans see this as an act of

malinchismo, anti-Mexican, (for more details on this phenomenon and a description of the origins of malinchismo see Riding, 1996) and is thus increasing protests against the skyscraper project.



Figure 17. A neighborhood association places a sign protesting the construction of Latin America's largest tower

Those protesting the construction of the sky scrapers are not the working poor residents I have already mentioned, they are professionalized elites. These elites are employing modernization tropes to prevent the completion of its construction. This approach differs from the ambulantes in the Centro Histórico who employ spatial politics and organize vernacular forms of resistance to frustrate the neoliberalization of space as gentrification and to negotiate with the City on the implementation of the Programa de Rescate. The residents of upper class Polanco and Chapultepec are mobilizing under the rubric of the law to prevent the white elephant project from going through. These upper class protesters have economic means to negotiate and resist the construction of the skyscraper.

For example, the community's members accumulated their funds to hire a high profile environmental lawyer to write an environmental report on the impacts the construction and placement the skyscraper would have on the community. The



report purports that the seventy story skyscraper would suck up the resources currently allotted to the neighborhoods, would overstrain the electrical grid and roadways, and the construction of a parking lot in the Chapultepec forests would eliminate much needed green spaces in the city of 25 million residents. Due to antiquated water provision systems, México City loses up to 40% of the potable water that it provides to its residents (Pezzoli, 2000). The Bicentennial Tower would rob the much needed water supply to neighboring residents as the 300 meter tower would require not only large amounts of water, but enormous pressure to force the water up the 70 story edifice. The electrical grid is already strained. The presence of a building this size would cause blackouts in the surrounding neighborhoods. The report also found that the 30 meter skyscraper would cast a shadow in the winter and summer months spanning 376 meters in distance robbing the neighborhoods the limited amount of sun caste in the basin of México City, which sits at 5, 600 feet and is surrounded on all sides by mountains and volcanoes reaching 15,000 feet in height. The sheer size of the prospective skyscraper proves a hazard in such a seismically active zone as México City, where residents are still painfully carrying with them the memoires of the set of 1985 earthquakes that devastated many parts of the city, crossing class lines and older and newer urban built environments alike.

Much of the resistance to the tower has been mobilized by the elected delegate who heads the Delegation Hidalgo (a delegation is similar to a borough in New York—the Federal district is divided into sixteen delegations or delegaciones)—demonstrating the messy politics that can exist in post-colonial, heterogeneous México. Until 2000 the heads of each Delegación were appointed by the Mayor of México City. With the advent of decentralization—brought on in part by the implementation of neoliberal policies to México City and the shift of the concept of transparency from the economic to the political sphere—the delegates from each Delegación are popularly elected. The autonomy of local politics as the sphere of the Delegación causes an even greater amount of messy local politics vis-à-vis the Federal District, México D.F. The Mayor of México City is from the PRD, a left of center party, while the delegate from Delegación Hidalgo—the would be site of the Bicentennial Tower—is a PANISTA, from the right of center PAN party. The political geographies

embedded in the resistance to the construction of the Bicentennial tower speak to the complexities of the creation, implementation, resistance and negotiation vis-à-vis the Programa de Rescate.

The Torre Bicentenario provides a further example of how GFD et al are trying to create a world city in a place rife with complex social and political formulations and ensuing manifestations of resistance. The resistance strategies of the ambulantes will be discussed in chapter 7. The example of resistance here points out that elites in México City are not uniform in their complicity with the Programa. The elites battling the construction of the Torre serve as just one example.

### **6.5 Reflecting on the Socio-Spatial reconfiguration in the Centro: from deterioration to “normalization”**

Despite the combined efforts detailed in sections 1-4 above, the full implementation of the Programa has still not been realized. Here I discuss these combined efforts at normalizing and gentrifying the Centro in relation to the built environment and the current state of “normalization” in relation to the gentrifying efforts outlined in this chapter.



**Figure 18. A “rescued” street: Tacuba Street has been normalized under the Programa. Ambulantes are gone and ecclesiastical buildings have been refurbished. Photo by author**

Neoliberal economic policies are one of the factors that began to lead to the deterioration of the Centro more than twenty-five years ago. I first visited México City in 1994. Although nine years had passed since the Major earthquake of 1985 hit México City, the perimeter A zone of the Centro still suffered from seismic damages. Twelve years later in 2006, the Centro had recuperated from the damages caused by the 1985 seismic activities. As shown in the image below, the Centro was beginning to have the feeling of grandeur thus effectively achieving one of Slim’s major goals: to recuperate the colonial splendor of the Centro and make it a safe play ground for the wealthy.

Attention to the substitution and replacement of urban infrastructure constituted the implementation of the first phase of the Programa in the perimeter A zone. In February 2002, the Fideicomiso allocated 500 million pesos for this first initiative to “rescue” this historic part of the Centro. This new infrastructure included; the replacing of sewage lines; removal of telephone wires and other

electrical wires and the placing of the wires underground; and the changeover of cement and asphalt streets and walkways for cobblestone – or what is referred to in México as adoquinado – cobblestone style pavement that emulates an historical corridor. The goal of the first phase of the Programa intended to renovate 34 blocks and 500 properties in the perimeter A zone of the Centro.

These examples of ‘urban recovery’ are driven by the desire of the promoters and financiers of this gentrification project, under the rubric of ‘roll-out’ neoliberalization, to create an imagined, regal, neo-colonial urban space. During the phase of roll back neoliberalization, this site was, in the words of Martin Phillips, ‘being made ready’ for gentrification investment (Phillips, 2003 ). In the current age of roll-out neoliberalization that involves state collaboration with the private sector to implement urban policies and to gentrify and police the derelict areas of the Centro that were thrown into disarray during the earlier period of roll-back neoliberalization, the promoters of the Programa have chosen the Centro to play out their desires to create a regal space as this is a site that holds symbolic national importance as exemplified by the cathedral in the following image.



**Figure 19. The National Cathedral, located in the Zócalo at the heart of the Centro, is flanked by City Hall and the National Palace. Photo by author**

This place harbors 1600 colonial buildings, including all of the remaining 16th and 17th century vice regal palaces, many early colonial and baroque religious edifices, and scores of plazas, including the largest square in Latin America, the Zócalo. The promoters believe that with proper investment this site has the necessary cache to finalize the conversion of México City into a global urban Center.

I conducted fieldwork consisting of interviewing Liliana Cepeda, director of Fundación in the Centro, Juliette Bonet the director of the PUEC (Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre La Ciudad), Adrian Pandal, director of the Fideicomiso, and hours of surveying the build environment of the Centro through Participant Observation. This fieldwork revealed investments in cultural and urban infrastructure and events and tourist facilities, with disproportionate investment in housing. According to the director of the real estate company, Fundación, many of

the refurbished luxury apartments that have primarily been restored by Grupo Carso lay empty, while the theatre events, art gallery openings and performance arts events are enjoying enormous successes – with entry fees that are prohibitive for the 90,000 working poor who live and work in the Centro . The upper class comes to the Centro to enjoy the cultural events- but then return in the evenings to upscale communities in the west and south of the city (participant observation). The promoters’ efforts to attract the targeted population to move to the Centro have yet to materialize.

In the words of the director of PUEC (Programa Universitario de Estudios sobre La Ciudad), Juliette Bonet when asked if the Programa aimed to ‘gentrify’ the Centro, she said, “What we wanted was to gentrify the Centro; encourage a particular class to re-populate the Centro. But what we are finding is that this may not be possible.” So, in effect, after culture and cocktails, the Centro remains residentially untransformed.

I re-visited the sites in the perimeter A zone in February 2007, and I found that the Fideicomiso did not reach their goal of renovating 34 blocks and 500 properties. After surveying the sites block by block and house by house I was able to conclude that the renovation of urban infrastructure, including the application of the Panic Buttons and the CCTV systems had successfully been accomplished along the streets of: Cinco de Mayo; Bolivar; Francisco I. Madero and Isabel La Católica. Infrastructure work was still in progress along the streets of: Donceles; Veustiano Carranza, Eje Central; Cinco de Febrero; Guatemala and Argentina.

The areas mentioned above that have been renovated – running primarily between the Alameda Park and the Zócalo – have completely changed the use of public space in this area. I first visited the Centro Histórico in 1994. The two contrasting images below show the Cinco de Mayo Street before and after the urban spaces along the street had been “normalized”.



Figure 20. Cinco de Mayo: pre-normalización. Image by La Jornada



Figure 21. Cinco de Mayo: post-normalization. Image by La Jornada

The two images are strikingly different showing how the street that functioned for the ambulantes as a site of commerce now is free of ambulante. One

component of the struggles over the utilization of space in the Centro Histórico stems from ambulante groups and the working poor who reside in Tepito. This is another aspect of socio-politics that is preventing gentrification from occurring in México City. The ambulantes work in the informal economy selling their wares in the streets and on the plazas of the Historic District and embody distinct class interests from the government officials, the upper classes who want to play in the Centro, and investors who are actively promoting the Programa de Rescate. The confrontation between the ambulante groups and the promoters of the Programa de Rescate characterize the geography of the Programa de Rescate. The contestation and reproduction of urban space in México City is being decided by the negotiation over the utilization of the spaces located in the Centro Histórico by these groups that represent distinct class interests. Next, I turn away from the elites, and focus on the working poor ambulantes in the Centro.

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## CHAPTER 7: RESISTING THE PROGRAMA: SPATIAL POLITICS AND VERNACULAR FORMS OF OPPOSITION AND RESISTANCE TO THE NEOLIBERALIZATION OF SPACE IN THE CENTRO

The Programa de Rescate requires the removal of the ambulantes from the streets and plazas of the Centro Histórico. This chapter articulates how the ambulantes employ political and spatial tactics—including acts of violence—to avoid being evicted from the alternative livelihood spaces they have appropriated and reproduced in the Centro. They defy the poverty hoisted upon them through the neoliberalization of Mexican economics, politics and state, which led to heightened urban poverty issues and the deterioration of the built environment. The residents and ambulantes utilize peculiarly place based, vernacular mechanisms of resistance. Language and religion function as devices that coalesce the multiple identities of the community helping bring the ambulantes and residents together to protect their informal economies and housing.

Pile et al. are helpful to understand how the vernacular forms of resistance in the Centro function noticing that, “the spaces of domination and the spaces of resistance are not flattened out, made interchangeable and reversible [and] while strategies define territory marked by an inside and outside, resistances cross these spaces” (Pile, 1997, p. 15). The territories in the Centro are the would-be neoliberalized urban spaces juxtaposed with the informal use of urban space under the rubric of ambulantaje. Spatialities in the Centro can be helpful to maintain domination and achieve the goals of the Programa de Rescate. However, the City and Federal governments have the monopoly on legitimate violence as outlined in hegemony theory (Gramsci 1971). The city has sporadically used the monopoly on legitimate violence as exercised by the state to remove ambulantes, to expropriate historical buildings and to evict residents.

The spatialities of the Centro also provide the corridors for resistance – thus providing an example of how resistance and power are not hierarchical processes but also allow for power and resistance to move in a capillary fashion (Pile, 1997). The

results of resistance often are a mere negotiation enveloped in the myriad of different possibilities that apply through power structures that play themselves out in the spatialities of the city.

According to Castells and Portes (1989)—when referencing Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*—one of the key mechanisms linked to the production and reproduction of urban space is the negotiations and conflicts found in multiple sites located in cities such as the streets; plazas; places of employment; places of worship; and sites of leisure. The Lefebvrian argument insists that economic production and urbanism are mutually constitutive in the continuous production of space. Castells furthers the Lefebvrian argument in stating that the set of exchanges involving resistance and conflicts over the utilization of urban space are apparatuses that continue the production and reproduction of the city in infinitum. The Centro Histórico and Tepito, a neighborhood situated in the Centro, are urban spaces that are experiencing reconfiguration through resistance.

In section 7.1 of this chapter, I give an historical context within which the *ambulantes* are framed as resisters within the urban spaces of Barrio Tepito. The material effects of neoliberalization and gentrification include rebellious action on behalf of the working poor residents and *ambulantes* alike. I open section 7.2 with a description of a police raid on a palace where *ambulantes* live and store their wares in Tepito before segueing into a discussion on their spatial politics of resistance to the Programa. The multiple forms of vernacular resistance that are carried out in the Centro in opposition to the implementation of the Programa I discuss in sections 7.3, 4, and 5. Indeed, the use of vernacular forms of language (3), religion (4) and the heterogeneous examples of timespace (5) found in the Centro are frustrating the neoliberal gentrification of this locale and are a place based component to the production of urban space in the Centro.

### **7.1 Forging El México Profundo: The Emergence of Informal Entrepreneurialism and Autonomous Practices**

In the second chapter of this dissertation I outlined how the material effects of roll back and roll out neoliberalization instigated the most recent fold in the

alterations of the urban built environment in México City. The first period of roll-back neoliberalization witnessed the deterioration of public urban sites in the Centro Histórico and the subsequent augmentation of ambulantes who have taken over the Centro's urban spaces as sites of popular economic production in the form of ambulanteaje. During the current phase of roll-out neoliberalization the representatives from the state and global capitalists have bonded together to create the Programa de Rescate with the goal of reclaiming the regal, colonial spaces of the Centro that have been appropriated by the ambulantes. The current struggles of resistance and the negotiation over the utilization of urban space in the Centro among the ambulantes and supporters and promoters of the Programa de Rescate are re-scripting how space should be used in the Centro. These current conflicts over the deployment of sites of consumption, employment, and leisure in the Centro are also leading to the production and reproduction of urban spaces in the Centro Histórico.

Ambulanteaje is in and of itself a reaction to the implementation of neoliberal policies in México and a mechanism employed by the working poor in the Centro to cope with the poverty that has worsened under neoliberalism. It also functions as an act of resistance to the continuation of neoliberal economic policies that are supported by the current PAN led government. In México City, the neoliberalization of the state and the economy coincided with natural calamities. The set of earthquakes that struck the city in 1985 occurred in tandem with the period of roll-back neoliberalization that was initiated in 1982. Tepiteños organized in the face of economic hardships brought on by the shift to the neoliberal paradigm. A state purged of its powers by roll-back neoliberalization did not possess the resources to react to the catastrophe brought on by the earthquake. Tepiteños organized work crews to save the Centro's residents from fallen buildings and rubble. The Tepiteños organized work brigades to clean up the ruins in the aftermath of the earthquake. The residents of the Centro Histórico invested their own labor and capital into rebuilding many homes and businesses that were ravaged by the earthquake. This early period of economic hardship—the neoliberalization of the economic sector and the state beginning in 1981—and the 1985 set of earthquakes— fostered multiple anti-neoliberal and anti-state popular movements in México City (Ramirez Saiz 1986,

Monsivais 1987, Forewaker and Craig 1990). The emergence of popular resistance at this time informs the politics of negotiation and resistance currently at work in the Centro Histórico.

The entrepreneurial ambulantes forged informal economic activities associated with ambulanteaje. They created clandestine clothing and appliance factories, they had studios that pirated electronic goods such as CDs, DVDs, books and computer software, and they re-produced the ways in which urban spaces were used in the Centro Histórico. The informal sector emerged in the Centro Histórico as a survival mechanism in the face of a deregulated state that could not provide any back-up support to México's populace in the face of the weakening economy of the early 1980s. According to the director of the CET and documents produced by this think tank, the act of ambulanteaje is not just a reaction to the neoliberalization of the economy and the state; it is also an affront to the political and economic changes associated with the neoliberal paradigm shift in México. Ambulanteaje functions as a popular economic movement that negotiates the poverty-ridden policies of neoliberalization and resists the reconfiguration and normalization of urban space under the auspices of the neoliberal gentrification policies: the Programa de Rescate. The ambulantes embrace informal economic activities in order to continue living and working in the sites where they choose such as Barrio Tepito in the Centro Histórico and to prevent the normalization of space in the Centro's locales.

Even prior to the period of neoliberalization and the rise of urban crises heightened by the calamitous 1985 earthquakes, the Tepiteños have continuously exercised the creation of their Barrio's identity in the face of mainstream European and even Mestizo Mexicaness, or Mexicanidad. The Tepiteños constitute a factor of the population distinct from the imagined nation of the want-to-be upscale malinchista European and Mestizo Mexican that emulates Western Europe and the U.S. for its fashions, politics, and economic models (Esteva, 2006). The Tepiteños comprise one of the many folds that encompass the 'México Profundo'—or the 'deep', 'profound' or 'true México' (Bonfil, 1990)<sup>34</sup>. Ironically, 'México Profundo' consists of

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<sup>34</sup> Bonfil creates a dichotomized México in his work on México Profundo: the

the majority of working poor Mexicans. Originally, this term referenced the Mexican Campesinos, or peasantry; however, with the advent of mass rural-to-urban migration spurred by the deregulation of the agricultural sector under the neoliberalization of the state and economy in México, the México Profundo also references the working poor of urban spaces like Tepito.

Much of the scholarship analyzing resistance tactics in the global South aims to contrast commonly conceived forms of rebellion, such as violent unrest, against forms of less-recognized protest incorporated in daily activities (Scott, 1985). Through studying Malay peasantry, Scott realized that:

the emphasis on peasant rebellion was misplaced. Instead [of violent acts of resistance], it seemed far more important to understand what we might call everyday forms of peasant resistance—the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry [or the urban working poor] and those who seek [to displace or exploit] them. Most of the forms of this struggle take stop well short of collective outright defiance. Here I have in mind the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth. (1985, p. 29)

Scott believes that the emphasis placed on outright rebellion is misplaced as “the rare heroic, and foredoomed gestures of a Nat Turner or a John Brown are simply not the places to look for the struggle [over resistance to occur]...one must look rather at the constant, grinding conflict over work, food, autonomy, ritual—at the daily forms of resistance” (1985, p. xvi). The ambulantes provide an example of these daily acts of resistance in their performances of new popular informal spaces of economic production. Through place based, daily politics involving surreptitious economic activities related to ambulanteaje, the residents of the Centro have reconfigured the urban spaces of the Centro Histórico by re-inventing their livelihood strategies.

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imagined México and the true or real México. There exists more folds to Mexican society than these nicely separated dichotomies.

Residents of the Centro Histórico—including the Barrio Tepito— rebuilt many of their homes without government assistance after the 1985 earthquakes as the federal and local governments were nearly bankrupt in 1985 when the earthquakes struck the City. This form of housing is called “self help” housing (Gilbert, 2004). The practice of taking housing matters into their own hands foreshadows the Tepiteños’ formation of popular, informal economic production as entrepreneurial *ambulante*. The Tepiteño entrepreneurs were adept at resorting to popular forms of informal economic production when faced with the neoliberal crisis of the lost decade of the 1980s and the heightened gradations of neoliberalization of the 1990s and beyond. Since 2001—the year the implementation of the Programa de Rescate began—the residents and *ambulantes* have also developed strategies to negotiate and resist gentrification as the neoliberalization of space in the Centro Histórico.

## **7.2 *Ambulantes* in Action: Strategies of Spatial Resistance**

On February 17<sup>th</sup> 2007 riot police from the federal government and D.F. cops (police from the federal district of México City) conducted a pre-dawn raid on a building at number 40 Tenochtitlan Street in Tepito neighborhood not far from the offices of the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños. This neighborhood—which harbors many of the colonial and ecclesiastical buildings and palaces—is a site in the Centro where the urban México Profundo actively resist the neoliberalization of space and gentrification under the rubric of the Programa de Rescate. The building had been nicknamed the “Fortaleza”, or fortress, as the residents put up enormous opposition to prevent the authorities from carrying out the eviction process. The police of the GFD invaded this 18<sup>th</sup> century palace to evict the 144 people—consisting of multiple families— living there who had turned the colonial building into a living space and warehouse to store the goods they sold in the streets as *ambulantes*. This building is earmarked to be ‘saved’ under the Programa de Rescate. Under the laws of México, the Police justifiably evicted the residents as there were illegal activities occurring in and around the building. The authorities’ allegations are correct. This is a site where *ambulantes* store stolen and/or pirated goods while drug trafficking and prostitution also go on in and around the building. However, not all of the 144 residents—many

who have been occupying the building for decades—were involved in disreputable activities. Police filled the alleyways—normally rugged paths filled with ambulantes—surrounding the old colonial palace and occupied the communal spaces consisting of the inner patios of the Mozarabe influenced, architectural colonial jewel.

In the past, the residents had successfully prevented the intrusion of the authorities. Neighborhood associations with names such as Frente Francisco Villa and Frente Zapata, barricaded themselves in their homes and surrounded their buildings with pregnant mothers and children to deter the police from violently evicting residents, thus effectively manipulating the patriarchal system prevalent in México. However, in this instance, the pre-dawn forced entry caught the residents by surprise. Moreover, the new mayor of México City, Marcel Ebrard, approached the ‘rescate’ of the Centro under the rubric of the Programa with a much more aggressive stance than his predecessor, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. The residents were taken off guard. They immediately called the media and began to make placards denouncing the raids as a violation of their rights, citing the constitution that they were within the realm of the law to occupy the building. Residents complained that “the police know perfectly well how things run around here and which are the residences that are ‘chuecas’ [a slang word or albur that signifies illegitimate or unlawful] “ (Flores, 2008). Their reaction to begin a protest of the eviction is one of the many forms of resistance to the neoliberalization of space and the Programa de Rescate in the Centro Histórico.

The well organized resistance by ambulante groups and neighborhood associations (which are often times co-opted by the PRI and/or the PRD) is an obstacle preventing the full implementation of the Programa de Rescate. The ambulante groups use political and spatial strategies and public demonstrations to protest the neoliberalization of urban space. For example, in February 2005 an ambulante organization called Grupo Capitalista took advantage of a large demonstration in the Zócalo put on by an opposition party to the Mayor’s office (they were not affiliated with the ambulantes). The Grupo’s leader knew that the police would be too occupied containing the demonstrators in the Zócalo to prevent the

ambulantes from setting up their stalls. The ambulantes grabbed the opportunity to take back several streets from which they were removed, as it was being ‘recovered’ by the Programa.

One of their spatial strategies is to locate stalls near intersections where they can quickly move from a ‘recovered’ street (where they are not allowed to sell their wares) to a street that has yet to fall under the Programa.



**Figure 22. Police officer inquires ambulante women about their activities**

The well organized ambulantes all carry cell phones and have look-outs who surround the area. When the patrols approach, lookouts warn ambulantes in advance and they quickly move their carts to the safe street- only to return to their original location after the patrols have gone through. The image above shows women selling therapeutic herbs on a ‘recovered’ street in the Perimeter A. The women have set up their wares on a mere bed-sheet in anticipation of the arrival of police who monitor the Centro for ambulantaje. The women employ the bed-sheet instead of a formal stall as this allows them to quickly pick-up their goods and move to a street where they will not be hassled by the authorities. This style of ambulantaje has been labeled ‘Ambulantes-Toreros’—or bull-fighter street vending—as the rapid lifting up of the



bed-sheet mirrors the matador has he raises his bull-fighting cap over the Toro . Many vendors now prefer to risk peddling their wares in this manner on ‘recovered’ streets and plazas in the Centro as these newly renovated spaces attract more tourists who will pay more for the goods.



**Figure 23. Ambulantes protesting against the Programa de Rescate in Tepito (Jornada, 2005)**

The extreme ambulatory nature of torero peddling means that the goods that the torero vendors sell are often geared towards tourists, or are light-weight consumer goods like traditional medicines rather than books, tools, and house-hold appliances. When authorities physically attempt to remove ambulantes they respond in violent public demonstrations.

For example, the young male protester holds a sign that reads, “Tepito until death.” He is protesting the removal of ambulantes from the streets and plazas of Tepito and the relocation of residents from palaces in the Centro. Ambulantaje is the lifeblood of this community. The residents believe that the end of ambulantaje will lead to the ruination of their livelihoods.



**Figure 24. Violent Protests in Tepito, Photo: Adeath, 2007**

In January of 2006, a combined force of 480 México City police officers and Mexican soldiers conducted a raid in Tepito to remove ambulantes and secure the area for recovery (Laura Gomez Flores, 2007). The special operation confiscated 10 tons of pirated materials, mostly CDs, computer software and DVDs. This was the largest effort by the authorities to remove ambulantes from Tepito in order to prepare the zone for recovery (Laura Gomez Flores, 2007).

The barrio erupted in mass protests. Residents stated they would not allow authorities to remove any more street vendors, dislocate residents from their homes, or permit continued confiscation of goods (Laura Gomez Flores, 2007). Protests against the removal of ambulantes lasted for three solid days in Tepito. The vendors jeopardized their own street commerce in order to literally commandeer Tepito, preventing authorities from removing ambulantes. The image above reveals an example of protests against the Programa turned to violent disturbance. The protests escalated into riots as Tepiteños unfortunately vandalized their neighborhood. According to the director of the CET, the ambulante group leaders lost control over the ambulantes. Many incidents of violence ensued, both against police and Tepito residents.



**Figure 25. A protestor points the barrel of a pistol towards the camera while holding a placard that reads “I am a street peddler”**

Many of the ambulante group leaders held the ranks of their ambulantes and maintained political protests against the police ‘invasions’ into Tepito. The ambulantes refused to allow a continued presence of authorities in Tepito and called for Tepito autonomy to prevent further encroachment by the neoliberal state. The image above divulges a poignant example of the veracity of ambulantes to hold their ground.

Ambulante groups sometimes employ women to protest against the Programa. To contrast the violent images of ambulantes above, ambulante group leaders will manipulate these popular perceptions of ambulantes as violent male youths through the use of maternal looking women.



**Figure 26. A female protestor claims that “the Centro just isn’t the Centro Histórico without ambulantes (Cruz, 2007 )**

The image above portrays one such grandmotherly figure bearing a sign reading, “the Centro just isn’t the Centro without ambulantes”. This sign speaks to the maintaining the livelihood of the ambulantes as well as to the benefits that the ambulantes provide to the working poor. How will mothers, aunts and grandmothers provide for their families without the cheap, pirated goods that the ambulantes provide to these working poor families?

These protests are one of the factors that prevent the targeted population from inhabiting the Centro. The continuous street protesting and violent outbursts combined with the persistence of the ambulantes to re-occupy areas recovered by the Programa are detracting from the gentrification of the Centro.

### **7.3 ‘Albures tam bien se pueden’: Vernacular Language as Resistance to the linear, neoliberal strategies of the normalization of space in the Centro Histórico**

In this section I discuss language as one of the vernacular forms of resistance in the Centro. The argot spoken in the Centro functions as a coalescing tool to bring the community together in the face of the elimination of their alternative livelihood strategies and homes due to the neoliberalization of space carried out under the rubric of the Programa de Rescate. Vernacular or local based linguistic structures—such as argot or slang—are complicit in the formation and binding together of alternative identities (Glissant, 1999; Klahr, 2005; Linke, 1998). Language is used to create solidarity among marginalized groups as well as to create elite discursive structures that separate the elite from the masses. Linguistic and discursive structures are a component in the production of identities in order to create solidarity among subjugated classes, and to create alliances against hegemonic power-structures in multiple locales with different social bases, political configurations and within different time periods.

The construction of vernacular linguistic forms and discourses allows for the marginalized to re-theorize their positionality in juxtaposition to the mega-power-structures. In the case of the residents and ambulantes who work and live in the Centro Histórico, vernacular discourses of Tepito provide a resistance strategy to linear, singular, teleological top-down, neoliberal discourses. As expressed by Barbara Christian, vernacular discursive structures function to re-theorize power relations:

People of color have always theorized—but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. And I am inclined to say that our theorizing...is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. How else have we managed to survive with such spiritedness the assault on our bodies, social institutions, countries, our very humanity? (Christian, 1990, p. 336)

Vernacular discursive strategies take form as *albures*, or alternative utterances, function to unite those experiencing marginalization under the neoliberal discursive strategies of the Programa de Rescate. The linguistic dynamism of *albures*—consisting of the double-entendre structures and *dichos*—provide a varied, nuanced understandings of the social production and utilization of urban space in the Centro Histórico. The dynamic discursive strategies of the Tepiteños rely on the, ‘juego de palabras’, ‘jouet de mots’, the double entendres, the *albures* that are messy sentence structures of the Tepiteños. The opacity of the chaotic discursive structures—the rhizomatic, non linear terms and flows of Tepiteño vernacular discourses— thwarts the attempt to create a ‘universal truth’ of the neoliberal language behind the Programa de Rescate. The neoliberal ideal of transparency—key to the neoliberal re-working/normalization of urban space—is frustrated by the opacity of *albur* sentence structure and discursive formation. Below I provide three examples of language as resistance; these are external to the Tepito example. I then discuss how *albures* function as resistance to the Programa de Rescate.

The first example is the making of identity, language and forms of resistance amongst the “criminal class” in Victorian England(Beier, 2005). The cockney spoken by lower classes and working poor – not just the criminal class—empowered individuals from these classes in the face of a very polarized top-down Victorian society (Klaus 1979). Linguists consider a ‘jargon’ to be a “powerful social marker” and, in the case of lower classes and working-poor, to reflect participation in an alternative society to that of the hegemonic power structure: “a society that is set up within another society as a conscious alternative to it” (Halliday, 1978). According to sociological studies, youth appropriate and deploy argot or slang with the intention to differentiate themselves from the adult world thus signifying their resistance to that world and its hegemonic culture.(Burke & Porter, 1995) Historians of language have found that thieves and beggars have used jargons since the Middle Ages to disguise their illegal activities and to form a counter-hegemonic identify in order to form solidarity amongst themselves. The Cockney dialogue fashioned and spoken by the lower classes in Victorian Britain was developed around class barriers, class-based identities, and the attempts of the lower ‘castes’ of Victorian society to craft

discourses that separated them out from the upper classes while simultaneously providing an incognito communication system that allowed them to thwart the regimented structures of Victorian society. As for the criminals, the distinct cockney argot allowed them to often communicate without the power structure's understanding.

A second example of linguistic resistance—or the formation of a particular argot that allows for the creation and coalescence of a counter-hegemonic group to emerge—is found among the Zoot Suiters and Pachucas(os), the counter-cultural Mexican-American groups that would eventually become Chicanas(os). Many Pachucas(os) and Chicanas(os) employ Pochismos (lexical borrowings) combined with a working-class inflected American English. During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the Pochismos (and linguistic traits characteristic of Pachucas(os) and Chicanas(os)) came to signify both difference and opposition to mainstream, white, American society. Chicana and Chicano writers popularized this form of vernacular argot through their stylized writings, poetry and plays. The Pochismos deployed by Chicanas and Chicanos signified a refusal to conform to the status quo and a distinctly racialized, working-class, urban youth style. In short, many utterances of Zoot Suiters, Pachucas(os), and Chicanas(os) came to signify resistance, style and style-as-resistance. Following James C. Scott's metaphor of 'hidden transcripts' (1986), Catherine S. Ramirez argues that "veiled social and cultural worlds of oppressed people frequently surface in everyday forms or resistance—theft, foot-dragging (C. S. Ramirez, 2006) agging, the destruction of property" .... and ..."the language and culture of Zoot Suiters [as well as Pachucas(os) and Chicanas(os)] represent[s] a subversive refusal to be subservient [to the white, male mainstream hegemonic power structure]" . (C. S. Ramirez, 2006)

A third nuanced, place based and distinct time period where language was implemented as a form of resistance—and in this particular case a form of maintaining a national identity— is found in the use of Czech jokes and joke telling under Nazi Occupation as a form of coalescing a counter hegemonic identity to a particularly brutal hegemonic group—the Nazis. The Czech resistance to Nazism is

often portrayed as a failure to negotiate a truly Czech national space. Indeed, at the end of World War II when the Nazi occupation ended, the imagined history of Czech resistance became the image of a Czechoslovak, Russian inspired hybrid disassociated from straight Czech identity vis-à-vis resistance to the Nazis (Bryant, 2006 ).

However, Chad Bryant argues that a form of Czech resistance did exist during the Nazi occupation. According to documentation collected by Chad Bryant, he claims that the Czechs, “did not have arms [weapons] their only weapon was the joke, which, like a beetle, gnawed away at the feeble foundation of that monstrous colossus [i.e. Nazism]” (Bryant, 2006, p. 128). Bryant argues that for the Czech patriots, jokes constituted a particular form of resistance against a regime that demanded total conformity and obedience. The jokes functioned as symbols of Czechness in the face of Nazi repression as “patriots saw in jokes proof that the Czech nation still existed and that people were still acting ‘Czech’, despite Nazi attempts to ‘Germanize’ the Protectorate’s economy, political structures and population” (Bryant 2006, p. 136).

The examples of a Cockney dialect developed by the underclasses in Victorian England, the Pochismos that distinguished Chicanas(os) and Pachucas(os) from and against white, mainstream America, and the jokes and joke telling that kept a sense of Czech nationalism alive during the Nazi occupation provide three distinct, place based and time differentiated examples of how language has been and can be used to band together identities in the face of oppressors. While all three examples are very place based, they speak (no pun intended) to the vernacular form of alburas that bind together the residents and ambulantes in the Centro Histórico in the face of the neoliberalization of space brought on by the Programa de Rescate.

Bakhtin states that nothing exists outside text and that each utterance can function as a set of power-structures in and of itself. This has been made clear in Chapter two of my dissertation, which demonstrates how the implementation of language and the rhetorical apparatuses of knowledge that center around the discourses of neoliberalization and globalization are what bring the true power to these concepts. There are agents behind these terms who are manipulating discourses, practices and processes in order to achieve very specific goals. Thus the



written policy (i.e. the municipal document) that informs the Programa de Rescate, which has at its center a nexus of relations combining a neoliberal, neocolonial, regal approach to the normalization of space in Centro Histórico, also consists of a set of pro-development discourses that aim to ‘retake’ urban space from the working poor entrepreneurial ambulantes who managed to salvage their communities from the ravages of the early phases of ‘roll-back’ neoliberal paradigms. However, just as space is always in the process of becoming (D. Massey, 2005), so too are discourses-cum-language structures not static and ossified in time. In México City—and indeed beyond—vernacular language is continuously remaking itself and being remade in a multiple dialectic centering around myriad nodal processes that may flow from organic ‘grass root’ points as well as from learning institutions such as schools and universities to government forms of discourses, popular culture and media representations. In the case of Barrio Tepito, in the heart of the Centro, the colloquial speech of albuces allows for the appropriation of urban space by the neighborhood’s residents, and thus disables the municipal planners and multi-national capitalists’ discursive power-structures that aspire to ‘normalize’ and neoliberalize the Centro’s urban space.

Albuces, the vernacular language of anti neoliberal discourses in Tepito, are, in effect, a discursive strategy to resist the oppressively singular authority represented through México City’s Programa de Rescate of the Historic Center.(Klahr, 2005) The aim is to de-center efforts to neoliberalize organically produced urban spaces by replacing authoritarian discourses with a plurality of discursive visions. The albuces thus work to re-frame spaces, create multiplicities and opportunities for the popular, informal economic and social production of urban spaces that differ from the neoliberal production of space. These counter discourses suggest the organic usage of urban space that is outside of the neoliberal framework where ambulantes can participate in alternative livelihood strategies.

A peculiarly Chilango form of resistance to development and gentrification, which speaks to how gentrification plays itself out on the ground in different places, is represented in how this vernacular language becomes a form of resistance to the

Programa de Rescate in México City. In the barrio de Tepito, the usage of albures, which is a very Mexican way of using language to produce double-entendres through dichos and sayings, facilitates the production of a counter-culture and resistance to the linear development strategies of the government and neoliberal businessmen that promote the gentrification of the Centro. The director of the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños discussed how the florid language of albures functions to prevent Tepiteños from becoming domesticated by the system. The director elaborates how, “the language used in Tepito forms part of the barrio’s identity creating a cohesive-interconnected community of resistance to the development strategies of the government – and allows the residents of Tepito – a war-torn neighborhood – to also resist modernity [i.e. the municipal plans to ‘normalize urban space in the Centro] .

The utilization of language to thwart authority or to create confusion, difference or multiplicity within the post-colonial urban spaces of Tepito has historical antecedents. According to Victor Hugo Rocha, a self proclaimed distinguished scholar at the Centro de Estudios Tepiteños, "when the necessity arose for the Mexicas [the original inhabitants of Tenochtitlan] to speak in front of the Spanish Conquistadors they chose to develop verbal ‘double entendre’ codes ”. In contemporary urban México, the implementation of albures as a form of argot allows for the special production of nodes of resistance to the linear trajectories of the normalization of space, which is one of the main discursive goals of the Programa de Rescate. The vernacular form of language as albures is doing more than just ‘playing with language’. In regards to language vis-à-vis identity construction of Mexicanidad, or Mexicaness, Octavio Paz states, “in this occasion it is demonstrated that the albur is not only an ingenious, whimsical, play on words or verbal combat threaded together with obscene allusions and double entendre’s, in which the winner is he [or she] that is able to contest and respond. If not he [or she] is possessed and violated by the other. It is the formation of lower [México Profundo] class Mexicanidad” (Paz, 1959, p. 35, my translation).

The language and culture of the Tepiteños, similar to the expression of the Zoot Suiters, Pachucas, Chicanas, the lower classes of the Victorian age in Britain, and

the Czech nationalists during the Nazi occupation, represents a subversive refusal to be subservient and functions as a vehicle to elide the linear trajectories of the Programa de Rescate. As Mestizos—which are a product of La Malinche and the Conquistador—Tepiteños are using the deterritorialized languages of both the Spanish invaders and the Nahuatl spoken by the Mexicas or Aztecs that lived in Tenochtitlan prior to the ‘encounter’ of the two distinct groups. The language the Tepiteños employ is infused with place based identity politics. When the Tepiteños employ *albures* in their speech, they are further embedding themselves into the spaces of the Centro Histórico and thus frustrating the neoliberalization of space of this locale. The use of *albures* and the construction of a class, ethnic, and place based vernacular discourages would-be gentrifiers from coming to the Centro. Many upper-class Capitalinos admit that they may frequent the *ambulantes* to buy a car stereo or other electronics that are cheaper (and sometimes better quality) than found at the mall. However, they would not consider traveling to Tepito at night to go bar hopping or attend a musical event and are even more reluctant to purchase and refurbish a palace in and around Tepito or buy a condominium off of the Plaza Santo Domingo. The use of vernacular discourses and utterances by the Tepiteños is one of the factors that have prevented the neoliberalization of space to spread out beyond the immediate area surrounding the Alameda, the Bellas Artes Building, and the Zócalo.

#### **7.4 Vernacular religion as resistance: the adoration of the Santa Muerte**

Just as the formation of vernacular or local based linguistic structures are complicit in the binding together of alternative identities to resist or oppose hegemonic power structures and processes, so too has religion played a similar role. (Blankenship, 2008; Nepstad, 2007) Religion has been complicit in the formation of counter cultural identities amongst Rastafarians in the formation of an anti-neocolonial British power structures and in the creation of pan-Africanism organized by Marcus Garvey (Chevannes, 1994). The hybrid, syncretized Rastafarian belief system differentiated Afro-Jamaicans from the British colonizers. The following of Rastafarian belief systems impelled solidarity among the Afro-Jamaicans in the face

of hegemonic, European-led Colonialism and Post-Colonial structures following the Island-Nation's independence. Marcus Garvey flirted with Rastafarianism—as well as other African-influenced spiritual structures in his failed attempts to forge a unified identity and solidarity among peoples of African heritage brought to the Americas during the era of forced African Diaspora (Chevannes, 1994).

Santeria, Voodoo, Condomble and Macumba have played place based, distinct roles in the formation of alternative Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Brazilian identities that have thwarted hegemonic power structures (Murphy, 1993). Voodoo provided the coalescing factor that helped rally slaves against the French plantation owners on the island of Hispaniola that eventually resulted in the formation of the second independent nation in the western hemisphere and the only black republic found in the Americas: the country called Haiti. Condomble and Macumba—two Afro-influenced belief systems that respectively are worshiped in the state of Salvador de Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil have been complicit in the construction of an Afro-Brazilian identity. During the Vice-regal colonial period, the Afro-Brazilian religions gave hope to the Brazilian slaves and provided comfort and relief in the daily hardships they endured. A more tangible example of how Afro-Brazilian religions brought slaves together and empowered the Afro-Brazilians is found in the creation of huge runaway slave communities called, Quilombos. The largest and most researched Quilombo settlement, called Palmares or Angola Junga, peopled 20,000 inhabitants by 1605. The Afro-Brazilian colony within a colony was not repatriated and brought under Colonial Portuguese rule until 1694! (Anderson, 1996) The inhabitants who worshipped Condomble and who resided in the city state of Palmares utilized the syncretic form of Afro-Brazilian religions to organize their communities and household structures. In the modern era, the Afro-Brazilian religions of Condomble and Macumba have played a role in the coalescing of Afro-Brazilians around social justice issues. The syncretic form of religion helped forge more rights for people of color in Latin America's largest nation.

In addition to the discursive anti-neoliberal albur constructs, the adoration of la Santa Muerte in México City also works as an apparatus in the configuration of a

counter-culture identity that resists the linear development policies of the gentrification promoters. La Santa Muerte is a product of religious syncretism that combines pre-Colombian beliefs with southern European Maríanismo and a dash of Caribbean Santería. The pre-Colombian predecessor to the Santa Muerte dates to the god a goddess Mictecancuhtli and Mictecacihuatl, the deities of death, darkness and the 'religion of the dead' (Garibay Diaz, 2006). Mictecacihuatl presides over Mictlan, the underworld. The followers of these gods provided 'ofrendas' or offerings—similar to how the Santa Muerte is currently worshiped—in order for the gods to provide them favors. In Europe, the pre-Christian worship of the earth goddesses in the multi-theistic religion of Mirthism practiced by Roman soldiers shifted—through a form of pagan and Christian syncretism—to the worship of the Virgin Mary and multiple other virgins such as Jativa, Rocio, Montserrat, Lourdes, and St Maries de la Mer, among others. The worship of virgins is referred to as Maríanismo. There are many goddesses—called Orixas— representing the earth and sea—such as Oshun—that were worshiped by the slaves that traveled to the Americas during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, or forced African Diaspora. The Africans who were forced to come to the Americas as slaves brought their belief systems with them that included these West African deities. The Santa Muerte is form of vernacular religion consisting of a blended form of Mexican religious syncretism that is a combination of the European, indigenous and African influences on México.

There are many forms of religious syncretism in México from the Day of the Dead—a celebration on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> that honors deceased friends and relatives— to the patron saint of México—La Virgen de Guadalupe. Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe is a syncretic and Christianized form of the Aztec deity, Tonantzin, the mother goddess and lunar divinity (Wolf, 1958). The Mexican poet and philosopher, Homero Aridjis concludes that the Santa Muerte, a new form of religious syncretism<sup>35</sup>, “is a strong cult that is rapidly growing, the cult of the Santa Muerte is intertwined with the day of the dead, it has at its roots pre-Hispanic beliefs as well as

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<sup>35</sup> Aridjis (Aridjis, 2006) believes that perhaps La Santa Muerte will gain more favor than the Virgen de Guadalupe; this very place based deity from the barrio de Tepito.

colonial traditions, and this cult lends itself to contemporary urban México” (Aridjis, 2006)

La Santa Muerte—also known as the Señora de las Sombras, Señora Blanca, Señora Negra, Niña Santa, Niña Blanca, La Parca, La Flaca— is the deity of Mexicans who work outside the system. Many Mexicans pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe for miracles to help them in their lives. One does not pray to the Santa Muerte for a miracle, you ask her to—*hacerle un paro*— which is an example of the vernacular language, *albures*, discussed above, and is a Tepiteño way of asking to get something accomplished. As the director of CET expresses, “in Barrio Tepito, the Santa Muerte is inter-acting and playing the role of a devotional catalyzer (*catalizador*, in Spanish) in times of [economic] crisis”, such as the crisis of the neoliberalization of space brought on by the Programa de Rescate. She was originally adored by thieves, prostitutes and drug dealers, but now her following has become quite eclectic and includes devotees from all walks of Mexican life—while still being very place-based in the Centro Histórico. The Santa Muerte can be worshiped by believers of Christianity as well. She is a syncretized deity as expressed by the keeper of one of the altars situated in the Centro Histórico,

Here we do not celebrate mass [no hay misas], there are no devil worshipers, nor are there Christians. There are no misas because this is an altar that does not have the recognition of the Catholic Church, so it is a place [site] where people come to pray, they make request [pedir que la hacen un paro, the Tepiteño way of asking for a favor] to and provides offerings to the Santa Muerte. You won't find any devil worshipers here because we are not part of a satanic sect, or are tied to any form of devil worship.

Tepito houses two main altars to the Santa Muerte where her followers leave her money or drugs and alcohol in exchange for her favors. These altars are located in Barrio Tepito west of the Zócalo in the Centro Histórico. On November 1<sup>st</sup> 2005 I visited the site of the Santa Muerte Altar on Calle Alfareros No. 12 in Barrio Tepito<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> I spent many hours observing both altars where devotees worship the Santa

While there is constant activity around the altars of the Santa Muerte, on Halloween, or Dia de Los Muertos, there was an enormous amount of goings-on. Hundreds of people were gathered in the street. They had come there not only to worship and pay respect to the Santa Muerte, they were also there to socialize with family, friends, neighbors and even people beyond the Barrio that shared the same belief system. The Santa Muerte functions as a triangulating device and as an identity building mechanism among those that wish to protect the Barrio for the worship of la Niña Flaca and preserve the livelihood strategies of the Barrios residents, thus effectively thwarting the neoliberal gentrification sought by the Programa's supporters. The festive atmosphere involved with the adoration of the Santa Muerte included food stalls (in and of itself a form of ambulante), live music, make-shift bars, dancing, and lots of fireworks! The timespace of this site on the evening of Dia de los Muertos was a celebration of one of the many folds of the México Profundo, discussed earlier. The people celebrating on this evening were not the malinchistas wishing to emulate gringo and European styles of consumption and worship. The people at this particular timespace are products of the syncretic México. They embrace Mexicanidad and they worship their own vernacular deity: the Santa Muerte.

The vernacular festive atmosphere surrounding the adoration of the Santa Muerte functions in direct contrast to the government supported festival of México City and the festival of the Historic Downtown Area (as well as the event Por la Noche de Primavera), describe in chapter six, whose goals are to bring would-be-gentrifiers to the Centro to celebrate, explore and consume. The spontaneous fiestas that emerge in and around the altar to the Santa Muerte are an example of the cohesive qualities this vernacular form of worship has in bringing people together who have distinct perspectives and wants from the teleological goals of the supporters of the Programa who envision the neoliberalization of space and the Centro functioning as a playground of the rich.

### **7.5 Heterogeneous Occurrences / Geographies of Time**

Allow me to begin this section with a brief definition, borrowed heavily from

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Muerte.

Theodore R. Schatzki<sup>37</sup> on how recent theorists conceptualize the conjoining of time and space into ‘timespace’. Schatzki recognizes that only recently, “have theorists begun to ponder timespace, that is, time and space as dimensions, aspects, or components of a single phenomenon” (Schatzki, 2007, p. 1). Timespace has been theorized as, “an objective manifold, as something that is what it is independently of human apprehension and comprehension” (ibid). Timespace has also been theorized as arising from a nexus of social relations, much as Massey has framed places as sites of social interactions (D. B. Massey, 1994). Timespace is also theorized as a juxtaposition of both temporal and spatial processes that occur separately yet in tandem so that even when “time and space arise from the same processes, they are conceptualized as separate” (ibid). Finally, Schatzki posits that “conjoined timespaces and unified teleological timespace are related. In fact, they are related through human activity. For human activity and practices are events that at once are positioned in the timespaces of the cosmos and stretched out existentially” (D. B. Massey, 1994, p. 1).

Teleological timespace differs from the timespace that is produced by a nexus of social relations in the Centro Histórico. In the Centro, distinct timespaces are at odds with one another, and not all of the socially produced timespaces are teleological: many are produced and reproduced infinitum. Contradicting temporal-spatialities at work in the Centro prevent the full implementation of the Programa, effectively thwarting gentrification.

There is a multiplicity of different networks of actors immersed in chaotic manifold temporalities, sometimes using and producing timespace in the Centro in a way that frustrates the neoliberalization of space in México City. The promoters of the Programa have a linear vision of how the Centro should be: a teleological, linear development trajectory that sees the end result of the Programa as the conversion of México City into a global urban center. They wish to advance México City as a truly global city safe for international investment and tourism with a secure Centro

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<sup>37</sup> Schatzki (Schatzki, 2006, 2007) gave a paper at the AAG in Chicago in 2006 on Social Timespace. He was kind enough to share the paper with me.



functioning as a play ground for the wealthy. Ambulantes and residents inhabit the spaces of the Centro as sites of commerce where their daily time-routines unfold and their utilization of space is always in a fluid process of change- from one plaza or street to the next- and does not include a final outcome or goal. There are multiple examples of time and space that exist in a post-colonial space such as México City- from the western ideal of development, to the Mestizo concept of ambulante, to the indigenous notion of subsistence. Often these socially produced conceptualizations of timespace overlap and are intertwined – contributing to the reproduction of urban space in this locale and complementing the concepts of investments and flows as a way to theorize urban transformation in the global South(Amin & Thrift, 2002 ).

How are the theories of timespace linked in contemporary accounts and how do they play themselves out in the Centro? One way to consider manifold timespace as it functions in the Centro is as a conceptualization of diverse, multiple objects – there are quotidian understandings of timespace that may occur in the Centro independently of human agency. There are also socially produced teleological multiple timespaces. This is the timespace of human activity that is central to understanding the socially produced timespace of the Centro, yet the timespace produced by ambulantes does not have an end result at its nexus or goal. The timespaces of ambulante are constantly in flux being produced and reproduced by the nexus of social interactions and contestations.

The timespace of human activity in the Centro consists of the different facets of socio-economic production that exist in tandem and are harbored in this place. Particular sites in the Centro, those of which consist partly of the human-urban built environment, and therefore are also socially produced, can take on distinct functions within the realm of socially produced timespace. Take for example, the Plaza Santo Domingo. The Plaza Santo Domingo is a site that can function independently of human interaction. The stones, trees and timber found in the Plaza are adamant, non human actors found within the realm of this site (there are also birds, insects and rodents that are non human actors found in and producing the Plaza). Nevertheless in the eyes of the promoters of the Programa de Rescate, Plaza Santo Domingo

represents a site prime for urban renewal-cum gentrification in order to promote their goals and achieve more investment in the urban built environment of the Centro. The promoters of the Programa privilege a neoliberal value to this site in terms of return gains from the fictitious capital of investment and speculation.

Ambulantes may also perform an economic gaze over the Plaza Santo Domingo. In contrast to the promoters of the Programa de Rescate, what the ambulantes envision is not a site that, with enough sprucing up, will produce confidence in investors to want to play, live and invest in the Centro. The Plaza is a theater that provides the scenario for the unfolding of socio-laborial, informal, popular production. The way the ambulantes produce the quotidian timespace of the plaza is through a manifold of activities. The ambulantes do not envision the Plaza Santo Domingo as a site of permanent neoliberal investment, but as a site of fleeting multiple timespace that change with the ebbs and flows of their quotidian motions – movements that also vary with the seasons and the pre-Columbian and Judean-Christian calendars.

For example, in the early mornings of February and March, before the deluges of the late spring and summer months begin, the Plaza Santo Domingo is used to sun plants from the nearby plant stores found in Tepito. The plants will literally be removed from storage to receive their morning dose of sunlight prior to being placed on display in order to be sold to the residents of México City throughout the day. This timespace utilization of the Plaza can be enjoined by food vendors who arrange their stall in the morning, commute hours near the metro entrance in order to serve typical breakfasts of atole, tamales, and morning tacos to the working poor commuters who pour through the plaza at other sites of heterogeneous timespace(s). At this particular juncture of timespace, the breakfast smells waft through the air stimulating the olfactory while boosting commuters' appetites. The overlap of the ambulantes positioning their stalls to sell school books, computer software, music videos and CD's to the throngs of after-school-potential-customers provides another aspect of enjoining manifold timespaces at the sites of the Plaza Santo Domingo.

The timespaces that result from a nexus of social relations produced by the

ambulantes are a direct affront to the manifestation of neoliberal gentrification in the Centro. The timespaces at work in the Centro prevent the normalization of urban space under the Programa and thus thwart the goals of this neoliberal gentrification project. The temporal-spatial flows of the ambulantes who work from plaza to plaza and street to street according to the time of day, the Judean-Christian calendar and the seasons that produce fruits and goods that they sell is not compatible with the normalization of space purported by the Programa. The distinct socially timespaces produced by the promoters of the Programa, ambulantes and subsistence groups are a component in the uneven geographies found in the Centro. The geographies of the recovered streets and plazas found in perimeter A juxtaposed to the organic socially produced urban spaces still at play found throughout the rest of the Centro are sites of distinct productions of and gradations of timespaces where different actors use urban space distinctly in the Centro.

## CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have analyzed how México City's Centro Histórico is a nexus of globalization, neoliberalization and gentrification processes that are coalescing to produce distinctive forms of urban reconfiguration in the global South. I have merged together and examined these literatures to study the neoliberal, urban municipal policy called the Programa de Rescate. In so doing, I have completed several tasks in this dissertation. I analyze and describe how businesses leaders, such as Carlos Slim, CEO of Grupo Carso and TELMEX, combined efforts with intellectuals and neo-populist left wing PRD politicians from the Government of the Federal District (GFD) to join forces to create and craft México City's neoliberal gentrification project called the Programa de Rescate.

I tell the story behind the Programa de Rescate and recount the codification of the Centro Histórico as a place worth 'rescuing' that ushered in the neoliberal gentrification policy. I provide a discussion on the execution strategies of the Programa with a detailed description of its implementation. I outline the complicated and convoluted investment strategies involved in paying for the Programa. I also discuss how the Programa has initiated changes in the socio-spatial fabric of México City. Descriptions on the reconfiguration of the Alameda, the changes of class structures using urban space, the initial systematic and strategic removal of ambulantes from the perimeter A zone of the Centro, and the preliminary—albeit ephemeral— small scale residential gentrification occurring in the Centro are all transforming how the urban spaces are used in the locale.

The contestations and confrontations over who uses these spaces is in part how the geographies of the Centro are being reconfigured. I highlight the spatial confrontations between ambulantes and promoters of the Programa that are impeding the full neoliberal gentrification of the Centro. I also provide a description of vernacular forms of language, religions and timespace at work in the Centro that function as a barrier to neoliberal gentrification in this locale.

## **8.1 What makes and analysis of the Programa de Rescate a gentrification Study?**

As I outline in chapter 2 section 3, the term gentrification has morphed to signify many forms of urban change/revitalization/renewal as urbanization processes have shifted and become more convoluted in tandem with economic and cultural transformations of cities. Since Ruth Glass (Glass, 1964) first coined the term nearly a half century ago when she described house-by-house gentrification and subsequent displacement of the working poor in London, England by the gentry who bought and refurbished homes in working poor communities thus effectively reconfiguring working class strongholds into upscale neighborhoods—the term has continued to hold the connotation of displacement of the working poor by land speculators, the gentry, or global capital as witnessed in México City's Centro Histórico. The removal and displacement of the working poor under the guise of revanchist urban policies is a thread that can be found in distinct examples of urban renewal that occur differently in each locale but that weaves together the displacement of the working poor as a result of these urban policies.

The phenomenon of the displacement of working poor populations allows the term gentrification to carry cache and remain poignant in the face of multiple forms of urban renewal experienced today. From the idiosyncratic experiences and examples of neoliberal gentrification in Istanbul (Potuoglu-Cook, 2006), to the examples of rural gentrification of the carefully manicured, bucolic English countryside (Phillips, 1993, 2003 ), or from the wide breaching experiences of post-apartheid South African gentrification (Visser, 2002), to the gentrification of Latin American resort towns (Johnson, 2007), displacement of the working poor and the insertion of a new, upwardly mobile class into the spaces previously occupied and utilized by the working class is what links together these multiple socio-spatial transformations. Indeed, much ink has been spilled over the constant debate in academic journals over just 'What Makes Gentrification "Gentrification"?' (Redfern, 2003 ).

My case study of neoliberal gentrification in the Global South is the revanchist, neoliberal municipal policy called the Programa de Rescate. As this

particular municipal urban renovation policy requires the removal of ambulantes from selling their wares in the streets and plazas of the Centro combined with the displacement of the working poor from the vice-regal palaces that serve as low cost tenement housing for this segment of the population in order to meet its goals, I insist in referring to the socio-spatial changes afoot in the Centro Histórico as an example of gentrification, albeit a discrete case in point of gentrifications from the examples above or the more in-depth analysis I provide in chapter two. As I outline in chapter two, I mobilize the term gentrification in the Centro Histórico to signify the use of urban space by a more upwardly mobile class than what previously utilized the space. Although the ambulantes have never been permanently grounded in one particular site in the Centro, they have used multiple spaces in the Centro as sites of economic [production to peddle their wares. The removal of the ambulantes from the streets and plazas of the Centro under the guise of the Programa de Rescate is a form of the displacement from the working poor and the re-insertion of the upper classes in the these urban spaces.

## **8.2 What does Gentrification look like in México City?**

For some time now, economic and cultural trends and changes have occurred in tandem and functioned mutually to reconfigure the built environment of cities (Castells, 1977). It is quite difficult to state that an entirely new, novel, unique phenomenon may occur in the social transformation of a city as the city promoters have employed many diverse guises to reconfigure urban centers. Additionally, urban scholars have been hot on the heels of urban socio-spatial changes in order to document and catalog these evolutionary phenomena. In my study of gentrification in México City there are events and promotional tactics top encourage the genrtrification of the Centro that have occurred previously in other locales while there are also distinctively México City socio-spatial transformations taking place as well.

So, the neoliberal gentrification occurring now in México's Centro Histórico provides examples of urban renewal strategies already witnessed in the Global North, while there are also differences found in the successes and failures of the Programa

de Rescate to gentrify the Centro. For example, festivals, street fairs and the use of display is a tool that has been employed in cities in both the global north and the global south to promote the renovation or gentrification of different cities. While the festival functions as a tool to encourage targeted populations to return to urban areas that are in the process of gentrifying, the festivals will look different from one locale to the next. In this dissertation I discuss the festivals promoted by the Government of the Federal District in the Centro. These all-night affairs are meant to convey to the wealthy Mexicans and international tourists that México City is a safe place to play. Moreover, the all-night festivals are to encourage the targeted population to spend more time in the Centro with the hopes by the promoters of the Programa that the elite will eventually choose to settle in the Centro Histórico. The festivals aim to promote creative spontaneity, to borrow a term from Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1991), so that the gentrification processes in the Centro would take-off—similar to development theory – and the Centro would finally be reconfigured into the regal playground for the wealthy instead of sites of ephemeral economic production for the working poor, ambulantes. It is easy yet facile to suggest that the festivals promoted by the Government of the Federal District in the Centro Histórico are the same as –say–the festivals that promote Edinburgh in Scotland. They have at their core the same goal—to convey to the public that the inner-city is a safe place to play and perhaps even invest – but the way they play themselves out is distinctive. Just as places and sites constitute a nexus of social relations—and therefore are ephemeral and constantly in flux—then the creation, albeit promoted by local governments, of a festival in Edinburgh Scotland or the Centro Histórico of México City—even though they have at their root the same goals—will – on the ground—perform in their own fashion according to the different actors involved. Each set of actors in these varied locales (Edinburgh and México City) will perform according to their learned, socially constructed norms that have been developed over the historical long duree and incorporate the different influences that each respective society has developed. Nevertheless, the use of spectacle, fetes and festivals is a tool that has been incorporated across hemispheres and through the global north and south to promote gentrification. Now let me move on to examples of

characteristically DF forms of socio-spatial transformation under the rubric of the Programa de Rescate.

### **8.3 Gentrification at work: Urban reconfiguration in México City**

So, let me turn to examples of urban reconfiguration in the Centro that prove to be quite place-based and provide gentrification a distinctive layering in México City. Moreover, the key factor that weaves together the disparate examples of gentrification found across the globe—that still allows us to employ the term gentrification—are the examples of displacement that are found in each of the urban renewal stories.

The resistance by the ambulantes in the Centro gives gentrification in the Centro its unique face. One of the key goals of the Programa de Rescate is the normalization of urban space in the Centro Histórico. This entails the removal of the ambulantes—the component of this study that is associated the Programa with gentrification. There are examples of the displacement of the working poor in the Global North—one of the most written about and cited occurred with the displacement of Puerto Rican working class residents with the advent of gentrification in the Lower East Side of Manhattan (N. Smith, 1996).

The ambulatory and mobile aspect of the ambulantes – with their capacity to move from plaza to the next; their ability to warn each other as the Centro Histórico Police approach to remove their goods; their aptitude to employ spatial strategies (discussed in chapter 7) provides the case in point of a characteristically México City form of resistance to gentrification. The production and reproduction of the urban built environment occurs through the conflicts over how urban space is to be utilized and employed. (Castells & Portes, 1989) The ambulantes ability to thwart the main goal of the Programa—the removal of ambulantes from peddling their wares in the Centro and the subsequent normalization of urban space in México City—the ambulantes are complicit in how the reconfiguration or urban space in the Centro will occur. It is this particular mobility that is inherent to the livelihood strategies of the ambulantes that creates a characteristically México City layer to the resistance to the gentrification of the Centro.



The role the ambulantes play in resisting the Programa and their insistence of using urban space in the Centro as sites of commerce plays a direct role in the reconfiguration of urban space in this locale. The differences found in gentrification in México City lay in the position the ambulantes perform in the conflicts over the socio-spatial reproduction of the Centro Histórico. The example of the ambulatory, mobile nature of the ambulantes provides a case in point of how urban socio-spatial change under the rubric of the Programa de Rescate is producing a particularly place-based form of gentrification.

#### **8.4 Carlos Slim: Private business and the Centro Histórico**

Now, let me go on to describe the role that Carlos Slim—the CEO of Grupo Carso S.A. and the largest per capita investor in the Centro— has played in producing a characteristically DF form of gentrification.

No other individual has invested as much capital into the gentrification of the Centro Histórico as Carlos Slim. As of October, 2007—the most recent figures I am able to obtain—Slim has spent 481,762 million pesos on property in the Centro. (Gonzalez, 2007). This figure is solely the buildings that Slim has purchased. This figure does not include infrastructure in sewage lines, potable water, lighting projects etc. – as listed in the chapter on the implementation of the Programa de Rescate. Indeed, perhaps not since the 19<sup>th</sup> century dictator, Porfirio Diaz, has México City witnessed one individual leave such a large mark on the urban built environment as Slims is in the processing of fulfilling now (Johns, 1997) .

Carlos Slim's father migrated to México City from Lebanon in 1911 where he established a dry-goods store called la Estrella de Oriente and purchased real estate in the Centro Histórico. Slim was raised in the Centro by his extended Lebanese family. Many of Slim's cousins and nephews are also very successful businessmen in Mexico, but none have amassed the fortunes that Slims has accumulated since the opening of the economy under neoliberalism in the early 1980s. Indeed, what catapulted Slim's fortunes was his purchase of TELMEX from the Mexican Government in 1989 when then president Salinas de Gotari was privatizing industries in order to pave the way to the neoliberalization of the state and economy in Mexico.

Slim's wealth is a product of the polarization of society that occurred in tandem with the neoliberalization of Mexico. Slim is a neoliberal businessman who has benefitted from neoliberalism in Mexico. Since the 1980s, Slim has amassed a fortune surpassing \$60 billion dollars. His interests in the Centro are hard to gauge. Adrian Pandal claims that Slim does not have political ambitions in México City, that he truly cares about the Centro Histórico and wants to see it restored to its natural beauty. This may be true, but that one man has the capital to transform the entire Centro Histórico to his own whim reeks of demagoguery. That one individual owns so much property has become a concern for many of the original organizers of the Programa de Rescate. Nevertheless, without the presence, money and headstrong practices of Slim, the Centro would not be experiencing the socio-spatial transformations that are occurring in México City. In the words of Licenciada Magdalena Zarazúa, the director of sales a Bienes Raíces del Centro Histórico, if it were not for Slim, "all of the work that you see that has been accomplished in the Centro would not have happened".

For example, there is perhaps an odd form or variation of the rent-gap theory occurring in the Centro under the guise of Slim's financial clout. The rent gap theory states that when "the actual capitalized ground rent (land value) of a plot of land given its present use and the potential ground rent that might be gleaned under a 'higher and better' use" occurs, it becomes economically feasible and profitable for capitalists to begin to purchase property in dilapidated neighborhoods.

One of the impediments to the carrying-out of the rent gap theory in the Centro Histórico is land tenure. Land tenure disputes have been a major obstacle to the refurbishment of the Centro's palaces and buildings. In the UNESCO heritage area of the Centro Histórico six out of ten properties is lacking in ownership title. The lack of titles to the properties has made it difficult for the Government of the Federal District to collect property taxes on the buildings, to expropriate the buildings, to find out if the people living in the buildings should be allowed to receive compensation for leaving the buildings and finally to also provide loans to property owners in order for them to refurbish these architectural jewels. With such land-

tenure dilemmas over property ownership in the Centro, the true value of many of these buildings is not entirely clear. Moreover, the 'higher and better' use of these buildings has yet to be determined. Previously, many of the palaces functioned as tenement housing. Now they are museums. Is more profit being gleaned from these buildings as museums? The rent-gap theory does not necessarily apply to the current situation in the Centro Histórico. Or if the rent-gap theory applies, it appears very difficult to document.

There is not a clear increase in the 'higher and better' use of the palaces—as of yet. Without Slim's interest in the Centro, the socio-spatial transformations taking place would not occur. Slim has a social-conscious to refurbish and modernize the Centro. His modernization efforts are intertwined with his neoliberal epistemology coupled with his goals to re-create the regal, colonial atmosphere of the Centro. It is difficult to measure his true goals. However, Slim adds a nuanced DF characteristic to gentrification not witnessed in the global north as he has singularly impacted the Centro more than any other actor involved in the Programa de Rescate.

Another distinctive layer to gentrification in México City is the religious component. The Consulting Council for the Rescate del Centro Histórico (Consejo Consultivo) consisted of Carlos Slim; the Cardinal of México City, Norberto Rivera; the Archbishop of the Orthodox Church, Antonio Chedraui; the historian Guillermo Tovar y de Teresa; the director of the influential newspaper, El Universal, Juan Francisco Ealy Ortiz; and the renowned journalists Ricardo Rocha and Jacobo Zabudowsky. That important religious figures play a role in deciding the implementation of the Programa provides a unique layer to gentrification. Slim's presence on the council with the other religious figures shows that the seemingly real presence of a



**Figure 27. Marcelo Ebrard kisses his wife, the famous Spanish painter and actress, Mariagna Pratts, on a street free of ambulante. (Olvera, 2006)**

social conscience found in this gentrification project that is not as noticeable in the global North.

### **8.5 El Programa continues**

The Programa de Rescate is still in the process of recovering and normalizing the Centro. Six years and over one billion dollars since its inception in August 2001, the Programa has made great strides in transforming the Centro from an outdoor bazaar landscape to a more august, neocolonial space. The Programa has transformed perimeter A by replacing sewer lines, installing lighting systems, refurbishing ecclesiastical edifices, painting the facades of buildings and promoting cultural events. However, the Programa has yet to meet all of its goals.

When Andres Manuel López Obrador first created and brought into practice the Programa he sat as Mayor of México City. Currently, Marcelo Ebrard is Mayor. Ebrard was the head of security for the GFD under the mayorship of Lopez Obrador. Ebrard was responsible for hiring the Giuliani consulting firm signifying his zero tolerance approach to the implementation of the Programa. As Mayor of México City, he has worked closely with Fideicomiso and Fundación to carry out the normalization of urban space in the Centro and is specifically concerned with the removal of the ambulantes.

Ebrard is one of the new PRD politicians. He jumped from the PRI in 2000 when the party lost the federal elections. The new PRDistas such as Ebrard matured as politicians inside the PRI party during the neoliberal experiment in México. Ebrard effectively has only experienced neoliberal politics. He strongly embraces the neoliberal philosophy that informs the Programa. He is very much the upper class Capitalino (as opposed to Lopez Obrador who is from Tabasco and worked his way into politics through the Petroleum union): a French last name (that he traces to the Maximilian invasion of México in the 19th century); light skinned; married a Spaniard and is educated in private universities (Salgado, 2007). Indeed, not only does he back up the rhetoric espoused by the Programa of re-covering the Spanish colonial architecture and re-converting the Centro into a regal space, he also practices it, and occasionally gets in trouble for his practices.

Ebrard employed México City's Special Forces and the troops from the Mexican Army to clear Calle Moneda – a beautiful palace-filled street that at the time had still not been recovered—in order to provide a regal location for his own personal wedding ceremony and reception.

The wedding took place on a Saturday afternoon that lasted well into the evening. The couple took their vows in the refurbished palace that houses a cultural center called José Luis Cuevas Museum. The audacious act of the Mayor to use public money to clear the area left aghast even the press and authorities of México City who are accustomed to 70 years of ostentatious acts by PRI politicians. The PRD supposedly is the party of the people: of México Profundo. At this event the mayor is behaving like an aristocrat enjoying the magisterial playground of the recovered Centro. The press publicly chastised the Mayor for using public money for a private event. An investigation ensued and eventually a private donor – Grupo Carso – covered the expenses (Sanchez, 2007). Nevertheless, the press was impressed that the streets were clear of vending on the night of the event. As one reporter relates<sup>38</sup>:

Much different than any other Saturday that usually finds streets such as Moneda—which happens to be earmarked for recovery under the Programa—saturated with ambulantes and shoppers, yesterday [the day of the wedding] Moneda street was passable [free of ambulantaje], and the historic buildings, such as the Santa Ines Temple, were brilliantly lit and free of the ropes and chords [supporting the ambulantes' stalls] that usually cover its walls. (Sanchez, 2007)

Ebrard used a heavy hand to clear the streets of ambulantaje for his wedding. He went on to show that he would use even more draconian measures and authoritarian rule to rid the perimeter A of ambulantaje. Ebrard trained even more

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<sup>38</sup> A diferencia de cualquier otro sábado, cuando calles como Moneda -que está incluida en el programa de rescate del Centro Histórico- se encuentran saturadas por comerciantes y compradores, ayer fueron transitables, y edificios históricos, como el templo de Santa Inés, lucieron libres de los lazos y lonas que habitualmente penden de sus muros.

police and, in conjunction with Fideicomiso, put more police in the streets of perimeter A to clean out ambulanteaje.

After months of using the police and army in attempts to remove ambulantes from the perimeter A, Ebrard resorted to negotiations with the ambulante groups to finish the normalization process and remove ambulanteaje from the zone. He has been forceful in negotiating with the ambulante leaders and has secured substantial funds from Grupo Carso and the Fideicomiso to put his plan into action.



**Figure 28. The police remove ambulantes one day to find that they return the next. The continued police patrols led to violence. The violent outbreaks proved damaging for the image of the Centro under the Programa and also hurt the ambulantes' sales**

Ebrard has used money as an incentive to entice the ambulantes to abandon their livelihood strategies in the perimeter A: he has issued vouchers that the ambulantes may use in order to move their wares to established stalls outside of the Centro Histórico. In February of this year, a total of 15,000 ambulantes have left the streets of the perimeter A zone. They have taken advantage of the vouchers and are moving into permanent stalls. This is not the first time that a mayor has convinced ambulantes to relocate in México City (Cross, 1998).

In the past attempts un-democratic regimes forcefully removed ambulantes only to see them return after the end of a sexenio (Cross, 1998). In this case, Ebrard is

using a neoliberal incentive: corporate financing combined with state legislature to lure to ambulantes into permanent stalls. The violent outburst between authorities and ambulantes began to wear on the public. Residents of the Centro began to call for an end to the disruptions and side with the GFD (Sanchez, 2007). Ebrard took advantage of this turn to seek a new route to normalization.



**Figure 29. The violent outburst between authorities and ambulantes began to wear on the public. Residents of the Centro began to call for an end to the disruptions and side with the GFD (Sanchez, 2007). Ebrard reacted by seeking a new route to normalization**

It is too soon to determine if the economic incentive to remove ambulantes from the perimeter A will have a lasting effect. Recent newspaper reports published in the La Jornada cite complaints by ambulantes and renewed confrontations between ambulantes and police. According to the ambulantes they are not receiving the same level of foot traffic through their newly established permanent stalls; that they can't get at the commuters; and that their business only picks up in the afternoon.

These complaints reflect how the ambulantes livelihood strategies are conjoined with their ambulatory nature: to meet commuters in the morning with the goods that the commuters demand; to move their stalls in the afternoon in order to meet a new clientele with distinct goods. The sedentary nature of the permanent

stalls prevents the ambulantes from practicing their livelihoods to the fullest in order to make a living. Already this year there has been continued confrontations with ambulantes (Severiano, 2007). The ambulantes have been met by the police resulting in violent confrontations.



**Figure 30. Ambulantes Protests the Zero Tolerance Policies of Ebrard (Severiano, 2007)**

Ebrard has adopted a zero tolerance policy a la Rudolf Giuliani to rid the center of ambulante and realize the normalization of space in perimeter A. He again has looked abroad for help in implementing zero tolerance in the Centro. Much to the laughter and chagrin of local authorities he has invited the Guardian Angels to patrol the streets of the Centro.

Xenophobic México immediately became suspicious of the Guardian Angels-who hail from the U.S. and are mostly ex-felons and gang members. Members of the Deputy of Chambers in México City declared that Ebrard was violating México's sovereignty by allowing the Guardian Angels into México City (Flores, 2008). The Guardian Angels probably won't last long in México City. It remains to be seen if his Ebrard's zero tolerance efforts will have long standing effects. Nevertheless, Ebrard, who is a politician from the left wing party, has truly adopted revanchist neoliberal policies through his zero tolerance approach.





**Figure 31. Guardian Angeles in Front of national Palace in the Zocalo (Lopez, 2007)**

People have employed street vending, or *ambulante*, or the *tianguis*, as a livelihood strategy for centuries. It has become a more heightened tactic under the auspices of neoliberalism. One political commentator astutely states that *ambulante* won't and can't disappear under the current economic climate in México City because it provides an escape valve for the working poor (Velazquez Alzua). The state also benefits from this escape valve. If *ambulante* actually was successfully removed the state would need to replace the jobs lost to the elimination *ambulante*. The state would also have possible consumption riots on their hands as the working poor would no longer have an inexpensive market where to buy their consumer goods. What the state wants is to "support the modernization of public markets [*ambulante*, *tianguis*] in order to incorporate them into the tax base" (Velázquez Alzua). The informal economy is approximately 60% of the overall GDP of México City (Cross, 1998). The GFD can't afford to entirely ban *ambulante*. Indeed it wants to incorporate this livelihood practice into the tax base.

That last quarter century has witnessed the neoliberalization of the Latin American Continent. Each country has adopted neoliberal economic policies differently based on its history within the world system of capitalism; its degree of

economic globalization; and its level of commitment by politicians to adjust or break away from the neoliberal regime.

As of late there has been a political backlash against neoliberalism in Latin America. The press has hailed this as the Hugo Chavez-ization of the continent. In reality, each country that has adopted a path distinct to neoliberalism is choosing an alternative best suited for its circumstances. Nevertheless, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Uruguay, Nicaragua and Paraguay have all elected politicians who have run for office under anti-neoliberal banners. On contrast to federal governments electing anti-neoliberal politicians, major cities are adopting neoliberal policies similar to the Programa de Rescate. Indeed, Quito, Ecuador and Lima, Peru have both initiated similar neoliberal revanchist policies. Adrian Pandal has been secured as a consultant to both municipalities to help oversee the implementation of the recovery of their Historic Centers.

Just as neoliberalism takes on distinct place base characteristics, so to will the interworkings and contestations of these programs in Quito and Lima play themselves out distinctly from México City. The Programa de Rescate has proven to be a policy of adaptation and negotiation. Its replicability in Quito and Lima will depend on the set of actors implementing and contesting neoliberal gentrification in those locales.

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**Zukin, S. (1996). *The cultures of cities*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Press.**

## VITA

### David Matthew Roy Walker

#### **Birth Data**

- November 19, 1967
- San Francisco, California

#### **Education**

- M.A. in Latin American Studies, San Diego State University, 2000
- B.A. in Latin American Studies, minor in Spanish & Portuguese, University of California at Berkeley, 1996

#### **Positions**

- Assistant Professor (Tenure Track), Department of Geology and Geography, Ohio Wesleyan University. 2007. Present Position

#### *Teaching Assistantships at the University of Kentucky*

##### **Department of Geography 2001-2006**

- Geography 160 Lands and Peoples of the Non Western World- Duties included designing the Syllabus, writing tests, exams, class projects and lectures, and full responsibility for grading. Class size: 75 Students.
- Geography 365 Central and South American Economic and Political Geography- Duties included designing the Syllabus, writing tests, exams, class projects and lectures, and full responsibility for grading. Class size: 35 Students.

##### **Program in Latin American Studies 2003-2006**

- Program Assistant for the Program of Latin American Studies. Duties included, assisting in grant writing, organizing colloquia, event organizer, advising undergraduate majors, organizing film series.

- Instructor for Latin American Studies 201: Introduction to Latin American Studies- Duties included designing the Syllabus, writing tests, exams, class projects and lectures, and full responsibility for grading. Class size: 35 Students.

*Teaching Assistantships at San Diego State University*

**Department of Rhetoric and Writing 1997-1999**

- Economics 96A. Freshman Success Program. Duties included teaching students how to read syllabi, study for exams in economics, and adjust to university life. Duties also included writing tests and classroom projects.

**ESL Teacher: San Diego County Unified School District**

- Bilingual Teacher/ English as a second language teacher. Duties included teaching recent High School immigrants English, developing bilingual curricula for San Diego City Schools 1999-2001

**Honors**

*University of Kentucky*

- Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars Award. San Diego State University. Fall, 1998.
- Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars Award. San Diego State University. Fall, 1999.
- Commonwealth Research Award, Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Spring 2003.
- University of Kentucky Office of International Affairs Grant, Spring 2004.

**Conference Presentations**

- “Listening to sounds, talking to people, smelling the landscape: doing fieldwork in the barrio bravo of Tepito, in the Centro Histórico de México,

D.F.” Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. Boston, MA. 04/2008

- “Contesting and negotiating neoliberalism Tepito style: La Santa Muerte and Albures frustrate the neoliberalization of urban space in México City’s Centro Histórico” 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Critical Geography. Lexington, Kentucky. 10/2007
- “The adoration of La Santa Muerte, Vernacular Albures, Spatial politics and opposition to the Neoliberalization of Space in Mexico City’s Historic Center”. Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. San Francisco, California. 04/2007
- “When Participation meets Empowerment: The WWF and the Politics of Invitation in Chimalapas, Oaxaca”, 7th Annual International Social Theory Consortium, Roanoke, VA, 05/2006
- “Gentrification Moves South: The Neoliberalization of Urban Space in Mexico City’s Historic Center”, XXVI International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 04/2006
- “When Participation meets Empowerment: The WWF and the Politics of Invitation in Chimalapas, Oaxaca” Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. Chicago. 03/2006
- “Neoliberalizing the Zócalo: The Gentrification of México City’s Histórico Center”. Reunión de la Conferencia de Geógrafos Latinoamericanistas. Morelia, México 10/ 2005.
- “Gentrification as the Neoliberalization of Space in Mexico City’s Historic Center.” Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. Denver. 04/2005.
- “Gentrification, Housing, and Poverty” Chair. Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers. Denver. 04/2005.

- “Problemas urbanos y rurales” Cuarta Conferencia Internacional de Geografía Crítica. México City. 01/2005.
- “NGOs and the Globalization of Managerilism.” Sexto Simposio Internacional de Estudios Oaxaqueños. The Welte Institutes of Oaxacan Studies. Oaxaca, Mexico. 06/2004.
- “The Neoliberalization of Space and Landscape Changes in the Historic District of Mexico City: Gentrification Moves South?”. Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Philadelphia, PA. 03/2004.
- “Article 27: Ejido Privatization and Environmental Impacts on Mexican Border Cities” XXIV International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Dallas, Texas, 03/2003
- “Neoliberal Policies and Globalization: Looking for the Heterotopias in Tijuana’s Zona del Rio.” Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, New Orleans, LA., 03/2003.
- “Negotiating with the state: Ejidatarios’ resistance, negotiation and interpretation to neoliberalism and the 1992 Agrarian Reform”. Southeastern Division of the Association of Southeastern Geographers, Richmond, VA., 11/2002
- “Ejidatarios’ Negotiation and Interpretation of the Amendments to Article 27: Neoliberalism, Globalization and Landscape Changes in Mexican Border Cities.” Border Cities Conference, Milwaukee, WI, 11/2002.
- “Ejido Privatization and Urbanization: Neoliberalism and Landscape Changes in Mexican Border Cities”. Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, Los Angeles, CA., 04/2002.
- “Modernity in a Developing City: Tijuana’s Search for a sense of Identity: Public Spaces in the Zona del Rio, Tijuana”. San Diego State University Department of Sociology Annual Graduate Student Conference, San Diego, CA., 04/2000.

## Publications

- Gillen, Jamie, Ben Smith, David Walker. (2004). Geographies of Globalization:disClosure interviews Neil Smith. *Disclosure* 13. pp. 147-158
- Walker, David and Margath Walker. Power, Identity and the Production of Buffer Villages in ‘the Second Most Remote Region in All of Mexico (2008). *Antipode*
- Walker, David, John Paul Jones III, Susan Roberts, Oliver Fröhling. (2007). When Participation Meets Empowerment: The WWF and The Politics of Invitation in Chimalapas Oaxaca. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.
- Walker, David, John Paul Jones III, Susan Roberts, Oliver Fröhling. (2007). When Participation Meets Empowerment: The WWF and The Politics of Invitation in Chimalapas Oaxaca. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.
- Walker, Margath and David Walker and Yanga Villa-Gomez (2006). The Wal-Martization of Teotihuacán: Issues of Resistance and Cultural Heritage. Stanley D. Brunn, *Wal-Mart World*. Routledge Press. pp.213-227
- Walker, David et al. (1998). Borderlink, the Tijuana River Basin: Basic Environmental and Socioeconomic Data”. Yearly working paper. The Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias. San Diego State University Press.

## *In progress*

- Walker, David. Gentrification Moves South? Re-theorizations of urban Socio-Spatial Transformations in The Global South. Plan To Submit to *Environment and Planning A*
- Walker, David. Neoliberalizing the Zocalo: Gentrification as the Neoliberalization of Urban Space in Mexico City’s Historic Center. Plan to Submit to *Cities*.
- Walker, David. Resisting the Neoliberalization of Space: Vernacular Religion and Language as tools of opposition to the Gentrification of Mexico City’s Historic Center. Plan to Submit to *Antipode*.

### **Language Skills**

- Near Native Fluency in Spanish.
- Proficient in Portuguese, French, Italian.

### **Service**

- Student Representative for, Minority Affairs, University of Kentucky Department of Geography. 2003
- President of the Latin American Studies Student Organization (LASSO). San Diego State University. 1997-1999

### **Participation in Professional Associations**

- The Association of American Geographers (AAG) 2001-present
- Latin American Studies Association (LASA) 2002-present
- Association of Pacific Coast Geographers 2005-Present
- Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG) 2001-2003

David M. Walker

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8/1/2008

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